

in which organisms can live. Condensation of moisture takes place very readily on such small objects, and it is significant that the largest catches have been reported from just below the base of clouds, where saturation conditions obtain. In the like situations, multiplication of organisms may take place to such an extent as to give rise to a veritable cloud flora and perhaps to account for the many instances of rains of small organisms for which no terrestrial source has been reliably indicated. Even apart, however, from such favourable conditions, it is quite possible for micro-organisms to live, surrounded by condensation droplets, even at great heights. Many, if not most, are protected from the lethal action of ultra-violet rays by red or orange pigments which screen the living matter and also warm it by absorption of heat rays, so that they may survive anywhere below the ozone layer, even at air temperatures well below zero. All the elements necessary for nutrition may be obtained in the air in quantities sufficient for the exceedingly small weight of the aeroplankton. Formaldehyde and radioactive material are also present, and may play a part in stimulating growth.

When one considers the heavy contributions that air deposits make to the soil, even in country districts, there is seen to be no more reason for regarding the soil as the origin of the air flora than vice versa. Dust is in fact the mother substance of the soil.

Methods which will combine both qualitative and quantitative results still need to be worked out, and particular stress may be laid on the need for variety of growth-media and for prolonged incubation periods, since many aeroplankton organisms are of very delicate growth. Until we know why this is so and how such apparently delicate organisms can survive in the atmosphere, we are not likely to have a full understanding of the conditions of air-borne infection.

Educational Topics and Events

BIRMINGHAM.—Prof. Kenneth Neville Moss, professor of mining, has been elected to succeed Prof. Stiles as dean of the faculty of science.

Dr. E. L. Hirst has been appointed reader in the chemistry of natural products.

Work on the foundations of the new chemistry block has begun.

CAMBRIDGE.—At Clare College, J. D. Boyd, University demonstrator in anatomy, has been elected into a fellowship.

The governing body of Emmanuel College invites applications for a research studentship which will be awarded in July 1936. Applications must be sent to the Master, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, in time to reach him not later than June 30. Preference will be given to candidates who have already completed one, but not more than two, years of research. The studentship, which must be held at Emmanuel College, and has a maximum annual value of £150, is awarded and normally held for two years, but may be renewed for a third. The studentship is not tenable by a woman or by a graduate of the University of Cambridge.

LONDON.—Dr. Eric Boyland, since 1931 physiological chemist at the Research Institute of the Cancer Hospital, has been appointed University reader in biochemistry, and Dr. V. B. Wigglesworth, since 1926 assistant in the Department of Entomology

at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, has been appointed University reader in entomology.

OXFORD.—On November 23, Dr. R. T. Gunther in his lecture on the "Early Men of Science of Magdalen College" suggested that the natural amenities of the site may have attracted the attention of Edward Wotton and others to zoological studies, just as in the seventeenth century the foundation of the Botanic Garden on the College land stimulated an interesting group of botanists, among whom were William Browne, Stonehouse, Hooper and Drope. Cartwright, of power loom fame, Gowin Knight, maker of strong magnets, Charles Daubeny, vulcanologist, chemist and botanist, and Lord Rosse, were among the distinguished forerunners of the modern succession of eminent Waynflete professors now attached to the College.

The honorary degree of D.C.L. was conferred upon Sir Harry McGowan, chairman of Imperial Chemical Industries, Ltd., on November 23.

ST. ANDREWS.—Mr. R. C. Alexander has been appointed to the chair of surgery in the University, vacant through the death of Prof. John Anderson.

THE result of the parliamentary elections to the three seats for the Combined Scottish Universities was announced on November 25. The following were elected: Prof. J. Graham Kerr, formerly regius professor of zoology in the University of Glasgow (Unionist); Dr. G. A. Morrison, formerly headmaster of Robert Gordon's College, Aberdeen (National Liberal); and Mr. A. Noel Skelton (Unionist). The death of Mr. Skelton on November 22 will cause a by-election.

THE following scholarships, which are tenable for three or four years, will be offered by the Institution of Naval Architects for competition in 1936: *Naval Architecture: Martell*, £130 a year; *Trewent*, £125 a year; *Denny*, £75 a year. *Marine Engineering: Parsons*, £150 a year; *Yarrow*, £100 a year; *Denny*, £75 a year. The Denny scholarships are tenable for four years at the University of Glasgow only. Full particulars can be obtained from the Secretary of the Institution of Naval Architects, 2 Adam Street, Adelphi, London, W.C.2.

THE Association of University Teachers has written to the Rumanian Legation in London in reference to Prof. Pierre Constantinesco Iasi, professor of the history of art in the Faculty of Kichinev, who is stated to be undergoing trial on a charge of conspiracy against the State following his activities against war and fascism, activities which it is claimed have been carried out in a public and legal manner. The Association expresses the hope that the outcome of the trial will be such as to make it clear that the right of freedom of speech for university professors is upheld in Rumania, and quotes from a resolution adopted by its Council on December 14, 1934, in the course of which the Association affirms "the right of university teachers to the full exercise of their functions and privileges as citizens. It maintains that the public expression of opinion, within the limits of the law, on controversial matters is in no way incompatible with the position and responsibilities of a university teacher, it being understood that such expression of opinion is personal and does not commit the Institution to which he belongs."