

Science News a Century Ago

The Trogon

DR. DAUBENY, who had recently returned from a visit to America and the West Indies, on November 12, 1838, at a meeting of the Ashmolean Society, Oxford, described some of the zoological specimens, including about sixty birds, which he had brought back and intended for the Ashmolean Museum. Among the birds was a very rare trogon, from the island of Cuba. Mr. Holme, of Christ Church College, observed that the specific name of the trogon was *Temnurus*, from the ends of the tail feathers appearing as if cut and spread out. The only other specimen in Europe was in the Museum at Paris and had been figured in Temminck's "Planches Coloriées". There was also an uncoloured figure, from a drawing by Colonel Hamilton Smith, in the seventh volume of Griffith's "Animal Kingdom".

Asiatic Society

AT a meeting of the Asiatic Society on November 17, 1838, two of the communications read were from Dr. Falconer, superintendent of the Honorable East India Company's Botanical Garden at Saharanpore, in lat. 30° N. The first referred to the cultivation of plants in the garden likely to become important articles of commerce. The tea plant was thriving in the nurseries in the neighbouring hills, the Otaheite sugar cane had been a success, the Egyptian cotton seemed likely to thrive, while among other plants mentioned were the Ceylon cinnamon, American annatto, Bombay mangoes and the Chinese litchee (*sic*). Dr. Falconer's other letter was written from Cashmere.

Another paper read was "On the Yellow Colour of the Barberry", in which Mr. E. Solly stated that the root of the common barberry, or *Berberis vulgaris*, was used for dyeing leather yellow, and that from experiments made by him in the Society's museum, he was convinced that the root would prove an article of considerable value to dyers.

F. J. V. Broussais (1772-1838)

NOVEMBER 17 marks the centenary of the death of François Joseph Victor Broussais, the founder of the so-called 'physiological medicine' and one of the most eminent physicians of his time. He was born at St. Malo on December 17, 1772, qualified in Paris in 1803, took part in the Napoleonic campaigns in Holland, Germany and Spain, became physician-in-chief to the Val-de-Grâce Military Hospital in Paris, and was the author of several works of which the principal are the following: "Histoire des phlegmasies ou inflammations chroniques" (1822), "Examen de la doctrine généralement adoptée" (1816) and "De l'irritation et de la folie" (2nd edition, 1839). The main features of his doctrine were the denial of specificity, the attribution of all diseases to gastro-enteritis and the reduction of therapeutics to the application of leeches and a restricted diet. His teaching, which for many years had an enormous vogue, was finally overthrown by P. C. A. Louis.

M. Gaudin's Lime Light

ON October 19, 1838, M. Gaudin had shown some experiments to the Paris Academy of Sciences on his new method of illumination. On November 17

the *Mechanics' Magazine*, under the heading "Substitute for the Sun", said: "The newly-invented light of M. Gaudin, on which experiments were recently made in Paris, is an improved modification of the well-known invention of Lieutenant Drummond. While Drummond pours a stream of oxygen, through spirits of wine, upon unslaked lime, Gaudin makes use of a more ethereal kind of oxygen, which he conducts through burning essence of turpentine. The Drummond light is fifteen hundred times stronger than that of burning gas; the Gaudin light is, we are assured by the inventor, as strong as that of the sun, or thirty thousand times stronger than gas." M. Gaudin "proposes to erect on the island of the Pont Neuf in the centre of Paris, a lighthouse, five hundred feet high, in which is to be placed a light from a hundred thousand to a million pipes strong, the power to be varied as the nights are light or dark. Paris will thus enjoy a sort of perpetual day; and as soon as the sun of the heavens has set the sun of the Pont Neuf will arise."

Horticultural Society

IN its column of "Weekly Gossip", the *Athenæum* of November 17, 1838, said: "We understand that in consequence of the disturbed state of Mexico, and the difficulty of obtaining any package from that country, because of the rigour with which the French squadron maintains the blockade of Vera Cruz and Tampico, the Council of the Horticultural Society have decided upon withdrawing their collector, Mr. Hartweg, and sending him to investigate the botany of the State of Guatemala. The mountainous region, which cuts this magnificent country into two parts, and which abounds with most noble vegetation to an elevation of more than 13,000 feet above the sea, cannot fail to afford Mr. Hartweg a rich harvest. . . ."

University Events

CAMBRIDGE.—AN appointment to a research studentship at Christ's College will be made at the end of July 1939. Candidates must be men who will have graduated before October 1, 1939, at some university other than Cambridge, and who have not commenced residence in Cambridge at the time of election. Preference will be given to those who will by then have already devoted at least a year to research. Every candidate must declare that he intends, if elected, to proceed to the degree of Ph.D. in the University of Cambridge. Further information can be obtained from the Master, Christ's College, Cambridge.

OXFORD.—P. M. Medawar has been elected to a fellowship at Magdalen College for his work in zoology. Dr. K. N. Bahl, Merton College, has been granted the degree of D.Sc. for his work on earth-worms. The following have been elected to Theodore Williams scholarships: C. W. M. Whitty, Brasenose College (pathology); G. I. M. Swyer, St. John's College (anatomy); W. D. M. Paton, New College (physiology).

The Rolleston Memorial Prize for 1938 has been divided between Dr. N. V. Polunin, Christ Church and New College, and H. M. Sinclair, Magdalen College.