

others, and is most pronounced in the mountain and south central States and least in New England and middle Atlantic States, is attributed to the following influences: financial aid for students from the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, the difficulty of finding employment for young people leaving school, improved economic conditions in some parts of the country and the persistent faith of parents in the value of higher education. 'Liberal arts' continues to be the most popular choice of entering students, although its percentage (72) of the total entries was slightly lower in 1934 than in the preceding year. Some striking increases in the entries into the various professional schools were: 48 per cent in agriculture, 27.5 per cent in commerce and business administration and 20.5 per cent in engineering. Another statistical article in the same issue directs attention to the fact that one tenth of the expenditure of Yale University last year was on assistance to students in need of financial aid.

Science News a Century Ago

Resumption of Work on the Thames Tunnel

The construction of Brunel's tunnel beneath the Thames from Rotherhithe to Wapping began in 1825, had been brought to a premature close in 1828, and for nearly seven years work was at a standstill. In 1834, however, a "Tunnel Club" was formed, principally by fellows of the Royal Society, and successful efforts were made to secure assistance from the Government for the completion of the tunnel. At a meeting of the shareholders held on March 3, 1835, in the City of London Tavern, the chairman announced that £247,000 in exchequer bills was to be advanced on the security of the property. He said that "the Company were much indebted to the late Government, as well indeed as to the present, for this aid. Great credit was due to all those who had advocated the grant of money, and among those who had formed the deputation to the Government were men of all parties. It had indeed, been the wish of all persons, at home and abroad, that this splendid work should be completed, and foreigners considered it a national disgrace that it should have been allowed to remain seven years without an attempt being made to complete it. The time, however, was not far distant when it was confidently believed this magnificent work would be completed." At the same meeting, Brunel made a report in which he said that on February 4 "the water-ways, which had been closed for several years were reopened, as a preparatory step for entering the shield. It was quite satisfactory to find that the infiltrations are very inconsiderable, and are just the same as they were before". The tunnel was opened to the public on March 25, 1843.

Bessel's New Method of Lunar Distances

An advertisement in *The Times* of March 8, 1835, announced: "This day is published, 8vo., 5s., BESSEL'S NEW METHOD OF LUNAR DISTANCES—Distances of the Sun and the four planets Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn, from the Moon, calculated according to Mr. Bessel's method, together with their places for every day in the year 1835; to which is added, an Ephemeris of the Moon calculated for every third hour of mean Greenwich time upon M. Damoiseau's Tables; the culmination of the Moon for every day in 1835 for the Altona meridian,

with the auxiliary quantities to reduce it to other meridians; and Tables for finding the Latitude by the Pole Star for 1835, calculated under the direction of H. C. Schumacher. John Murray, Albemarle St."

Sir Robert Peel and Mrs. Somerville

After offering a Civil List Pension to Airy, Sir Robert Peel wrote in March 1835 to Mrs. Somerville, saying, "In advising the Crown in respect of civil pensions, I have acted equally with a sense of public duty and on the impulse of my own private feelings in recognising among the first claims on the Royal favour those which are deserved from eminence in science and literature. . . . In reviewing such claims, it is impossible that I can overlook those which you have established by the successful prosecution of studies of the highest order, both from the importance of the objects to which they relate, and from the faculties and acquirements which they demand. . . . I am enabled to advise His Majesty to grant to you a pension on the civil list of two hundred pounds per annum; and if that provision will enable you to pursue your labours with less of anxiety, either as to the present or the future, I shall only be fulfilling a public duty, and not imposing upon you the slightest obligation, by availing myself of your permission to submit such a recommendation to the King". The pension was conferred on Mrs. Somerville and later, when Lord John Russell was Prime Minister, it was increased to £300 a year.

Death of Thomas Drummond

Early in March 1835, Thomas Drummond, the botanical collector, died at Havana, after spending ten years collecting in North America. The younger brother of James Drummond (1784?–1863) who investigated the botany of Western Australia, Thomas Drummond began life as a nurseryman in Forfar, but became known to botanists by distributing sets of mosses. In 1825 he was selected as assistant naturalist to Dr. (afterwards Sir John) Richardson in Sir John Franklin's second land expedition in connexion with the discovery of a North-West Passage. He accompanied the expedition westward by the Hudson and Lakes Ontario and Winnipeg to the Mackenzie River, but quitted the main party at the Rocky Mountains. His subsequent botanical expeditions took him on foot across the Allegheny Mountains to St. Louis, to New Orleans and to Texas. At Velasco he was attacked by cholera but was afterwards able to continue his excursions. He finally embarked for Havana on February 9, 1835. The plants he sent home were described by Sir William Hooker in his "Flora Boreali Americana", his "Journal of Botany" and in the "Companion to the Botanical Magazine".

Objects for the Microscope

In the *Records of General Science* of March 1835 under the heading "Scientific Intelligence", it is stated that "Mr. Andrew Pritchard, Pickett Street, Strand, has just published a useful little work for such persons as take an interest in examining the beauties of the minute works of nature. It consists of a list of 2000 microscopic objects, and is intended to serve as a guide for selecting and labelling subjects of natural history, botany and mineralogy. Some good observations are prefixed in reference to mounting microscopical subjects, with remarks on the circulation of animals and plants."