

stars, though I showed everyone a map of the positions of possible visible objects, no one re-

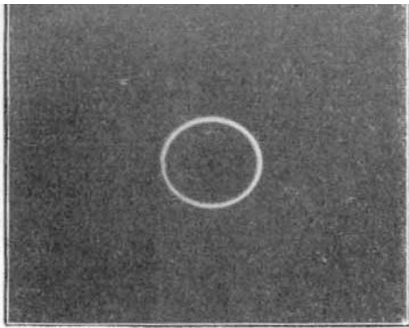


FIG. 3.—The eclipse just before the mid-phase of annularity.

corded the appearance of any. At Sidmouth I have been able to see Venus easily in the day-

time by looking along a telescope which was pointing to its position in the sky, but I could not pick it up without such help. During the eclipse I looked specially for it, but failed to see it; this may have been due to the haze referred to above. While we had no thermometer to record the temperature, the chilliness was so pronounced that everyone noticed it; further, there was no wind during the first phases, but before annularity was reached there was a distinct breeze blowing, which died away before the later phases ended.

It may be added in conclusion that this annular eclipse was not nearly so striking as that which I observed from the outskirts of Paris in April, 1912, when the moon at the greatest phase of annularity almost, but not completely, covered the sun, making the bright ring appear like a circle of irregularly placed pearls.

### The Royal Academy.

SCIENCE and engineering have become closely allied, and it is therefore of interest to note the prominence given in this year's Academy to engineering subjects; in many cases, not merely engineering features as an incident in a landscape or in a pictorial setting, but the work of the engineer shown for its own sake. Thus amongst unexpected subjects we find the interior of a garage with parts of a dissected motor-car in the foreground (262), and a bridge under construction (84). Of the same type is 654, showing railway sidings and factory chimneys with, it is true, cathedral towers in the background scarcely discernible through the smoke. The scientific basis of engineering is not far from the surface in "The Ages Meet" (156), where Mr. Stanhope Forbes shows the welding together of tramway rails by the oxy-acetylene process. The setting of the picture is the Embankment at the foot of Cleopatra's Needle. It was a happy idea of the artist to bring into juxtaposition the two human achievements—the modern welding of the steel rails in the tramway track, and the great stone column of antiquity. The task of raising this to a vertical position with the primitive devices available in those days must have been a feat in comparison with which our modern building operations, with their electric cranes and other labour-saving devices, appear but child's-play. As industrial engineering is given such prominence in this year's exhibition, it will be but one further step forward, one is tempted to think, for the laboratories of scientific workers and their cherished apparatus to be accepted as fit subjects for the work of future exhibitors at Burlington House.

This day has not yet come, and the scientific critic has for the present to confine his attention to the many aspects of Nature which are set forth from year to year in such countless profusion. The proportion of landscape scenes and Nature-studies which are really true to life seems ever to

remain a small one, and leads to speculation as to whether the cause lies in a lack of desire or a lack of power on the part of artists to give expression to the truth. There is, and probably always will be, a school which frankly cares not for the accurate representation of Nature; but there are other artists who seem to aim at reality without achieving their object, and the failure is more marked in some directions than in others. Thus the post-impressionist dog and the post-impressionist cloud may be equally obviously unreal; but in the other school the artist who sets out to paint a dog is apparently more likely to succeed than the artist who takes clouds for his theme. Such is the conclusion reached from an inspection of the exhibits at the Academy. Miss Hordern's miniature of a terrier (Bailey, 741) is excellent; so is the more ambitious painting by Edmond Brock (259); but "Rolling Clouds" (616) as an attempt at a cloud study is a failure, both in the colouring and in the form of the clouds. J. Farquharson, who is always at home in snow scenes, gives in 93 a delightful picture with snow on the ground and slanting sunshine among the pines which leaves open only one point for criticism. The moon, though apparently full, is above the horizon at the same time as the sun. The eye is not very sensitive to determining the fullness of the moon, and perhaps this would be the author's explanation, though it seems unnecessary so carefully to direct attention to the point by means of the title, "The Moon is up and yet it is not Night."

If Julius Olsson could refrain from such a free use of brilliant colours in strong contrast with one another his seascapes would be immensely improved. Several examples of these glaring colours are shown this year. There is one exception, "Silver Glitter" (458), where the artist has used more restraint with a marked improvement in effect. Mr. Mark Fisher, in his

two small works, shows something of the same defect, the skies containing a mosaic of colours; but, viewed at a distance, these blend, and the effect becomes much improved, particularly in the evening sky of 440. "The Ever Blue Pool" (276) is well named. The reflections of yellow sand dunes and of the curious red scrub growing upon them alike appear in its waters to be blue. Sand dunes are shown in several pictures, in most cases without much success, but a notable exception is found in "The Bay of Aberdovey" (309, Leader). In "Third Year Pollards" (269) Mr. Bertram Priestman has missed an opportunity of indicating the really remarkably rapid growth which occurs in the first year after a pollard willow has been cut. The trees in the picture show no great

growth for three years, and have a somewhat hard and unnatural look.

It is not to be expected that men of science will be numerous represented among the portraits in the Academy when there is so wide a choice open among civic authorities, well-known soldiers, and other men high in public esteem. Scientific visitors may this year take pleasure in noting that two fellows of the Royal Society are included amongst the portraits—that veteran man of science and professor of engineering, Dr. Unwin (242), and Sir Napier Shaw (348). Meteorologists may feel proud that their science is represented by the president of the International Meteorological Committee, than whom assuredly no better representative could be found. J. S. D.

### Obituary.

MR. BERTRAM BLOUNT.

ON April 9 chemistry suffered a loss in the death of Mr. Bertram Blount at the comparatively early age of fifty-four. Never robust, his health had been poor for the past few years; he appeared to be exhausted by his successful struggle in 1915 to bring cotton within the list of contraband goods; for, wonderful as it may seem, it was no light task to convince the Government of the necessity for the step, even with such weighty aid as that of Sir William Ramsay. But of nervous energy Blount had a remarkable store; his staying-power was the admiration of those who knew him as an early cyclist, and later as a pioneer automobilist.

After a few years at King's College School, Blount entered the chemical laboratory of the college, where the foundation of his skill as an analyst was laid by the then professor, C. L. Bloxam. At the age of nineteen he accepted service as an assistant to W. H. Stanger, a consulting engineer to the Crown Agents for the Colonies. His talent did not allow him to remain a subordinate for long; Stanger's practice soon developed to include that of consulting chemist, with Blount as partner. On Stanger's death a few years later Blount continued practice on his own account,

and rapidly became a prosperous consultant, the chemistry of cement being his chief subject. His quickness in grasping the meaning of a problem and his undaunted perseverance in attacking it fitted him to be a researcher. His clients' interests, however, left him little time for investigation, so that his contributions to purely scientific literature are limited to a few papers on cement and on minor analytical problems; recently, in conjunction with J. H. Sequeira, he investigated the origin of the colour of Blue John.

Blount was an excellent writer and talker, his style being clear and incisive in both cases. His more permanent writings are "Chemistry for Engineers and Manufacturers," in conjunction with A. G. Bloxam; a "Practical Electrochemistry"; and a recent monograph on "Cement," in conjunction with W. H. Woodcock and H. J. Gillett. He also contributed the articles on cement in the "Encyclopædia Britannica" and in Thorpe's "Dictionary of Applied Chemistry."

WE regret to record the death, on April 21, at seventy-nine years of age, of DR. E. J. MILLS, F.R.S., emeritus professor of technical chemistry in the Royal Technical College, Glasgow.

### Notes.

THE observatory founded in 1913 by Sir Norman Lockyer and Lt.-Col. F. K. McClean on Salcombe Hill, above Sidmouth, is henceforth to be called "The Norman Lockyer Observatory." It will thus form a memorial to the scientific pioneer who was described by Dr. Deslandres, past-president of the Paris Academy of Sciences, in our columns as "one of the greatest astronomers of all time." It is proposed to render the memorial more complete by placing in the observatory a portrait of Sir Norman Lockyer, in the shape of a medallion, to be executed by Sir Hamo Thornycroft, R.A. As there are, no doubt, many persons who will value the opportunity of joining in this tribute, the council of the Observatory Corporation has

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decided not to restrict to a few friends participation in defraying the cost of the medallion, but to invite contributions of any amount from all who may wish to express appreciation of Sir Norman's astronomical work. Names of donors will be recorded in a suitable manner in the observatory. Contributions towards the cost of the medallion should be sent to the hon. secretary of the Observatory Corporation, Capt. W. N. McClean, 1 Onslow Gardens, London, S.W.7.

THE Institute of Chemistry has just issued by order of the council a memorandum prepared by the Special Purposes Committee on Fine Chemicals, Laboratory