

## Educational Topics and Events

EDINBURGH.—At the graduation ceremony on June 28, the honorary degree of LL.D. was conferred on the following: The Right Hon. the Viscount Bledisloe, Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief of New Zealand; Dr. J. L. Garvin, editor of the *Observer*; Dame Maria M. Ogilvie Gordon, geologist and vice-president of the International Council of Women; Prof. J. Graham Kerr, M.P., regius professor of zoology in the University of Glasgow; Prof. John Laird, regius professor of moral philosophy in the University of Aberdeen; Sir George Macdonald, formerly secretary of the Scottish Education Department, archaeologist, numismatist and historian; Dr. J. D. Pollock, Hon. Surgeon-Commander, R.N.V.R.; The Hon. Lord St. Vigeans, formerly chairman of the Scottish Land Court.

The degree of D.Sc. was conferred on the following, for the theses indicated: A. B. D. Cassie ("Infra-Red Absorption Spectra and Molecular Structure of Triatomic Molecules"); D. Clouston ("The Identification of Grasses by Leaf Anatomy"); Dr. J. MacLeod ("The Ecological Complex controlling Activities and Distribution of *Ixodes ricinus*"); Dr. H. W. Melville ("The Kinetics of Gaseous Chain Reactions").

OXFORD.—Sir Charles Sherrington has resigned the Waynflete chair of physiology, which he has held since 1913, as from October 1.

Mr. L. S. Bosanquet has been granted the degree of D.Sc.

At Christ Church, Mr. D. Roaf has been elected to the Duke of Westminster research studentship (that is, fellowship) for work in nuclear physics, and Mr. J. A. Moy Thomas to a lectureship for research in vertebrate palaeontology.

At the Queen's College, Mr. E. W. Yemm has been elected to a junior research fellowship in botany.

DR. JOHN A. WHEELER has been appointed assistant professor of physics in the University of North Carolina, at Chapel Hill. During the past year, Dr. Wheeler has pursued research in nuclear physics at the Institute of Theoretical Physics in Copenhagen.

GERMAN universities are, one gathers, like other cultural institutions in Germany, being remoulded so as to conform with Nazi aims. A letter from the Berlin correspondent of the American Medical Association tells of a new decree releasing the general student body from obligatory attendance on the special political training course prescribed, together with enrolment in a hostel, for members of the Nazi student league. The director of this league has announced that "during the past year and a half the student has been tossed about to such an extent that he has lost most of his faith in attempts to direct the thinking of students. A reawakening of this faith I regard as a necessity . . ." Last winter new regulations made compulsory for all students participation in physical exercises and sports, including *fünfkampf* training and rifle exercise during the first three semesters as a pre-requisite for any degree. Another interesting development is the provision made for permitting twenty of the most talented sons of workmen to attend a university

without presenting a diploma of completion of a secondary school course. For such special entry the Universities of Heidelberg and Königsberg are being considered.

SEX education in schools is discussed in a remarkable paper by Dr. E. P. Phillips which has been published by the Transvaal Education Department in its monthly circular for April. Dr. Phillips writes as a biologist. He begins by emphasising the fact that notwithstanding the fundamental biological discoveries of the past seventy-five years, we still think in terms handed down to us by earlier civilisations, terms involving an often inextricable entanglement of religious ideas with ideas relating to sex. Hence arise divergences between mental outlooks which he classifies as the orthodox religious, the biologist's, and that of the large body of parents who, while not holding very strict religious views, are ignorant of the elements of biology. There should, he holds, be no course of sex education *as a subject*, taught either by the school staff or by visiting doctors; but all children should receive instruction, which should begin before the age of puberty, in some of the more important biological facts about themselves as human beings. It should be inculcated that mankind is faced, like myriads of other species, with the two fundamental problems—the struggle for individual existence and the struggle to maintain the species. Thereafter, the similarity of mankind to the rest of the animal kingdom having been sufficiently demonstrated, the overwhelming importance of the reasoning faculty which differentiates the human from other species should be stressed in connexion with man's social development. To adolescents who have received such a grounding, information about the dangers and implications of sex can be imparted without difficulty. The crux of the scheme for such a broad biological course is the supply of suitable teachers. These should have studied biology, chemistry, physics and geology, should have read widely, and should have tact, sympathy and understanding. The course should not be taught as an examination subject, thereby suppressing the individuality of the teacher. It should be a necessary part of every child's social, moral, ethical and religious training.

## Science News a Century Ago

Lyell and Sir John Herschel

LYELL, whose "Principles of Geology" had been published originally in three volumes in 1830, 1832 and 1833 respectively and had been republished in four volumes in 1834, wrote to Sir John Herschel on July 6, 1835: "I heard some months ago from Whewell that you had, in one of your letters to him, expressed much pleasure at some parts of my book, which I think you read when on your way to the Cape. It has been so much altered, enlarged, illustrated, abridged, and I hope improved since the first edition, that I am anxious, if you ever refer to it again, that you should see it in its amended state. Some of my friends have read letters of yours which they have received, to me, and I rejoice that your grand scheme of visiting the Southern Hemisphere has answered so well."

"When at Copenhagen last year Oersted, who was reading your paper on double stars, was talking of