

LONDON.—The following appointments have been made: Dr. James Whillis, since 1923 lecturer in anatomy at the College of Medicine, Newcastle-on-Tyne, to be reader in anatomy (Guy's Hospital Medical School) as from October 1; Dr. Jerzy Neyman, since 1927 lecturer in mathematical statistics at the Central College of Agriculture, Warsaw, and also since 1928 head of the Biometric Laboratory, Nencki Institute, Warsaw, to be reader in statistics (University College) as from October 1.

The title of professor of statistics in the University has been conferred on Dr. E. S. Pearson, in respect of the post held by him at University College.

The Sir George Jessel studentship in mathematics for 1935 has been awarded to Mr. A. E. Chapman, of University College.

Mr. E. P. Stibbe, senior demonstrator of anatomy at the London Hospital Medical College, has been appointed to the University readership in anatomy tenable at King's College from October 1.

PROF. A. NORMAN SHAW has been appointed head of the Physics Department and director of the Macdonald Physics Laboratories at McGill University, Montreal, in succession to Prof. A. S. Eve, who has retired.

A 'SABBATICAL YEAR' for university teachers is a notion that has obviously much to recommend it, but it has failed hitherto to gain effective acceptance in Great Britain as a feature of university policy. In a statement recently submitted on behalf of the Association of University Teachers to the University Grants Committee, it has been urged as a "highly desirable reform" and in an article by Mr. G. F. H. Harker, of University College, Cardiff, published in the April issue of the *Universities Review*, the case for it is argued with considerable force. The writer quotes Bertrand Russell's "Every university teacher ought to have one year in every seven to be spent in foreign universities . . ." and points to the spectacular rise of America to the front rank in so many fundamental branches of thought and action as attributable in some measure to American universities encouraging the members of their teaching staffs to do this very thing. English universities are more or less autonomous, and are proud of the fact, but they suffer, especially the smaller ones, from a correlative tendency to isolation. During vacations the average university teacher, except for spells of necessary relaxation, divides his time between private work for supplementing his income and the preparation of lecture courses for the ensuing session. Moreover, only a lengthy stay abroad, and that not during vacations, can give any real insight into universities in another country.

THE Tennessee Valley Authority has provided for the world an object lesson in the operation of a planned economy without recourse to compulsion. The salient features of this vast undertaking are already widely known in Great Britain thanks to the recent publication in *The Times* of special articles by Prof. Julian Huxley. An account of its more specifically educational aspects is given in *School Life of March* under the heading "A New Frontier in Education". The authority assumes towards its labour force responsibilities more like those of the head of a family than the mere cash nexus of the paymaster. It charges itself with the organisation of an environment

suitable for a civilised life. In its various training programmes it has grappled successfully with the difficulties of providing ample facilities for instruction for employees without disorganising the work on which they are engaged. The normal working hours are 5½ hours a day for six days a week. For the more talented workers opportunity is provided for changing every five weeks from one to another of ten different types of work. The authority has created a civil service of its own in which appointments are, it is stated, made on the basis of merit only. This would-be Happy Valley covers 40,000 square miles and some six million people are or will be affected.

Science News a Century Ago

Death of Gilbert Thomas Burnett

ON July 27, 1835, at the early age of thirty-five years, Gilbert Thomas Burnett, the first professor of botany in King's College, London, died, worn out by "multiplied literary, lecturing and professional labours". The son of a London surgeon and born on April 15, 1800, Burnett began the study of medicine at fifteen years of age, and, after commencing practice as a surgeon, gave lectures on medical and general botany at the Great Windmill Street School of Medicine. He frequently lectured at the Royal Institution, gave a course at St. George's Hospital, and in 1831, on the opening of King's College, was appointed to the chair of botany. At the time of his death he was also professor of botany to the Apothecaries' Society. His "Outlines of Botany" in two volumes appeared shortly after his death, while a large series of "Illustrations of Useful Plants Employed in the Arts and Medicine", which was published during 1840-49 with drawings by his sister, contained text chiefly by Burnett himself.

J. D. Forbes in the Pyrenees

ANOTHER entry from the "Journal" of Forbes during his visit to the Pyrenees in 1835, dated July 29, said: "I left Luz on foot at half-past five, for Gavarnie. . . . Beyond Gèdre, where we breakfasted, I found in accordance with the accurate account of Charpentier, magnificent crystallised limestone in the granite: the granite here, like that of Héas, is altogether a strange rock, and often passes into a slaty structure, becoming gneiss, or mica slate, besides enclosing masses of these rocks, and forming an absolute breccia. But where crystalline, it seems to me never stratified; the fissures and the flat surfaces they leave can never be traced to any distance, and when they disappear, are as often at right angles to the former as not. The appearance of vertical stratification is often caused by the rain courses, as in the valley of the Reuss at St. Gothard, to some parts of which this valley has a great resemblance. . . ."

Berzelius in Paris

ON July 31, 1835, *The Times* announced that "The celebrated chymist M. de Berzelius has just arrived in Paris. He is accompanied by one of his former pupils M. Dahestaeno, professor of chymistry at Stockholm. It is the intention of these two savans to remain in Paris until the beginning of September, when they will set out for Germany, to be present at the meeting of the naturalists at Bonn."