

Prof. Max Weber.

CELEBRATION OF SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY.

THERE are few living zoologists whose researches have taken so wide a range as have those of Prof. Max Weber of Amsterdam, whose seventieth birthday has been celebrated in Holland during the present week. As naturalist-traveller by land and sea in many parts of the world, he has brought together vast collections for study by his pupils and colleagues; as anatomist and histologist, he has studied the structure and elucidated the affinities of very diverse groups of animals from flat-worms to mammals; he has written the best text-book of mammalian anatomy and conducted one of the most important oceanographical expeditions of recent times; nor has he disdained to labour as a "mere systematist" at the description and cataloguing of species of Crustacea, fishes, and reptiles.

To select for mention the most significant among contributions to knowledge so numerous and so varied is no easy task. Among the first that come to mind are Weber's demonstration that the pattern formed by the hair-follicles in the skin of various mammals can be interpreted as derived from the scaly covering of reptilian ancestors, and the evidence he has adduced for the dismemberment of the order Edentata.

As a zoogeographer, Max Weber's studies on the fauna, and especially on the freshwater fishes, of the East Indian Archipelago will have a permanent value, whether or no "Weber's line" is to replace "Wallace's line" as the accepted limit between the Oriental and the Australian regions.

An enterprise of a very different kind carried out under Max Weber's personal leadership was the exploration of the Malayán seas in the years 1899 and 1900 by the Dutch steamship *Siboga*. The stately series of reports on this expedition, which have been appearing under his editorship since 1902, form a contribution to the science of the sea scarcely surpassed in importance save by those of the *Challenger* expedition. Dealing with only a restricted area of the ocean, but paying far more attention to the fauna and flora of the shallower waters than the naturalists of the *Challenger* were able to do, it is not too much to say that the *Siboga* expedition has given a new aspect to many problems of the distribution of marine animals in tropical seas.

It remains to be added that Madame Weber (*née* van Bosse) is a botanist of distinction, who has contributed monographs on many of the groups of seaweeds collected by the *Siboga*; she has also described the minute algæ which find a curious habitat on the hairs of sloths.
W. T. C.

Prof. D'Arcy W. Thompson has sent us the following letter signed by other British naturalists and himself:

DEAR PROFESSOR MAX WEBER,

You celebrate your seventieth birthday to-day, and we, who are your colleagues and are but a few of your many friends in England, join together to congratulate you and to wish you many years to come of work and happiness. By your long life of teaching and research, by your leadership of the *Siboga* Expedition, by your great handbook of the Mammalia, and by innumerable other important publications, you have come to be the acknowledged leader of zoology in the Netherlands and to be recognised far and wide as one of the most distinguished naturalists of our time. Your solid learning has upheld the great scientific traditions of your country, your investigations have influenced and stimulated many of us, your broad interests, your singleness of purpose, the simplicity of your life, and your genius for friendship have set an example to us all.

December 5.

A. ALCOCK.

E. J. ALLEN.	SIDNEY J. HICKSON.
CHAS. W. ANDREWS.	JAS. P. HILL.
J. H. ASHWORTH.	WM. EVANS HOYLE.
W. BATESON.	J. GRAHAM KERR.
GILBERT C. BOURNE.	E. W. MACBRIDE.
W. T. CALMAN.	W. C. MCINTOSH.
GEO. H. CARPENTER.	DORIS L. MACKINNON.
WM. J. DAKIN.	P. CHALMERS MITCHELL.
ARTHUR DENDY.	C. LLOYD MORGAN.
J. C. EWART.	EDWARD B. POULTON.
F. W. GAMBLE.	R. C. PUNNETT.
J. STANLEY GARDINER.	C. TATE REGAN.
WALTER GARSTANG.	G. ELLIOT SMITH.
JAMES F. GEMMILL.	OLDFIELD THOMAS.
SIDNEY F. HARMER.	D'ARCY W. THOMPSON.
J. R. HENDERSON.	D. M. S. WATSON.
W. A. HERDMAN.	A. SMITH WOODWARD.

Obituary.

H. J. ELWES, F.R.S.

MR. HENRY JOHN ELWES passed away on November 26, after a life full of activities spread over seventy-six years. Born heir to landed property and great wealth, his life at first promised to be that of the typical English gentleman. He was sent to school at Eton, and served for five years in the Scots Guards; afterwards he became one of the greatest travellers of modern times, led on by his love of natural history, entomology, horticulture, trees, and big game shooting. He visited Asia Minor, Tibet, Nepal, India, China, Formosa, Siberia, Caucasia, North and South America, and most if not all the countries of Europe. As a

landowner, he was interested in sheep, and studied all the various breeds. He rendered important services to entomology by his enormous collections, which are now housed at South Kensington. He was a keen gardener, and introduced many beautiful and rare plants, a considerable number of which are figured in the *Botanical Magazine*. His "Monograph of the Genus *Lilium*" is a standard work. He aided several of the great scientific societies in many ways, and became president of the Royal Entomological Society of London and of the Royal English Arboricultural Society.

Mr. Elwes wrote numerous papers on gardening, agriculture, entomology, ornithology, and forestry. It is perhaps in the latter subject that his public services were