

## Educational Topics and Events

CAMBRIDGE.—Prof. A. C. Seward has declared his intention of resigning the professorship of botany on September 30.

It is proposed that the degree of Sc.D. *honoris causa* be conferred upon Prof. Ludwig Prandtl, professor of applied mechanics in the University of Göttingen.

OXFORD.—Dr. W. Baker, New College, has been appointed to an official fellowship in chemistry at the Queen's College in succession to Dr. F. D. Chattaway. Dr. Baker, who is a Ph.D. and D.Sc. of the University of Manchester, has been a lecturer and demonstrator at Oxford since 1928.

Dr. U. S. Haslam-Jones, Queen's, has been appointed to an official fellowship in mathematics at the Queen's College in succession to Mr. C. H. Thompson. Dr. Haslam-Jones won the Junior Mathematical and Senior Mathematical University scholarships and has been lecturer in mathematics in the University of Liverpool since 1927.

Dr. L. E. Sutton, Lincoln, has been appointed to a tutorial fellowship in chemistry at Magdalen College in succession to Dr. E. Hope, now a research fellow. Dr. Sutton has been a prize fellow of Magdalen since 1932 and has held a Rockefeller Foundation fellowship. He was recently awarded the Harrison Memorial prize of the Chemical Society.

D. W. Geidt, of Merton College, has been granted the degree of doctor of medicine.

An anonymous donor has given £10,000 towards the establishment of an Institute of Experimental Psychology. Dr. William Brown is to be the director. There will also be an assistant director. It is proposed to add to the endowment £500, and an annual grant of £150 for five years, from the Rockefeller benefaction for research in the social sciences. Further details are to be settled next term.

DR. L. F. BATES, reader in physics, University College, University of London, has been appointed Lancashire-Spencer professor of physics at University College, Nottingham, as from September 1.

At a meeting of the Council of University College, Southampton, on March 2, it was announced that Miss Mary Chamberlain and Miss Charlotte Chamberlain had made a gift of £20,000 for the purpose of building new physics laboratories. Other donations were also announced. The building to house the laboratories will be about a hundred feet square with a rectangular courtyard. There will be two lecture rooms and three students' laboratories, together with a library. Research rooms, workshop, power and battery rooms will be housed on the ground floor.

THE spring conference of the Geographical Association will be held at the University of Sheffield on April 17–20. In addition to a programme of lectures, there will be excursions to steel and cutlery works and a whole-day excursion to the limestone dales and the Peak district of Derbyshire. On the social side there will be a reception by the University and a dinner of the Association. Members will be accommodated so far as possible in one of the University hostels. All communications should be addressed to Miss A. Garnett, The University, Sheffield.

## Science News a Century Ago

### The Colouring Matter in Leaves and Flowers

ON March 21, 1836, Dr. Hope read a paper to the Royal Society of Edinburgh entitled "Observations and Experiments on the Coloured and Colourable Matters in the Leaves and Flowers of Plants, particularly in Reference to the Principles upon which Acids and Alkalis act in Producing Red and Yellow and Green". After some general remarks, Dr. Hope said that de Candolle had applied the term 'chromule' to the various coloured matters presented by the leaves and flowers of plants. There existed in plants however, in addition to the chromule, some matter properly destitute of colour, which became red by the action of acids and yellow or green by the action of alkalis. To this colourable matter the name 'chromogen' had been given, and the object of the paper was to show that chromogen was not an individual substance; and that there were two distinct principles, one which formed the red compound with acids, which he denominated 'erythrogen'; and another which afforded a yellow compound with alkalis, which he called 'xanthogen'.

### Gas Lighting in Ships

ON March 23, 1836, *The Times* said: "A steam-vessel is fitting in the river which is to be lighted by gas, on a plan suggested by Lieutenant Engledue, R.N.; two retorts are placed in the fires under the boilers about two hours before dark, which will supply gas sufficient to burn the whole night, lighting the cabins, engine room and masthead. This may be fitted at a trifling expense, and without the slightest danger, the whole of the apparatus being on deck."

### Faraday as a Lecturer

AMONG those who paid tribute to Faraday as a lecturer was the German historian Friedrich von Raumer (1781–1873), whose "Letters on England" were translated into English by Mrs. Sarah Austin (1793–1867), and published in 1836. On March 26, 1836, the *Athenæum*, which had already printed some of Raumer's letters, gave a review of Mrs. Austin's book and quoted the following extract: "Mr. Faraday is not only a man of profound chemical and physical science (which all Europe knows) but a very remarkable lecturer. He speaks with ease and freedom, but not with a gossipy, unequal tone, alternately inaudible and bawling, as some very learned professors do: he delivers himself with clearness, precision and ability. Moreover he speaks his language in a manner which confirmed me in a secret suspicion I had, that a great number of Englishmen speak it very badly. Why is it that French in the mouth of Mlle. Mars, German in that of Tieck, English in that of Faraday, seems a totally different language?—because they articulate, what other people swallow or chew. It is a shame that the power and harmony of simple speech (I am not now talking of eloquence, but of vowels and consonants) that the tones and inflexions which God has given to the human voice, should be so neglected and abused."

### The Wernerian Natural History Society

At a meeting of the Wernerian Natural History Society in Edinburgh held on March 26, 1836, Prof. Robert Jameson (1774–1854) exhibited a series of birds from northern India collected by Mr. Hamilton

Stirling. Speaking of British birds in general, in connexion with Indian ornithology, Prof. Jameson stated that more than one third of them occur in India, either identical with or undergoing certain slight modifications in the colour, size, etc. He particularly directed the attention of the Society to the diurnal rapacious birds and said that of the eighteen diurnal birds of prey found in this island the following striking distribution was presented, namely, in common with Europe, 3; Europe and Asia, 2; Europe, Asia and New Holland, 1; Europe, Asia, Africa and New Holland, 3; Europe, Asia and North America, 5; Europe, Asia and South America, 1; Europe and North America, 3.

#### Occultation of One Star by Another

WRITING from Bedford on March 26, 1836, to Mrs. Somerville, Admiral W. H. Smyth said: "Knowing the great interest you take in sidereal astronomy, of which so little is yet known, I trust it will not be an intrusion to tell you of a new, extraordinary and very unexpected fact, in the complete occultation of one 'fixed' star by another, under circumstances which admit of no possible doubt or equivocation.

"You are aware that I have been measuring the position and distance of the two stars  $\gamma^1$  and  $\gamma^2$  Virginis, which are both nearly of similar magnitudes, and also that they have approximated to each other very rapidly. They were very close last year, and I expected to find they had crossed each other at this apparition, but to my surprise I find they have become a fair round disc, which my highest powers will not elongate—in fact, a *single star*! I shall watch with no little interest for the reappearance of the second  $\gamma$ ."

#### Medicine in Spain

"THE medical profession in Spain, as regards its present condition, is in complete harmony with everything else—that is to say, it is in a state of revolution. Medical men belong, and with a few exceptions have always belonged to the Liberal party, and the class of *pure Physicians* consisted almost to a man of warm Constitutionals in the year 1820. By the term pure physicians we understand, in Spain, all those who belong to the universities, in contradistinction to those who belong to the colleges of surgery. When the Constitution was overthrown in 1823, the then absolute king, Ferdinand, incensed against the whole body of pure physicians, worked them all sorts of annoyance, and with much success. At last, and with the view of punishing them most effectually, he issued a decree, in which he commanded that no pure physician should be employed in the palace, the hospitals, or any establishment under government; that is to say, in no public situation whatsoever, since in Spain all establishments are more or less under the control of the government; and, to supply their places, he converted surgeons into physicians by royal order, commanded that the colleges of surgery should be of medicine also, and created a great many young men at that time in the colleges *Physician-Surgeons* (Medico-Cirujanos). . . . The present state of Spain is very adverse to the cultivation of science and literature; nobody thinks of anything but politics. Six months ago we had only four medical journals in all Spain, and at present we have only two." (*British and Foreign Medical Review*, Jan.-March, 1836.)

## Societies and Academies

### DUBLIN

Royal Irish Academy, February 24: The late R. SOUTHERN: The Turbellaria of Ireland. An annotated list of the Turbellaria found in Ireland, amounting to 103 species, based, with a few exceptions, on specimens examined in a living state by the author.

### PARIS

Academy of Sciences, February 10 (*C.R.*, 202, 445-524). RICHARD FOSSE: The synthesis of hydrocyanic acid and of formaldehyde by the oxidation of organic substances. Formaldehyde can be obtained by oxidation of various organic substances in ammoniacal solution: hydrocyanic acid may be regarded as the next stage of oxidation. N. SMIRNOFF: The distribution of  $\omega^2$  (Criterion of R. v. Mises). DANIEL DUGUÉ: The maximum of precision of the limit laws of estimations. FLORENT BUREAU: The elementary solutions of linear partial differential equations, totally elliptic. JEAN DELSARTE: The series of Schlämilch. CHARLES BLANC: Classification of the singularities of inverse functions of meromorph functions. RENÉ LEDUC and JEAN VILLEY: The problems of aviation at very high velocities. GILBERT ROUGIER: The photometric comparison of the moon and sun. The photo-electric albedo of the moon. HENRI GROULLER: The curve of light of Nova Herculis, 1934. Up to September 30, 1935, 1425 determinations of brightness have been made by 21 observers, and during the interval of 289 days there were only five days without an observation. The results are given graphically. H. LEMONDE: Isotherms of diffusion in binary mixtures. JEAN ROULLEAU: Barrier layers and photo-electricity. The photo-electric effect and rectifying effect of contact are independent of the specific resistance of the mass of cuprous oxide; both increase with the contact resistance. D. MILOSSAVLÉVITCH: The detection of high-frequency current by the condenser shunted in the grid circuit of an electronic tube. L. DUNOYER: Mirrors obtained by evaporation in a vacuum. Discussion of the various methods available for obtaining uniform deposits over a large area, with special reference to aluminium. ROGER SERVANT: A spectro-polarimeter for the extreme ultra-violet with metallic mirrors. Lenses are replaced by aluminium-coated concave mirrors. MME. RENÉE MONTAGNE and RAYMOND RICARD: Photographic photometry in the extreme ultra-violet. JEAN GRÉVY: The influence of the alkalinity of the glass on the viscosity of dilute ether-alcohol colloids. A considerable reduction in the viscosity of collodion may be produced by the alkalinity of the glass container, and in studying dilute collodion this fact necessitates special precautions. HENRI PARISELLE and FAZLOLLAH CHIRVANI: The polarimetric study of the formation of molybdosaccharic complex compounds VICTOR AUGER and Mlle. NINA IVANOFF: The etherates of bismutho- and antimonio-hydriodic acids. PIERRE SÛE: Double decompositions in solution of two sodium niobates with some metallic salts. Mlles. HORTENSE VAN RISSGHEM and BLANCHE GREDY: Allylic isomerism in the case of the bromohexenes. The gradual isomerisation of the bromohexenes has been followed by means of Raman spectra. MORICE LETOEF: The influence of the reaction products on the thermal decomposition of gaseous acetaldehyde. The velocity of the thermal