

for his original papers on mathematics, physics and astronomy. In 1831 he was elected a fellow of the Royal Society and two years later became M.P. for Chippenham. His experiments of 1834 were the outcome of an idea which had occurred to him when sketching the scenery of Lake Como with the aid of Wollaston's camera lucida, and they resulted in the development of Talbot's first process, photogenic drawing, described to the Royal Institution by Faraday in January 1839. The guests at Laycock Abbey on June 23 were received by Miss M. T. Talbot, the inventor's granddaughter, and an address on Fox Talbot's personality was given by his grandson, Prebendary W. G. Clark-Maxwell. Other addresses were given by Mr. H. Lambert, of Bath, and Mr. A. J. Bull, president of the Royal Photographic Society. A large exhibition of Fox Talbot's early apparatus and of his negatives and prints was arranged in the gallery and among these was probably the earliest existing photograph, a window in Laycock Abbey.

#### Blériot's Flight Across the English Channel

To commemorate the first flight by aeroplane across the English Channel by M. Louis Blériot on July 25, 1909, twenty-five years ago, a demonstration took place at his aerodrome at Buc near Paris on June 23, which was attended by the President of the French Republic, M. Lebrun, Lord Londonderry and Sir George Clerk, the British Ambassador. The old Anzani-engined monoplane in which the flight was made was on exhibition, and in the fly-past which closed the meeting, modern French aircraft scattered flowers upon it. At the time of the flight, M. Blériot was suffering from injuries to his foot and the crutches which he was using were strapped inside the fuselage. During the afternoon, many displays took part in which a squadron of Hawker Fury fighters of the Royal Air Force joined, and in a speech Lord Londonderry said that M. Blériot found a new high road of the air, which, within the short period of six years from the first flight, was to be traversed, not by a single Englishman paying a return visit to the coast of France, but by British pilots in their thousands, flying to the help and defence of Louis Blériot's fellow countrymen.

#### Recent Acquisitions at the Natural History Museum

An important donation to the Zoological Department of the British Museum (Natural History) is a gift from the Rowland Ward Trustees of a mounted head of a female addax (*Addax nasomaculatus*) from the Sudan. An abnormal elephant tusk from Uganda has been presented by Mr. George Howard, of the Queen's Bays. This tusk is of interest as showing an early stage in the formation of the so-called 'four-tusked elephant'. Another donation of interest is that of three skulls of the so-called dwarf elephant from the Gola Forest in Sierra Leone, the gift of Sir Arnold Hodson, the Governor of Sierra Leone. These specimens would seem to substantiate the theory that this animal, known locally as the 'Sumbi', is merely the young phase of what has been termed the

'forest' elephant, which may be known by the name *Elephas africanus cyclotis*. There has been presented to the Department of Geology a large and valuable collection of type and figured specimens of rhinoceroses from the lower Tertiary beds of Baluchistan, described and figured by the donor, Mr. C. Forster Cooper; a large collection of fossil invertebrates from the United States, collected and presented by Miss Mary S. Johnston, and type specimens of three fossil fishes described by Prof. H. H. Swinnerton, and presented by him. An interesting collection of 727 pebbles, illustrating forms, origins, and materials, has been presented to the Department of Minerals by Mr. E. J. Dunn of Melbourne, who commenced collecting so long ago as 1856.

Mr. J. E. COOPER has presented his herbarium to the Department of Botany of the Museum. It contains about 2,000 sheets of well-preserved flowering plants, a large number of which are aliens. The other specimens are chiefly from the London district, including parts now built over. A collection of more than 700 plants has been made by Mr. J. E. Dandy, assistant-keeper in the Department, who accompanied an expedition to the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan organised by Mr. C. G. T. Morison to study soil-vegetation relations in an area where there is a big variation in rainfall. The area west of the Nile shows a large range between the dry north and the Nile-Congo divide in the south. Collections were made in many areas which were previously little known, and it is probable that much of interest from the point of view of geographical distribution will result, particularly from that from the high massif of Jebel Marra.

#### Fire Protection of Electric Generating Stations

In the *Electrician* of June 22 there is an interesting account of the method adopted for protecting the large power station of the Bristol Corporation at Portishead from fire, by means of carbon dioxide. The great advantage of carbon dioxide for power-house use is that it extinguishes the fire with little risk of interrupting the operation of the station. The maintenance of a continuous supply of electric power is of the greatest importance in generating stations. The installation consists of carbon dioxide cylinder batteries centralised in a special building situated about 80 feet away from the station. Main pipes connect the cylinders with control valves placed at convenient points for directing the gas in the event of fire. Entirely automatic operation is arranged only for the transformer compartments, where thermostats are filled which operate the control valve. The quantity of gas stored is such that any section protected by the system can be flooded with gas more than sufficient to extinguish any fire. The drawbacks to using chemicals having a water content in rooms containing live electric wires are well known. In the event of fire arising in an alternator, there is an initial discharge of gas from ten cylinders. As the rotor continues to revolve for about half an hour before it comes to rest, the initial discharge is liable to be dispersed and so the gas concentration might