

Prof. Buckland and Oxford

It may be of interest to note that the verses on Buckland quoted by Prof. J. L. Myres (*NATURE*, Oct. 8, p. 673) were actually published at Oxford in 1869, in an entertaining little volume entitled "Fugitive Poems connected with Natural History and Physical Science", collected by C. G. B. Daubeny, F.R.S., sometime professor of chemistry and botany in the University of Oxford. They are there dated Dec. 1, 1820, and attributed to Richard Whately, at that time fellow of Oriel, and later Archbishop of Dublin. The verses are reprinted in the "Life and Correspondence of William Buckland" published in 1894, where it is stated that Buckland was so pleased with them that he had copies lithographed to present to his friends.

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THE verses on Buckland appearing in *NATURE* of October 8, p. 673, were published in "The Life and Correspondence of William Buckland", by his daughter Mrs. Gordon (London, 1894), page 41. It is there stated that they were written by Richard Whately, afterwards Archbishop of Dublin; and that Buckland had them lithographed and gave copies to his friends. The version there printed contains minor variations from that given in *NATURE*, and is entitled, "Elegy. Intended for Professor Buckland. December 1st 1820". In the same volume there are several other sets of amusing verses on geological subjects.

The verses are also printed in Frank Buckland's "Curiosities of Natural History", Second Series (1903 edit., pp. 144-146).

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Points from Foregoing Letters

FROM a study of the action of strychnine and caffeine upon the critical flicker frequency, Prof. N. T. Fedorov and Lucy Mkrlicheva conclude that fusion of light flickers in the synapses of the retina during dark and light adaptation results from the resistance offered by these synapses to the passage of impulses set up in the cones and rods of the retina, so that the impulses undergo deformation and enlargement.

Spectrographic analyses by D. A. Webb show that the presence of strontium gives rise to errors in the estimation of the calcium content of sea water. Since the magnitude of the error varies with the method employed, it is suggested that a conventional interpretation should be given to the term 'calcium content', as is given to the term chlorinity; 'calcium' shall be taken to mean 'calcium after the strontium and barium have been replaced by calcium'.

Dr. L. Havas reports that treatment with dilute solutions of trimethylamine increased the flowers produced by tomato plants and the average weight of tumours produced by *B. tumefaciens*. Also it had effects suggesting sex-hormonal influence upon *Rhodeus*, *Rana* and *Triton*.

Prof. D. Kostoff considers that B. R. Nebel's failure to obtain chromosome doubling by treatment of *Tradescantia* with acenaphthene solution was due to the method employed. The active agent is, he states, the sublimated particles, and he has found acenaphthene crystals to be effective at a distance in producing chromosome doubling in *Nicotiana*, *Triticum* and *Lactuca*.

A table showing the growth-stimulating effect upon oat seedlings of filtrates of various strains of clover nodule bacteria (in presence of tryptophane) is given by H. K. Chen. The non-beneficial strains (which do not lead to nitrogen fixation) appear to be equally effective as growth stimulants.

The adrenal glands in spayed rats injected with oestrone fluctuate in size in an approximately five-day rhythm, according to Dr. S. Zuckerman, Dr. G. Bourne and D. Lewes.

It is stated by W. Wight and P. K. Barua that an account in the folk-lore of Assam indicates that the Ahom tribes used to bury an earthenware vessel of mercury on the site of springs which were feeding reservoirs, in the belief that the water would thereby be purified.

An energy level scheme for the nucleus of nitrogen atoms of mass twenty-four is outlined by A. Sugimoto, to account for the energy and intensity of the beta- and gamma-radiations emitted by sodium atoms of mass twenty-four, from which the magnesium atoms are derived.

A number of cyanogen bands are identified by Prof. J. Cabannes, Prof. J. Dufay and J. Gauzit among radiations recorded in the spectrum of the night sky. These radiations do not change in intensity from the zenith to the horizon and consequently it may be presumed that they have their origin outside the earth's atmosphere.

The molecular extinction coefficient of cobaltous chloride dissolved in deuterium oxide (heavy water) is found by D. C. Martin to be smaller than in water throughout the region of absorption.

In connexion with the use of Kramers' absorption formula in astrophysical calculations, Prof. R. W. Ditchburn points out that the atomic absorption coefficient is in general a function of the temperature, pressure and state of ionization of the gas surrounding the absorbing atom.

S. Paramasivan reports that the Pallava paintings (seventh-ninth centuries A.D.) in the Kailasanatha and Vaikunthaperumal temples at Kanchipuram (South India) have been executed in fresco-secco technique. He gives the results of analysis of the plasters and the pigments. Carbon (for black), yellow and red ochres and terre verte (for green) have been used as pigments.

B. R. Seshachar finds that in the South Indian amphibian *Uraeotyphlus menonii* there are three pairs of large V-shaped chromosomes which form compound tetrads, similar to the large multiple rings observed by other workers in Urodela.