

Obituary

General A. W. Greely

ADOLPHUS WASHINGTON GREELY, whose death was recently announced, was born in Massachusetts in 1844, and in 1867 joined the Signal Corps of the regular army. In 1881 he was placed in command of the United States expedition to Lady Franklin Bay, Smith Sound, which was one of the two American circumpolar stations in connexion with the first International Polar Year. Greely and twenty-five officers and non-commissioned officers of the United States Army, with two Eskimos, were landed at Lady Franklin Bay on August 18, 1881, and a station, named Fort Conger, was erected. The ship then departed, her commander intending to return the following summer and not expecting any difficulty in again reaching the station. Admiral Nares had taken the *Alert* farther north, off the same coast, in 1875; but these ice-infested channels are seldom navigable, as the British expedition organised by Shackleton's younger son found only last year. Scientific observations were begun, and much game, especially musk-oxen, was seen. Some of these cattle were shot, and eaten during the winter.

In 1882 Lieut. Lockwood made a sledge journey along the north of Greenland, on which he discovered and charted about 125 miles of new coastline, beyond the farthest point reached by Beaumont of the Nares Expedition. Lockwood reached the record latitude of $83^{\circ} 24' N.$ in long. $40^{\circ} 46' W.$ Greely himself made even more interesting discoveries in the interior of Ellesmere Land, including Lake Hazen, more than fifty miles long, mountains, rivers and a number of Eskimo bone instruments. The relief ship failed to arrive and a second winter had to be spent at Fort Conger, as other parties, less well supplied, have done. There were caribou as well as musk-oxen, and salmon in the Lake Hazen district.

In April 1883, Lockwood followed Greely westwards, but completely crossed Ellesmere Land to Greely Ford, where he discovered a weird and wonderful cañon country. As the ship again failed to arrive, the outlook was serious and a retreat southwards was begun on August 18. News was found that the ship had been lost. Greely's party reached Cape Sabine on October 12 with very little food, and in this district game was scarce. In November the rations were reduced to 14 oz. a man a day, and in January 1884 the first man died. Lockwood kept his meteorological record until April 7 and died two days later. On May 24 all the food was finished, except for seaweed and shrimps, though the men became too weak to procure them. One man had to be shot for stealing on June 6. The seven survivors, including Greely, were rescued on June 22.

Greely gave the results of the expedition in his "Three Years of Arctic Service" (2 vols., 1886), which is worthy of comparison with the greatest works of other explorers. Work in the Signal Corps then

claimed Greely, who eventually became Major-General and Chief Signal Officer. In 1909 he published a "Handbook of Polar Discoveries", in 1912, "True Tales of Arctic Heroes", in 1927, "Reminiscences of Adventure", and the following year, "The Polar Regions in the Twentieth Century". In 1923-24 D. B. MacMillan placed a tablet on Cape Sabine in memory of the disaster; and in 1934 Greely was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honour. The Royal Geographical Society recognised his services by the award of the Founders' Medal in 1886. He was one of the founders of the American Geographical Society, to which he bequeathed his Arctic collections. Greely did excellent work in his day and set an example, not always followed, of careful and accurate detail. He was an explorer of whom the United States may well be proud.

J. G. H.

Dr. F. E. Rowett

TECHNICAL education in London has suffered a great loss by the death of Dr. F. E. Rowett, principal of the North Western Polytechnic. His career is an excellent example of the use of the facilities offered by our modern educational system, for a youth having ability and perseverance, to climb the academic ladder.

Dr. Rowett was the son of Capt. J. Rowett of the Board of Trade. His early life was spent at Portsmouth, after which the family moved to Gillingham, where he attended the Wesleyan Elementary School until he entered H.M. Dockyard, Chatham, at fourteen years of age, as an engine-fitter apprentice. Besides attending the Dockyard School, he went to Gillingham Technical Institute in the evenings and eventually obtained a Whitworth exhibition. After spending one year at East London College under Prof. D. A. Low, he obtained a Whitworth scholarship, the first year of which he spent at the Royal College of Science under Prof. Perry and the remaining two years at St. John's College, Cambridge, where he took his degree in 1914 on the research side, working under Prof. Bertram Hopkinson. In 1915 he joined the research staff of the engineering laboratory of the Royal Naval College, Greenwich, under Sir James Henderson, where he did good work on war problems for the Navy and Air services until 1918, when he was appointed principal of the Medway Technical Institute, Gillingham.

In this new post, Rowett left his mark as an organiser and teacher by re-equipping the laboratories and raising the standard to the requirements of the Board of Education, and when the new North Western Polytechnic was erected in London, he was selected to be its first principal. He planned the equipment, he gained the confidence of the Governors, the loyal co-operation of his staff and the affectionate regard of the students.

While at the Medway Institute, Rowett had taken the B.Sc. degree, London, in 1919, with first class

honours, and his D.Sc. degree in 1921 for a thesis on "Accurate Viscosity Determination of Fluids". His published papers deal with elastic hysteresis in steel, elastic properties of steel at moderately high temperatures, and viscosity of liquids; but his research work at the Royal Naval College has not been published.

Dr. Rowett was of a very retiring and modest nature, a skilful engineer and an ingenious research worker of great ability, very thorough in all he did. His work was his hobby, and forms a lasting memorial to him. Ill-health overtook him in his prime and he died at the early age of forty-six years. J. B. H.

WE regret to announce the following deaths:

Prof. A. V. Fomine, director of the Botanical Museum of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, and professor of botany in the University of Kiev, an authority on the Cryptogams and plant geography, on October 16, aged sixty-six years.

Prof. J. G. Goodman, emeritus professor of civil and mechanical engineering in the University of Leeds, on October 28, aged seventy-three years.

Prof. Frederick L. Ransome, professor of economic geology in the California Institute of Technology, on October 6, aged sixty-seven years.

News and Views

Sir Charles Sherrington, O.M., G.B.E., F.R.S.

THE official announcement of Sir Charles Sherrington's retirement from the Waynflete professorship of physiology at Oxford recalls the simple but moving ceremony which took place at the Oxford meeting of the Physiological Society in July. Sir Charles was then presented with an address recording his long association with the Society, and expressing the esteem and affection of his fellow members. These feelings are world-wide. Sir Charles's studies of the nervous system will command the admiration of neurologists for years to come, but those who have been privileged to know him personally have far more to admire. During his tenure of the chair at Oxford, the conception of the nervous system which he originated has become part of the classical doctrine of physiology. At the same time, his more recent studies have made Oxford the chief centre in Great Britain for research on the central nervous system. He has been president of the Royal Society, has served on countless scientific committees, and recently has done much for the improvement of scientific bibliography. Though we may regret the loss from active work of such a leader, we cannot grudge a rest and change of scene to one whose example has so enriched the scientific life of our time.

Progress in Medical Science

IN his Sir Halley Stewart Trust Lecture on October 31 in the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, Prof. Edward Mellanby, secretary of the Medical Research Council, discussed recent developments in medical science. He said that it is only in the past hundred years that medicine has made substantial advance. This relatively dormant state of knowledge lasting over a period of thousands of years was due partly to the idea that disease was caused by the invasion of the body by evil spirits—a view held by the Egyptians, Babylonians and Assyrians—and partly to the belief that man's body was of no account as compared with his soul—a view held

throughout the Middle Ages. Landmarks of medical advancement were introduced on the anatomical side by the Italian school as represented by Vesalius and on the physiological side by Harvey, who gave the first classical demonstration of the possibilities of acquiring knowledge by the experimental method. By the time of Pasteur, the field was set for development and intensive study. Pasteur's work on enzyme action immediately opened up a new chapter of knowledge and led to the work of Lister on antiseptics and of Koch on bacterial disease in general. In the present century, medical research has become more and more intense. In Great Britain, the Medical Research Council was initiated in 1913 and, besides using its own public funds, it has the privilege of working in close association with the efforts of private benefactors such as the Lister Institute of Preventive Medicine, founded by Lord Iveagh, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the trusts formed by Sir Otto Beit and Sir Halley Stewart. On the administrative side, the greatly increased activities of the Ministry of Health and local health authorities have resulted in the application of new knowledge acquired by research to the practical problems of health.

PROF. MELLANBY gave some results showing the effect of advancement in medical science on mortality rates. The infant mortality rate in the period 1896–1900 was 156 per 1,000 births registered; in 1934 it was 59. The mortality rate of men between 45 and 55 years of age was 20.3 per 1,000 males in the period 1870 to 1875; in the period 1926–30 it was 11.7. Progress in medical science has tended in recent years to centre round three types of knowledge affecting: (1) Problems of infection—protozoal, bacterial and virus—and their control by raising the immunity. In this way such diseases as smallpox, measles, diphtheria, meningitis and scarlet fever have been influenced. In a group of 399 London children recently treated by immune serum, not one had died of measles, whereas in a control group the death rate