

literature was there a manual available containing such a wealth of detailed, carefully documented information.

From the institution of the International Radium Standard Committee Meyer was a very active member, and in 1938, after the death of its president, Lord Rutherford, he became his successor. The Second World War paralysed the activities of the Committee; but when three years ago efforts were made again to agree on international regulations for the standardization of radioactive sources, Meyer took a lively interest in them. Letters he wrote to colleagues up to a few days before his death were full of valuable information about previous international negotiations, and wise counsel as to how to overcome the present difficulties.

Meyer's activities as director of the Vienna Radium Institute came to an abrupt end in 1938 when the Nazis seized power in Austria; being of Jewish descent, he was dismissed. He did not leave the country but retired to his house in Upper Austria where he was fortunate enough to live unmolested, thanks to the loyalty of friends and to the courage and devotion of his daughter, who had become a Norwegian by marriage. Several brochures which have since appeared, about the theory of vision and about musical instruments, and a few theoretical contributions to the *Mitteilungen* (written jointly with his daughter), show that even in retirement his mind was constantly active.

All those who at any time have worked in Meyer's Institute, as his assistants or as guests, remember with deep gratitude his never-failing kindness. It was perhaps the most outstanding feature of his personality; but I refrain from enlarging on it as tribute will be paid to Meyer's friendliness by one who came to know him well in specially difficult circumstances.

F. A. PANETH

I FIRST met Prof. Meyer nearly thirty-seven years ago, when I began work in his Institute. The First World War extended my sojourn in Vienna to nearly six years, and a firm and enduring friendship developed between us. As the only Englishman who has worked in his laboratories, it is perhaps fitting to recall a few personal experiences, for there could be no better revelation of his personal charm and good nature, his warm friendship and his innate kindness.

Twice in the early months of the War, I was taken into police custody as an 'enemy alien'. On the first occasion Prof. Meyer was at his country home in Bad Ischl, and although I had known him for only a year, he travelled to Vienna as soon as he heard the news, applied for my release, and on the third day he and his 'first assistant', Prof. V. F. Hess, called for me at the Central Police Station and took me home by taxi. On the second occasion he achieved my release on the second day; after that all went well, except that I had no funds and could not for many months communicate directly with my parents. But rather than that I should stagnate in an internment camp, Meyer again intervened. For the rest of the War he supplied me with money on trust and free of interest, the amounts being left to my discretion, and he established intermittent but adequate contact with my parents through the good offices of that great-hearted and kindly man of science, Prof. H. Kamerlingh Onnes, who devoted much time to work of this kind for others similarly placed to myself.

On all festive occasions throughout the War I never failed to find good things on my work bench from Meyer and his colleagues; at Christmas time *Krampus* was always there, at Easter the 'Easter hare', and on birthdays an iced cake resplendent with candles and good wishes. Scientific visitors from abroad could always be assured of friendly discussion and a hearty welcome to the Institute, and I recall how Meyer used to look forward to vacation visits of his old friend Dr. Lise Meitner, a native of Vienna. I remember, too, a visit from Prof. Nernst, and how, with a merry twinkle in his eyes, Meyer said to him: "But before you go you must meet our English prisoner!"

This account would be incomplete without mention of his happy home life with Mrs. Meyer and their son and daughter, all of whom survive; it was one of the high-lights of life in the Institute to be entertained by these charming personalities. In the truest sense, Meyer was an ardent patriot of the old Austria-Hungary, and in no wise a hide-bound nationalist. Science to him was international, and he acted accordingly. In his personal relationships he was always sincere; when the situation required it he could be firm, but never unkind. I salute the memory of an outstanding man of science, a true Austrian, and a staunch friend.

ROBERT W. LAWSON

Prof. Battiscombe Gunn, F.B.A.

BATTISCOMBE GEORGE GUNN, fellow of the Queen's College, Oxford, and professor of Egyptology in the University, died after a long illness on February 27.

Gunn was the son of a London stockbroker and was born in 1883. His father destined him for a business career, and after the completion of his education at Westminster School and Bedale's, he entered the service of a City bank; but although brilliant at figures and entirely competent at his work, he found it so distasteful to his temperament that it was soon abandoned; a second project, that of becoming an engineer, in which his mathematical gifts would have served him well, was likewise dropped. Gunn's tastes led him into the field of literature and philology, and he early began the study, self-taught, of the language and writing of ancient Egypt. In 1906 he produced a small book, "The Instruction of Ptah-hotep", in which he attempted the translation of one of the oldest and most difficult of literary texts, the *Prisse Papyrus* in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* of Paris, a production which, although premature, displays a grasp of the intricacies of the language and a latent talent that was destined to be brilliantly developed later. Gunn had not yet adopted Egyptology as a career, however, and during 1908-11 he was private secretary to Sir Arthur Pinero and afterwards a sub-editor of the *Paris Daily Mail*.

An opportunity in keeping with his tastes arose when in 1913 he went as assistant to Petrie, who was then excavating in Upper Egypt; and his special work was copying the texts discovered and preparing them for publication. In 1914 he joined the Armed Forces; he was eventually invalided out of the Army, and became for some years assistant to Sir Alan Gardiner. It was then that his brilliant powers found full scope. Sir Alan has himself acknowledged the mutual benefit that arose from this association. In 1924, Gunn published his "Studies in Egyptian Syntax", a work of fundamental importance in philology.