

became an accepted authority on the technical methods of the Old Masters, his interests extended to other crafts; and his little book, "Building Materials" (1922), takes an honourable place beside his better-known works: for example, "The Pigments and Mediums of the Old Masters" (1914), "The Painter's Methods and Materials" (1926), and "The Brush-work of Rembrandt and his School" (1932).

Laurie developed many ingenious methods of investigating pigments and media on the micro scale, at a time when microchemistry had not yet become an orthodox technique, and he figured prominently in so many *causes célèbres* on the authenticity of Old Master paintings that his eminence in this sphere is in danger of obscuring the catholicity of his other interests. As a young man he worked in White-chapel under Canon Barnett, at Toynbee Hall; clubs, theatres and gardens for the young East Ender, and a precarious little factory for improved artist's colours, all engaged his energies at this time. A fervid Liberal and friend of Lloyd George, he once contested unsuccessfully a Liberal seat in his native city. He was principal of the Heriot-Watt College, Edinburgh, during 1900-28, difficult formative years; and the impressive development of the College owed much to Laurie's devoted labours. In 1912, to his great delight, the value of his researches on the artist's materials was recognized by his appointment as professor of chemistry to the Royal Academy of Arts.

Laurie was a character. Straightforward and honest to a fault; burly in figure, brusque and gruff in manner; scholar, humanitarian, lover of the arts; pugnacious, full of vitality, stubborn and argumentative, generous and kindly; a good talker on any topic, but most of all on pictures; the ever-probing investigator, a good friend, and a stimulating antagonist; a man intensely individual and unorthodox, authoritarian yet himself impatient of authority—these are some of the memories of him which persist most vividly. On his favourite topic he wrote as he talked—rapidly, staccato, with confident authority and little inclination to revise, prune and polish; but his matter was of such novelty and interest that it was easy to forgive the brilliant *non sequitur* which now and then delighted the reader.

It caused, perhaps, less surprise than distress to the friends of this robust and authoritarian old scholar when, in his seventies, he took up the cudgels on behalf of the Nazi philosophy, even to the publication of a spirited defence thereof, "The Case for Nazi Germany". This lost him friends; characteristically, however, he did not swerve from views honestly held, however unpopular.

P. D. RITCHIE

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Prof. Alexander Meek

ALEXANDER MEEK, who died on November 2, was born at Broughty Ferry in 1865. He was for many years, until his retirement in 1932, professor of zoology at Armstrong College (University of Durham) and director of the Dove Marine Laboratory. After leaving school, he studied art and then determined to become a scientific worker. He spent a year at the Royal College of Science and then entered University College, Dundee, as a student under Prof. D'Arcy Thompson. For two years after graduating in 1889 he worked at the Gatty Marine Laboratory under Prof. W. C. M'Intosh. He was then appointed county council lecturer in agricultural zoology in Aberdeen-

shire. He held this post until 1894 when he obtained a lectureship in veterinary anatomy and farm hygiene at what was then the University of Durham College of Science, later to become Armstrong College and, still later, although not in his time, to be merged in the present King's College.

After his appointment at Newcastle, his interest again turned to marine zoology, and, in 1898, he was appointed to a demonstratorship in the Department of Natural History without, however, severing immediately his connexion with agriculture. He was fortunate in working under Prof. G. S. Brady, who had written the reports on the Copepoda and Ostracoda of the *Challenger* Expedition and who knew or had known the local 'giants' of marine zoology such as Joshua Alder, Albany Hancock, Canon A. M. Norman and many others. He succeeded Brady in the chair of zoology in 1908.

In this environment Meek flourished. In 1897 the Northumberland Sea Fisheries Committee published his first "Report on the Trawling Excursions carried on during the Summer of 1897 and on the Marine Laboratory at Cullercoats". The Marine Laboratory at this time consisted of cramped and inadequate quarters at the old salt-water baths in Cullercoats Bay. Using this as a base, Meek carried out many investigations into problems of the local inshore fisheries. In his report for 1904, Meek recorded the destruction by fire of the old wooden laboratory and the complete loss of records, specimens and apparatus. But he also announced the formation of a committee the object of which was to collect funds for the establishment of a new and more adequate laboratory. As the result of the efforts of this committee and especially of Meek himself, a sum of money was collected which was, however, insufficient for the purpose. The situation was saved by Mr. W. H. Hudleston, who erected the present building at his own expense. Armstrong College at first was the tenant, and afterwards purchased the Laboratory which was opened in 1908 as the Dove Marine Laboratory.

Established at last in a well-built and up-to-date marine laboratory with a good aquarium and sufficient working space, Meek launched out into many activities. The long series of annual reports which he edited and to which he contributed so largely show how few aspects of the local inshore fisheries escaped the attention of himself or his staff and students. Meek had the welfare of the fishermen at heart and he had a remarkable power of gaining their confidence. One important result of his work and influence is to be seen to-day in some of the local by-laws governing the crab and lobster fisheries.

Apart from his more strictly economic studies of fisheries, Meek covered a wide field. Much faunistic work, especially in relation to fishes and amphipod Crustacea, was published by him in the Dove Marine Laboratory Reports. His book "The Migrations of Fish", published in 1916, was an important contribution at the time and is still valuable. He was the first to point out the importance of *Sagitta setosa* and *S. elegans* as plankton indicators. He was also interested in embryology, on which subject he published a number of papers.

Meek was a man of strong personality who could inspire enthusiasm and loyalty in his colleagues and students. He succeeded worthily to the great tradition of marine biology on the north-east coast of England, and his greatest achievement was, perhaps, the establishment of a laboratory in which this work still continues.

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