

account of the properties of the deuterioammonias, NDH_3 , ND_2H and ND_3 , is given.

Experiments on the hydrolysis of palmityl chloride and the enzymic hydrolysis of triolein, on the effect of heavy water on the respiration and fermentation of yeast, on xanthin oxidase, and on the cytochrome-indophenol oxidase system, as well as on the swelling of gelatin, have been reported by Rideal, Hughes, Yudkin and Kemp (*J. Chem. Soc.*, 1105; 1934). The results with yeast confirm the result found by Pascu that heavy water possesses toxic properties. No effect on the rate of hydrolysis of palmityl chloride or triolein was found, nor on the activity of xanthin oxidase or cytochrome-indophenol oxidase. The effect on the swelling of gelatin on replacing water by heavy water up to 90 per cent deuterium content was inappreciable.

University and Educational Intelligence

THE handbook of lectures and classes for teachers arranged by the London County Council for the session 1934-35 has recently been issued. Courses are being arranged in most branches of education, and will be given at various centres in London. Copies of the handbook and further information can be obtained from the Education Officer, The County Hall, Westminster Bridge, London, S.E.1.

DR. H. W. CHASE, Chancellor of the University of New York, spoke in his inaugural address on June 13 about the freedom of the individual as a condition of the advance of civilisation—a subject on which confessions of faith have been proclaimed on many occasions of late in American university circles, especially since the advent of the Hitler regime in Germany and the consequent eclipse of *Lehrfreiheit*. While insisting on the necessity for freedom in universities, Dr. Chase reminded his hearers of their obligation to maintain the scientific temper, especially in the fields of the social sciences, now attracting the labour of so many research workers. The address is reproduced in *School and Society* of June 23.

THE Advanced Studies Committee of the University of Oxford has recently published a collection of abstracts of dissertations for the degree of Ph.D. It is vol. 6 of a series of such abstracts and covers the period October 1932-December 1933. Since the institution of this degree in British universities in 1917, there has been no little uncertainty and controversy as to what it does and should imply, and its standard in relation to other post-graduate degrees; and the matter was three years ago considered of such importance and general interest that it was selected as one of the subjects for discussion at the Fourth Congress of the Universities of the Empire. These Oxford abstracts are full enough to give in many cases a fair indication of the standard of the candidate's work, their average length being about two thousand words. They are grouped under the faculty headings: physical sciences (27), biological sciences (3), modern history (6), medieval and modern languages (5), theology (2), *lit. hum.* (1), oriental languages (1) and social studies (1). Several are of wide general interest, notably a study by D. M. Eastwood of Somerville of "The Revival of Pascal in France".

Science News a Century Ago

British Association at Edinburgh

The Edinburgh meeting of the British Association was held on September 8-15, 1834. In the *Analyst* (London) it was stated that a dinner was held on the opening day at 5 p.m., attended by 350 persons, with Sedgwick as chairman. He proposed the health of M. Arago, the Astronomer Royal of France. In reply, "M. Arago dwelt on the advantages that must result from the union of the minds of Europe; he regarded it as the pledge of the peace of the world because intellectual supremacy daily acquires more direct power over the affairs of nations, and when the intellectual rulers are banded in friendship the nations subject to this influence cannot be forced into hostility". These sentiments, we read, produced considerable impression. Following the dinner, the inaugural opening of the meeting took place elsewhere, Sir Thomas Brisbane presiding.

The business of the meeting was dealt with by six sections: (1) Mathematics and Physics; (2) Chemistry and Mineralogy; (3) Geography and Geology; (4) Anatomy and Medicine; (5) Natural History; and (6) Statistics.

The subjects discussed in the Section of Mathematics and Physics ranged from capillary attraction, meteorology, magnetism and optics to engineering. Sir David Brewster described some experiments on reflection from crystals, Rennie submitted a report on hydraulics, and Scott Russell dealt with his observations of the traction of boats in canals. The chair in the Section of Chemistry and Mineralogy was taken by Hope, who was occasionally relieved by Dalton. In this Section there was a discussion on chemical notation, while Daubeny described experiments on thermal waters and the heating power of fuels, and Kemp dealt with the liquefaction of gases. Among those who contributed to the proceedings of the Section of Geology was Agassiz.

The Lord Provost awarded diplomas of the freedom of the City to M. Arago, Dr. John Dalton, and Dr. Robert Brown. Evening lectures were given by Dr. Lardner on Babbage's calculating machine; by Prof. Buckland on fossil reptiles; and by Prof. Whewell on phenomena connected with the tides.

Edinburgh as a Meeting Place

The secretaries for the Edinburgh meeting were Robison and J. D. Forbes. It was largely due to Forbes that the Association met at Edinburgh. A year previous he had written to Sir Thomas Brisbane and to Murchison advocating the claims of Edinburgh as opposed to those of Dublin, Bristol and Liverpool, and in his letter to Murchison he said: "Then as to Bristol, the idea is a new one. Liverpool was spoken of, but as far as I recollect, not the other, nor do I think it a good position. But putting this out of the question, what I object to is your calling Edinburgh a University town, and therefore that it ought not to follow Cambridge. This is quite a mistake. The University gives no character to Edinburgh, and I fear will give little to the meeting. You must be perfectly aware that it is not an academical place, and that the University has nothing to offer. It has no status, no funds, no power. In short, you must never think of the University when you come here, nor compare it in the remotest degree with Oxford and Cambridge. . . ."