

welcomed by the Belgian Minister of Education. Sir Eric Maclagan, director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, then gave his presidential address on "The Future of Museums". The increasing tendency in Great Britain for private collections to become absorbed into the public museums of the country, and the continued growth of the latter, has created, he said, a very serious problem, since ultimately the limit is reached beyond which expansion is practically impossible. Those in charge of museums must therefore become more and more selective in the choice of material. The principle whereby the contents of a museum are divided into public collections, exhibited with great care, and study collections available to students, is an ideal one, but it is practically impossible to adapt existing buildings to such a purpose. Another method of limitation, which could be applied to smaller museums, is that of specialisation, whereby individual museums would carry some groups of exhibits as near completion as possible. Museum federations offer opportunities to promote this by means of exchanges.

Above all, Sir Eric said, those in charge of museums should look forward and regulate their own activities with a view to those of their successors. If anything is to emerge unscathed from our troubled times, museums have a higher 'survival value' than almost any other contemporary institution.

The address was followed by a paper from Prof. Jean Capart, *conservateur en chef* of the Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, on "The Museum Spirit", which is, he said, to restore the voice to the dead. The scientific aspect of museum work is only a beginning; truth must not remain the personal benefit of the scholar, but must be widely distributed.

In the afternoon there were organised tours of the various departments of the Royal Museums of Art and History in Brussels, where in the evening a reception was held.

On the following day, Prof. F. Demanet, of the Musée Royal d'Histoire Naturelle, opened a discussion on "What is the best way of forming a palaeontological collection?" The answer is, he believes, by means of regional investigations carried out by specialists, who would note every fact throwing light on the stratigraphy, palaeobiology and ecology of the specimens collected. The collection of specimens should, in fact, become a science of observation. After this subject had been discussed by Drs. D. A. Allan and J. W. Jackson, of the Liverpool and Manchester Museums respectively, Dr. W. T. Calman, of the British Museum (Natural History), gave an illuminating account of the planning of the new Whale Room at that Museum, and Mr. K. de B. Codrington rounded off the morning by a scholarly and witty paper on "The Making of Museums".

The afternoon was kept free for visits to the Museums of Fine Arts and of Natural History (the latter remarkable for its fossil vertebrates), and in the evening members were the guests of Burgomaster Max at the Hôtel de Ville.

On Wednesday, July 3, the Museums Association was privileged to attend the centenary celebrations of the Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, at which Their Majesties the King and Queen of the Belgians were present. After lunch, a visit to the Congo Museum at Tervueren showed how admirably a single Museum could cover all aspects of the Belgian Congo—its history, natural history, economic resources, ethnography and art—and also provided an

enjoyable excursion through the Forêt des Soignes. The annual dinner was held in the evening.

The meetings on Thursday, July 4, took place at the International Exhibition at Brussels. After Mr. P. Dikaïos had given an account of the reorganisation of the archaeological museum at Nicosia, Cyprus, and Dr. H. J. Plenderleith, of the British Museum, had discussed the application of scientific research to the study of works of art—in which he pointed out that the scientific specialist needs a knowledge of painting if he would avoid errors when working in this field—visits were paid to the magnificent collection of "Art Ancien" and to the other attractions, scientific, artistic and popular, of the Brussels Exhibition.

Friday and Saturday mornings were devoted to excursions to Antwerp, with its unique Museum of Printing, the Musée Plantin-Moretus, and to Bruges, where the effective design of the new municipal museum was greatly admired.

During the Conference, meetings were very well attended, in spite of the many counter-attractions of Brussels, of its museums, and of the Exhibition, and at the end of the week those who took part returned to England agreed that the decision to meet abroad had been fully justified by the success of the meeting.

The next annual conference of the Association will be held at the Leeds City Museum and Art Gallery, in July, 1936.

Educational Topics and Events

BELFAST.—At the graduation ceremony on July 10, honorary degrees were conferred upon, among others, Prof. T. G. Moorhead, regius professor of physic, Trinity College, Dublin; Dr. T. Carnwath, senior medical officer, Ministry of Health; Major-General W. P. Macarthur, Deputy Director-General, Army Medical Services; and the degree of D.Sc. was conferred on J. B. Parke for work on the viscosity of emulsions.

DUBLIN.—On July 5 the University of Dublin conferred the following honorary degrees: D.Sc.—Prof. G. T. Morgan, director of the Chemical Research Laboratory at Teddington. Litt.D.—Sir Frederic Kenyon, formerly director of the British Museum. M.D.—Prof. T. H. Milroy, professor of physiology in Queen's University, Belfast, and Sir Norman Walker, direct representative for Scotland on the General Medical Council.

LIVERPOOL.—At a meeting of the Council on July 9, Mr. Thomas Bertrand Abell, professor of naval architecture and dean of the Faculty of Engineering, was appointed pro-vice-chancellor of the University for the session 1935–36. Prof. Abell, who has occupied the chair of naval architecture since 1914, had a distinguished career at the Royal Naval College, Devonport, and has held various appointments under the Admiralty, at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich, and the Royal Naval War College, Portsmouth. During the War he was assistant director of designs to the Admiralty and Ministry of Shipping and was awarded the O.B.E. for his War services.

The Council has also appointed Mr. J. F. Craig to the William Prescott chair of the care of animals as from October next. Mr. Craig has been on the staff of the Veterinary College of Ireland since 1903, having succeeded to the position of principal in 1918.

He has been president of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and is now president of the National Veterinary Medical Association of Great Britain and Ireland. Mr. Craig has been responsible for important researches into diseases of animals in the Irish Free State and has contributed extensively to scientific literature.

SHEFFIELD.—The following appointments have been made: Mr. J. MacD. Croll, to be lecturer in bacteriology; Mr. Mansergh Shaw, to be assistant lecturer in mechanical engineering; Dr. Edward S. Duthie, to be a demonstrator in pathology.

To universities, and the causes they stand for, the series of special university supplements now in course of publication by *Time and Tide* are doing a really valuable service. The third of the series, published with the issue of April 27 under the heading "More and More of Less and Less", elucidates a number of problems, all of first-rate importance, associated with the growth of specialisation in universities. Mr. R. H. S. Crossman's article on "The Problem in Philosophy" sketches with firm lines the situation confronting the modern student of philosophy. Lacking a comprehensive grasp, such as he cannot hope to compass, of the structure of modern scientific thinking, he tends to subside into the rut of history of philosophy on traditional lines or to give himself up to the exploration of the mazes of logistics. A better way is, however, open to him, pending the discovery of means whereby he may be equipped for holding converse with mathematical and physical scientific workers on their own ground: the study of politics and ethics, not *in vacuo* but in relation to contemporary issues. Mr. C. M. Bowra, discussing science and the humanities as studied in the older universities, suggests, *inter alia*, the institution of a course analogous to Oxford's "Modern Greats" combining with philosophy, physics or biology or chemistry. Three other articles deal mainly with conditions of study, in some respects deplorable, in the modern English universities: by Prof. E. R. Dodds on "Departmentalism and Humane Culture", Mr. Pilley on "The Universities and Science" and Mr. Mansell Jones on "'Facts and Skills' or Education". Lastly comes a study of the situation at Durham. A brief retrospect of the salient features of the history of this university is made to illustrate causes and effects of specialisation, and the recent Royal Commission's recommendations are used to point a moral and adorn a tale.

Science News a Century Ago

Progress of Colonel Chesney's Expedition

IN his expedition to the Euphrates in connexion with the project of shortening the passage to India by means of steam navigation, Colonel Chesney had met with some opposition from the Pasha of Egypt, who, however, had given way, and in a letter from "Port William" on the upper Euphrates, dated July 21, 1835, Chesney remarked, "We arrived here four days ago, and the spot where we are at work, has been named as above, in honour of our earliest patron, the King. We are making efforts of no common kind to get afloat, so as to reach Bussora in time to sail from thence upwards, about the 30th of September".

"I put up the little steamer at the Orontes as a sort of hint, that we did not mean to be stopped, but his Highness gave way, and instead of making our steamer take the gear up to Antioch, we broke her into eight sections, and placed them on keelsons and other pieces of timber, with wheels underneath to make their way by land. . . ."

"I do not expect to finish the steamer before we sail downwards, but she will probably be decked and in working trim, as a shell, in which we must rough it as is done here where there are a couple of habitable rooms, some sheds covered with branches, and tents . . . and the whole enclosed by a parapet and ditch, which were thrown up and just completed by one of the officers. . . ."

The Horticultural Society

ON July 21, 1835, a paper was read to the Horticultural Society, by J. Disney, "On the Preservation of the Golden Harvey Apple," a variety so well known for its excellence and general utility that a really good plan for prolonging the period of its maturity was a desideratum.

It was announced that the annual gold medal about to be given by Lord Grey of Groby, for the finest orchideous plants exhibited, had been adjudged to Mr. James Bruce, gardener to Boyd Miller, Esq., of Mitcham, for an extremely fine plant of *Oncidium ciliatum* with forty-four flowers in its panicle which was shown at the meeting on November 4, 1834 (*Athenæum*).

Lyell and the Continental Geologists

WRITING from Paris to Sedgwick on July 23, 1835, Lyell said: "I found here Von Buch, E. de Beaumont, Dufresnoy, Constant Prévost, Virlet, Boué, Alex Brogniart, and have had much talk with all of them, and some warm discussions with Von Buch and de Beaumont. Of the first, I must say that I found much to like in him. As I had handled some of his opinions very roughly, and as he is too much accustomed perhaps to have unbounded deference paid to him by most of his own countrymen, and by no one more so than E. de Beaumont, I had no right to expect a very cordial reception, but he met me with great frankness, and at once set me at ease by vehemently protesting against my numerous and crying heresies, none of which, not even the elevation crater theory, seems to have excited so much honest indignation as my recent attempt to convey some of the huge Scandinavian blocks to their present destination by means of ice. . . ."

James Bowman Lindsay's Electric Light Experiments

THE *Dundee Advertiser* on July 31, 1835, said: "Mr. Lindsay, a teacher in town, formerly lecturer to the Watt Institute, succeeded on the evening of Saturday, July 25, in obtaining a constant electric light. It is upwards of two years since he turned his attention to this subject, but much of that time has been devoted to other avocations. The light in beauty, surpasses all others, has no smell, emits no smoke, is incapable of explosion, and not requiring air for combustion can be kept in sealed glass jars. It ignites without the aid of a taper, and seems peculiarly calculated for flax houses, spinning mills, and other places containing combustible materials. It can be sent to any convenient distance, and the apparatus for producing it can be contained in a common chest".