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Nature's Birthday

The first issue of *Nature* appeared on 4 November 1869. The publication date of this number of *Science* makes an appropriate occasion for sending birthday greetings to our sister journal, an occasion made more appropriate by the fact that a recent visit by *Nature's* editor L. J. F. Brimble, provided opportunity for discussions of the editorial and publishing problems and policies of the two journals.

Although there is never any mistake concerning *Nature's* distinguished reputation, in the United States it is sometimes mistakenly thought that *Nature* bears to the British Association for the Advancement of Science the same relationship that *Science* bears to the American Association for the Advancement of Science. That is not so. Since its founding, *Nature* has been owned and published by Macmillan and Company, Ltd. The original idea, however, came from a group of scientists, of whom Sir Norman Lockyer was the prime mover. In 1869, the same year in which he discovered the presence of helium in the sun, Lockyer began discussions of the founding of a general journal of science. His colleagues in the enterprise were a distinguished company. Among the scientists were Roscoe, Hooker, Tyndall, Huxley, and Darwin. Also involved were Archdeacon Hare, Dean Farrar, the headmaster of Harrow, and Charles Kingsley, the novelist and poet. Perhaps most important of all was Alexander Macmillan of the firm of Macmillan and Company. As a contribution to scientific progress, Macmillan and Company decided to publish *Nature*, and has continued to do so ever since, even though the journal ran at a financial loss for the first several decades.

Norman Lockyer, who gave *Nature* its name and its start, also gave it its character, for he was the first editor and remained in that post for 50 years. In 1919, Lockyer was succeeded by another astronomer, Sir Richard Gregory, who had been assistant editor for 26 years and who continued as editor until 1938. In 1938 Gregory was followed by the third, and present, editor, L. J. F. Brimble. Like Gregory before him, Brimble had served as assistant editor. *Nature* has been extremely fortunate both in the quality of its editors and in the continuity of editorial direction made possible by their long service.

Through political and social upheavals and through great changes in science itself, *Nature* has remained an objective and dispassionate reporter of science and a forum for discussion of scientific matters. For 86 years it has provided a medium for reporting new discoveries and developments and for evaluating new books in science. It has offered opportunities for discussions of scientific policy, and sometimes has helped to steer the course of scientific progress. To its founders, editors, and publishers, science owes much. For the first international and comprehensive journal of science we wish a future as distinguished as its past.—D.W.

Science

Nature's Birthday

Dael Wolfle

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