

Educational Topics and Events

BIRMINGHAM.—In his annual report to be presented to the Court of Governors on February 20, the Vice-Chancellor (Sir Charles Grant Robertson) states that rapid progress is being made with the foundations of the new Medical School and the additional block for the Chemistry Department. The Department of Industrial Medicine and Hygiene has made a good start, and an imposing list of contributions to its upkeep from large industrial firms indicates that this new venture is receiving strong support from such bodies.

The impending retirement is announced of Prof. S. W. J. Smith from the Poynting chair of physics, and of Mr. R. C. Porter, who has been lecturer in mechanical engineering for the past thirty-five years and has been for many years in charge of the University power station.

CAMBRIDGE.—J. E. Harris, of Christ's College, has been appointed University demonstrator in the Department of Zoology.

Dr. S. Nevin has been appointed to the Pinsent-Darwin studentship.

Prof. A. Krogh, of Copenhagen, will give two lectures in the theatre of the Physiological Laboratory on March 3 and 4 at 4.30 on the following subjects: March 3, "Osmotic Regulation of Aquatic Vertebrates"; March 4, "Economy of some Animal Communities".

Prof. E. V. Appleton, Wheatstone professor of physics, King's College, London, has been appointed Jacksonian professor of natural philosophy as from October 1 next.

LONDON.—Prof. H. H. Woollard has been appointed as from October 1 to the University chair of anatomy tenable at University College. Since 1929 he has been professor of anatomy at St. Bartholomew's Hospital Medical College.

The degree of D.Sc. has been conferred on C. H. Douglas Clark, assistant lecturer in chemistry in the University of Leeds, for published work mainly on the basis of a system of classifying molecules, which enables certain molecular constants, not so far determined experimentally, to be accurately estimated, especially as described in "The Periodic Groups of Non-hydride Di-atoms" (*Trans. Farad. Soc.*, 31, 1018; 1935).

Science News a Century Ago

Economy of the Cornish Pumping Engines

A CENTURY ago the most economical steam engines were those installed in the mines of Cornwall. These pumping engines were the subject of discussion at the Institution of Civil Engineers on February 2, 16 and 23, 1836. It was then stated that the saving in fuel in the Cornish engines as compared with the Soho engines of Boulton and Watt appeared to be in the proportion of 3 to 1, so that a 1,000 tons of coal in Cornwall were made to do the same work as 3,000 tons in London. The paper on February 16 was by Wickstead, while that on February 23 was by Perkins, who attributed the saving to the use of a small quantity of steam generated under very great pressure in the boiler and allowing it to expand into a large space in the cylinder. There was no doubt

that advantage was obtained by expanding the steam, but many members thought the advantage over-rated. Some said that there was a difficulty in introducing high-pressure steam, as most of the influential persons in the district thought it was dangerous; while it was considered that Cornish engines could not, like Boulton and Watt's, be applied to driving various kinds of machinery.

Deshayes awarded the Wollaston Donation Fund

THE anniversary meeting of the Geological Society was held on February 19, 1836, the president, Lyell, taking the chair at one o'clock. The proceedings included the usual reports, the election of officers, an address by Lyell, and the award of the Wollaston Medal to Agassiz and of £25 from the Wollaston Donation Fund to Deshayes. In handing the donation to De la Beche, the foreign secretary, Lyell said: "I beg you will express to M. Deshayes, how highly we appreciate his services which he has already rendered to geology by his descriptions of the fossil shells of the strata above the chalk, to which he has chiefly though not exclusively devoted his attention, and we rejoice to hear that he is now engaged in the investigation of the fossil shells of the older formations."

Sale of Fossils from North America

ON February 20, 1836, the *Athenæum* recorded that "a sale, which excited considerable interest among zoologists, took place on Wednesday, at Mr. Steven's, King-street, of fossil remains of the Mastodon and Mammoth of the Ohio, and other curious specimens brought from North America. Among the extensive purchasers were the British Museum, the College of Surgeons, the Bristol Institution and Lord Cole. Some of the more remarkable lots brought high prices; for one in particular, described in the catalogue as 'The Cranium, with two perfect molar teeth, and sockets for two more; length from occiput to end of sockets of tusks, 36 inches, exclusive of portion of socket broken off; diameter across at orbit 13 inches, girth at occiput 57 inches; girth lengthways 83 inches; weight 175 lb., a grand specimen', the British Museum gave £147."

Professions and Consumption

IN a paper in the *Edinburgh Medical Journal*, January-March 1836, on the influence of professions on consumption, Dr. H. C. Lombard, of Geneva, emphasised the advantages which certain workmen might derive from a change of trade, as soon as they began to experience any symptoms of the disease. Workmen who neither had means of enjoying rest nor of changing climate, still less of devoting all their time to the care of their health, and who, if they continued to pursue their insalubrious occupation, would die of consumption, would experience the most advantageous effects from changing their occupation for one less dangerous. Thus strong robust men might assume the occupation of gardener, husbandman, bleacher, waterman, butcher, tanner, wharf-porter, etc. Those whose constitutions might be too delicate for occupations so laborious might become confectioners, cartwrights, slaters, braziers, binders, dyers, grooms, etc. They might, in short, choose one of those trades which were placed above the mean. The same advice might be given to young persons threatened with being consumptive, either from original feebleness of constitution, or from hereditary influence.