

All these aspects of wood utilisation deserve close study by forest owners and wood-consuming industries in Great Britain, in view of the relatively high proportion of low-grade material which newly-formed British forests will produce in the next few decades until they approach maturity; but it would be a grave mistake to think that the problem is already solved. Scientifically it may be; economically it definitely is not. As a stand-by in times of emergency, such derivatives of wood can be of the greatest value, but in emergency economy counts for little. In other times the question of cost of production is all-deciding, and in Great Britain other raw materials are cheaper to produce.

The three papers summarised above were given by men working under conditions of limited trade competition or of large supplies of cheaply transported timber, neither of which conditions obtains ordinarily in Great Britain. Therefore, before any large industries can be built up in this country by the application of chemical methods, the problem of insuring continued supplies cheaply to the factory must first be solved.

This is not to say that the study of wood chemistry in Great Britain is not worth doing; but study must be directed to objects which will fit in with the economic conditions of the country, and it will not necessarily follow lines developed in totally different surroundings.

Educational Topics and Events

CAMBRIDGE.—The Iron and Steel Industrial Research Council has decided to make a grant of £500 a year to the University for the purpose of supporting scientific research on corrosion, and has indicated its intention of continuing this grant for a short period of years subject to the satisfactory progress of the work. The grant will enable Dr. U. R. Evans to continue the investigations which he is at present carrying out while holding the Royal Society Armourers and Brasiers Company research fellowship, his tenure of which terminates shortly. Dr. Evans will retain complete freedom in planning and carrying out this work, and, while reporting the results to the Corrosion Committee of the Iron and Steel Industrial Research Council, will publish them in scientific journals or in the reports of the Corrosion Committee as may appear to him most appropriate.

The seventh course of Scott lectures will be given by Prof. E. V. Appleton, of St. John's College, Jacksonian professor elect, in the Cavendish Laboratory at 4.30 p.m. on May 11, 13, 15 and 18. The subject of the course will be "The State of the Upper Atmosphere".

ST. ANDREWS.—Mr. D. C. Innes has been appointed to the new chair of geology established by a recent Ordinance of the Court, approved by His Majesty in Council, the appointment to take effect as from August 1. Mr. Innes was appointed lecturer in geology in the University in 1920 and raised to the status of reader in 1927.

Prof. D'Arcy Thompson has been invited to deliver the Lowell Lectures in Harvard University, and the Senatus Academicus of the University has therefore agreed to grant him the necessary leave of absence to enable him to accept this invitation.

Major A. H. R. Goldie, superintendent of the Meteorological Office (Air Ministry), Edinburgh, has

been awarded the degree of D.Sc. for a thesis entitled "The Mechanism of the Depressions of Temperate Latitudes".

On April 23 the Irish Free State Dail passed a motion by 58 to 40 votes putting into force the Bill to abolish university representation. At the next general election, therefore, the three seats for Dublin and the three seats for the National University of Ireland will cease to exist (*The Times*).

Science News a Century Ago

Prof. D. Don at King's College, London

ON May 2, 1836, Prof. David Don (1800–41), who had succeeded Burnett in the chair of botany in King's College, London, gave his inaugural address. "The Professor," said *The Times* of May 3, "commenced by requesting the indulgence of his auditory, as he was unused to addressing public audiences, and as the lecture he was about to deliver was the first he had ever attempted. He then proceeded to give a detailed account of the history of botanical science and stated its progress from the times of Aristotle and Hippocrates to the days of Linnæus and Jussieu". After directing attention to the various publications relating to botany, he "impressed upon his audience the great importance of the study of botany, its immediate connexion with medical knowledge, and the necessity of its consideration by medical students, its importance to a proper knowledge of agriculture, and its great utility to the illustration of various other branches of learning. . . . Mr. Don was at all times rather inaudible and apparently labouring under the influence of those feelings which generally render persons unused to address a public meeting rather nervous. The general excellence of the lecture was, however, quite sufficient to redeem any drawback which this might have occasioned".

Don was the son of George Don (1770–1814) and brother of George Don (1798–1856), both well-known botanists. Educated in Edinburgh, he went to London in 1819, and in 1822 succeeded Robert Brown as librarian of the Linnean Society.

Annular Eclipse of the Sun, May 15, 1836

JUST as the reappearance of Halley's comet in 1835 had attracted much attention in Great Britain, so the annular eclipse of the sun on May 15, 1836, also created very widespread interest. Ten days before the eclipse, *The Times* on May 5 informed its readers that "On Sunday, May 15, in the afternoon, there will be a large and visible annular eclipse of the sun, which will be central in the north of England, Ireland and in the south of Scotland. It will begin at 50 minutes 59 seconds past 1 o'clock, and will end at 39 minutes 8 seconds past 4. Over England and the adjacent parts the light and the heat of the annular obscuration will be a little more than one tenth of the full sun; and should the atmosphere prove to be clear at the time of the greatest magnitude it may be expected that several of the largest stars will be visible. The breadth of the annulus for England will be about 142 miles. The whole body of the moon will appear on the disc of the sun, leaving a small ring or circle of light on the external edge of the sun, whence its name annular, from *annulus*, a ring".