

NEWS and VIEWS

Anatomy at Cape Town: Prof. M. R. Drennan

AFTER forty-three years of almost continuous service to the University of Cape Town, Prof. M. R. Drennan retired from its chair of anatomy at the end of 1955. He arrived in South Africa from Ayrshire in 1913, the year of the first discovery of a fossil human skull, the Boskop skull, in South Africa, and no single personality has impressed his stamp more profoundly upon the first medical school to be established in South Africa. Not only as a contributor to Cunningham's "Anatomy", but also as the author of his own concise text-books on osteology, embryology and physical anthropology, his name is familiar to medical students throughout the Commonwealth. Among some thousand registered medical graduates directly influenced and inspired by his teaching are such figures of eminence as Thomas J. Dry, of the Medicine Section of the Mayo Clinic, Sir Solly Zuckerman, of Birmingham, and David Slome, of the Royal College of Surgeons of England. Amid the spectacular South African discoveries in physical anthropology of his generation, Drennan's shine with characteristic brilliance. His recognition of the Boskop fossil type as still extant in a Hottentot being dissected (1924), of the Australoid fossil skull from the Cape Flats (1929), of pedomorphism in the pre-Bushman Plettenberg Bay skull (1931), of the Neanderthaloid features in the Florisbad skull (1935) and of the Rhodesian affinities of the Saldanha Bay skull (1953) are classical contributions to pre-history. His collection of extant, recent and fossil human material from the southern extremity of the Old World land mass established a crucial centre of research that has been steadily illuminating human anatomy and history in Africa from the Middle Stone Age to the modern era. In approximately a hundred publications, Drennan's originality has ranged over topics historical and educational as well as the more strictly anatomical and surgical. As past president of the South African Archaeological Society, member of the Historical Monuments Commission from its inception, fellow and council member of the Royal Society of South Africa, director of the South African Museum and in numerous other professional and public capacities, he has given and will doubtless continue to give unremitting service in many capacities to South African science.

Prof. L. H. Wells

DR. L. H. WELLS, who succeeds Prof. M. R. Drennan, is returning to South Africa, whence he went as senior lecturer in physical anthropology to the Department of Anatomy at the University of Edinburgh in 1951. Educated at St. John's College and the University of the Witwatersrand at Johannesburg, he showed an early leaning towards anatomy by graduating M.Sc. with a thesis entitled "The Foot of the South African Native", and by his appointment first as a graduate demonstrator and later as a junior lecturer in anatomy, prior to taking his medical qualification, by which time he already had a number of publications to his credit. His early interest in physical anthropology and human and comparative palaeontology, stimulated by the head of the Department of Anatomy at Johannesburg, Prof. R. A. Dart, and by the work of the late Robert Broom, has continued unabated to the present time, being recorded in a long series of papers

which report the results of studies on a wide variety of subjects ranging from the peroneus tertius muscle of the baboon and the anatomy of the Bushman to human remains of the Dark and Middle Ages in south-east Scotland. The appointment of an anthropologist of Dr. Wells's calibre to the chair at the University of Cape Town will undoubtedly further the study of anthropology in Africa, while bringing him into closer touch with the important discoveries of fossil primate remains which continue to be made on that continent.

The Perkin Centenary

To mark the centenary of W. H. Perkin's discovery of the first synthetic dye, the *Manchester Guardian* has included a supplement in its issue of May 7 in which various contributors discuss the many developments that have resulted from this great event made when organic chemistry was still in its infancy. The first article is a personal recollection of Perkin by his nephew, Mr. Arthur H. Waters, who relates how he can remember his uncle back to about the year 1880 (when Mr. Waters was six years old). The article is a charming reminiscence of a man who, though his name to the outside world was illustrious, was to his kith and kin a simple, kindly soul—a religious man deeply interested in social welfare, temperance and evangelism; a great lover of children; a vegetarian; a keen recruit to the ranks of bicyclists in the early nineties; and a man who scarcely ever mentioned chemistry in the family circle. Mr. Waters's contribution is followed by one by Prof. W. Bradley (Department of Colour Chemistry and Dyeing, University of Leeds) on Perkin's scientific work and life. Two more articles continue in the biographical vein: "The Perkin Family and the Textile Industry", by R. G. Fargher (director of research and development, Samuel Heap and Son, Ltd.), in which are discussed the parts played in the textile industry by two of Perkin's gifted sons, namely, William Henry and Arthur George; and "Pullar and the Dyers' Reaction", by J. L. Crockatt (director and general manager, J. Pullar and Sons, Ltd., Perth), in which is retold the story of Perkin and the young dyer, Robert Pullar, of Perth. The remaining three articles deal with the more modern industries that have grown up as a result of Perkin's work. Under the heading "A More Fragrant World", Paul F. Spencer (chief chemist, Cusson Sons and Co., Ltd.) discusses synthetic odours and flavours, and in a rather longer article, "Raw Materials derived from Coal", L. W. Blundell (president of the National Benzole and Allied Products Association) writes on the importance of the residues from gas-works. The last, and longest, article is by Frank L. Rose (research manager, I.C.I. (Pharmaceuticals), Ltd.) on "Perkin's Influence on Medicine: the Development of Drugs and Antibiotics", a field in which the name of Ehrlich, working first with methylene blue and congo red, stands head and shoulders above the rest. Of all the lines developed from Perkin's dye, this is perhaps the one in which the most amazing developments have been made; certainly it has been the one most beneficial to mankind.

Supply of Scientists and Technologists in Britain

In his presidential address to the Institution of Chemical Engineers on "The Technological Awakening", given on April 24, Mr. J. A. Oriol welcomed the Government's new awareness of the value of technology, which he thought was due largely to the