Educational Topics and Events

CAMBRIDGE.—Dr. J. A. Ryle has been appointed regius professor of physic in succession to Sir. W. Langdon Brown, who retired on September 30.

At Trinity College, H. Cary Gilson, N. M. V. Rothschild and H. W. Melville have been elected to fellowships.

At Pembroke College, Dr. G. B. B. M. Sutherland has been elected to a fellowship and appointed lecturer and director of studies in physical sciences.

GLASGOW.—The King has been pleased to approve the appointment of Dr. Edward Hindle to be regius professor of zoology in the University of Glasgow, in succession to Prof. John Graham Kerr, who has resigned.

OXFORD.—Prof. H. S. Jennings, professor of zoology and director of the zoological laboratories at Johns Hopkins University since 1910, has succeeded Dr. A. H. Compton of Chicago as George Eastman visiting professor and fellow of Balliol College. Prof. Jennings is an authority on the behaviour of lower organisms and on genetics.

Prof. G. H. Hardy of Cambridge has been elected an honorary fellow of New College, of which for many years he was a fellow.

Mr. B. V. Rollin (in physics) and Mr. G. J. Whitrow (in mathematics) have been elected to Harmsworth senior scholarships at Merton College.

Science News a Century Ago

H.M.S. *Beagle* Crosses the Pacific

UNDER the date October 20, 1835, Darwin records: "The survey of the Galapagos Archipelago being concluded, we steered towards Tahiti and commenced our long passage of 3,200 miles". He says that, during the voyage, "We passed through the Low or Dangerous Archipelago, and saw several of those most curious rings of coral land, just rising above the water's edge, which have been called Lagoon Islands. A long and brilliantly-white beach is capped by a margin of green vegetation; and the strip looking either way, rapidly narrows away in the distance, and sinks beneath the horizon. From the mast-head a wide expanse of smooth water can be seen within the ring. These low hollow coral islands bear no proportion to the vast ocean out of which they abruptly rise; and it seems wonderful, that such weak invaders are not overwhelmed by the all-powerful and never-tiring waves of that great sea, miscalled the Pacific."

The Horticultural Society

A MEETING of the Horticultural Society took place on October 20, 1835, in the rooms of the Society in Regent Street. "The tables which are usually covered with a gorgeous profusion of rare and beautiful shrubs and plants," said *The Times*, "presented an unexpected wintry meagreness of appearance. The Secretary explained that the severe frosts of the previous two nights had materially interfered with the intended display, the thermometers suspended against the walls of the Society's gardens at Chiswick had, on both nights, been as low as 27 of Fahrenheit. . . . There were a few exotic plants, principally from the gardens of Mr. Rolleson, of Tooting. . . . From the Society's gardens was a stove plant of the Orchideous tribe, which was deemed a great curiosity. It was a native of Surinam and was almost unknown in this country. The flower petals were of a dark colour, and the more closely examined, the more beautiful appeared their markings. They had an agreeable fragrance, somewhat partaking of the combined odours of the moss rose and the honeysuckle. . . . From a nobleman's grounds at Catterick, in Yorkshire, had been sent a plate of the veritable old English golden pippin, as a proof that the species was not, as generally supposed, extinct."

Sir James South and Christ's Hospital Boys

THOUGH among many of his contemporaries Sir James South (1785–1867) was perhaps as well known for his litigious character as for his astronomical work at Campden Hill, a kindly act of his was the subject of a letter from "Præceptor" in *The Times* of October 22, 1835. "On Tuesday last," the writer said, "Sir James South invited 50 of the scholars of Christ's Hospital, together with the masters and officials of the establishment, to view the comet at his observatory at Kensington. The evening proving unfavourable for the purpose, Sir James devoted the time to an explanation of his various instruments of observation . . . and afterwards set his youthful auditors to give each a practical proof of his attention to what he had heard, with the results of which he expressed himself very much pleased. He then treated them with a plentiful supper, and on their departure gave them another invitation, that they might not be disappointed of their view of the comet." A second visit was paid next day, the comet was seen and Sir James South in his drawing room delivered a lecture "on the methods by which individuals, however humble, may overcome the early difficulties that may obstruct their path in the attainment of scientific knowledge. . . ."

Lyell, Agassiz and Deshayes

IN the course of a long letter to Sedgwick, Lyell on October 25, 1835, said of Agassiz: "His knowledge of natural history surprises me the more I know of him, and he has that love of imparting it, and the power of doing it with clearness, which makes one feel one is getting on, and that one has caught his enthusiasm. I feel this also strongly when in company with Deshayes, who continues steadily to cultivate his own branch, and that under somewhat discouraging circumstances. . . . As it is my wish to propose the Wollaston medal this year to Deshayes, I wish you would have a talk with Agassiz when he is with you about the matter, for I believe there is no one in London who has seen so much of Deshayes, and knows so well his acquirements and the difficulties he has over-come as Agassiz. I am sure that if we could draw Deshayes over here, he would make a grand reform in our Museums, like Agassiz, and that he would discover rich mines of hidden treasure. . . ." G. P. Deshayes (1797–1875) at this time was teaching privately and devoting his leisure to zoological and conchological studies. From 1839 until 1842 he lived in Algeria. After his return he gave private courses on geology and palæontology and in 1869 was appointed to a chair in the Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle. The Wollaston Medal of the Geological Society of London was awarded to him in 1870.