

The British Association

THE British Association intends, unless unforeseen events intervene, to hold a conference in the University of Reading, by kind permission of the Council of the University, during July 25–27. The general reference will be to science in national and international aspects, and Sir Richard Gregory, president of the Association, will open the conference as chairman. Thereafter there will be meetings in four groups, dealing respectively with international intellectual co-operation; natural resources and national needs; social aspects of human nutrition; and scientific discovery and progressive industry. The preliminary programme for the conference is taking shape, and already a number of distinguished speakers have consented to participate, if circumstances permit, in the various group-discussions. The programme should be ready for issue in the early part of next month. Considerations of finance and the restriction of paper supplies will prohibit its distribution on the usual extensive scale, and any interested persons who do not receive it by the middle of May are requested to ask for it to be sent from the office of the Association at Burlington House, London, W.1.

Admission to the conference will be by tickets, the number of which will be restricted to some seven hundred by the available accommodation. The tickets will be free, but members of the Association will be urged to maintain their subscriptions, and others will be invited either to become members or to contribute by donation to the funds of the Association. Arrangements for the lodging of visitors in the University halls of residence are in hand. The Council of the University will hold an informal evening conversation for members of the Association and guests.

Siméon Denis Poisson, For.Mem.R.S. (1781–1840)

ON April 25, 1840, the distinguished mathematician Siméon Denis Poisson died at Sceaux at the comparatively early age of fifty-eight. Born at Pithiviers on June 21, 1781, he was the son of a soldier who had served in the Seven Years War, but was brought up by an uncle at Fontainebleau. At the local school he attracted attention by his gift for mathematics, and at the age of seventeen gained admittance to the *École Polytechnique*, with which he remained connected for practically all the rest of his life. In 1800 he presented to the Paris Academy of Sciences his first mathematical memoir, gaining thereby the interest of Lacroix and Legendre. He was appointed to the chair of analytical mechanics in the *École Polytechnique*, held the chair of mechanics in the Faculty of Sciences of Paris, was given a seat on Bureau des Longitudes, and became an examiner to both the *École Polytechnique* and the *École d'Artillerie* at Metz.

Altogether Poisson wrote more than three hundred memoirs on mathematical, astronomical and physical subjects. His most notable book was his "*Traité de Mécanique*", published in two volumes in 1811. His work on capillary attraction appeared in 1831 and

that on the mathematical theory of heat in 1833. A man of deep convictions, he took no part in political life, finding in mathematical pursuits his work and recreation. When enjoined to spare himself, his reply was "*La vie c'est le travail*". Among a great number of remarkably able men of science, he stood out as one of the foremost. He was buried in Paris, and a memorial notice was afterwards written by Arago. Napoleon had raised him to the rank of baron, and a few years before his death he was made a peer of France.

Sir Thomas Clouston (1840–1915)

SIR THOMAS SMITH CLOUSTON, a leading Edinburgh psychiatrist, was born on April 22, 1840, at Nist House, Orkney. He was educated first at Aberdeen Grammar School and then at the University of Edinburgh under Goodsir, Syme, Simpson and Laycock. He graduated M.D. in 1861, when he received a gold medal for his thesis on the nervous system of the lobster. After serving four years as assistant physician to the Morningside Asylum, Edinburgh, he was appointed medical superintendent of the Cumberland and Westmorland asylum at Carlisle, where he remained until 1873, when he succeeded Skae as medical superintendent at Morningside and continued in this post until his retirement in 1908. During his period of office he carried out many reforms in the asylum, including rebuilding and the introduction of humane and efficient methods in the treatment of the patients, in addition to making a large number of clinical and pathological observations. Besides being in great demand as a consultant not only in mental disease but also as an expert in forensic medicine, Clouston took an active part in municipal affairs at Edinburgh.

In addition to his principal work entitled "*Clinical Lectures on Mental Diseases*", which went through six editions between 1883 and 1904 and was for many years a standard text-book, Clouston was the author of "*Neuroses of Development*", which formed the Morison Lectures for 1890, "*Hygiene of Mind*" (1906) and "*Unsoundness of Mind*" (1911). He also contributed an important article on "*The Epochal Insanities*" to Allbutt's "*System of Medicine*" (1899). He was the recipient of many honours. In 1911 he was knighted, in 1907 he was made Hon. D.C.L. of Aberdeen and in 1911 of Edinburgh. He was also president of the Medico-Psychological Association of Great Britain and Ireland, of which he was one of the founders, and of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, and editor of the *Journal of Medical Science*. He died on April 17, 1915.

Factory Hours for Women and Young Persons

A REPORT on hours of employment of women and young persons in factories during the first five months of the War, issued by the Home Office (Cmd. 6182. London: H.M.S.O.), reviews the experience of 1914–18 and the situation at the outbreak of war. It was necessary to agree freely to substantial overtime at the outset so as to meet immediate difficulties and afford time, without holding up urgent supplies, for