

It is considered that the amount of extra food given was not sufficient, in all probability, to make the diet of the poorest group of mothers who were assisted, more than equal in *quantity* to that of the better-off groups, which did not receive the extra food and acted as controls to the first group. The additional medical facilities, where provided, were available to all groups without regard to income.

It appears, therefore, that the reduction in the maternal mortality rates must probably be due to the *quality* of the extra foods supplied, rather than their *quantity*. The administration of the schemes has now been handed over by the National Birthday Trust Fund to the Research Committee of the Joint Council of Midwifery, by whom further reports will be issued when the results are available.

University Events

CAMBRIDGE.—The Rockefeller Foundation is providing the University with up to £8,000 towards the support of research in the Department of Experimental Medicine over the five-year period, January 1, 1938–December 31, 1942. The funds will be used for the salaries of a pathologist and a psychiatrist, and for supplementing the amount which the radiologist receives from Addenbrooke's Hospital.

N. F. M. Henny, of St. John's College, has been appointed University demonstrator in mineralogy and petrology.

Dr. A. H. Evans has offered to the University his collection of birds' eggs, of which the Director of the Museum writes: "This collection is practically a complete series of the eggs of British birds, and Dr. Evans has spent much time over many years in perfecting it."

The Michael Perkins Prize is awarded to I. L. Mason, of Pembroke College, for his essay entitled "Hot-spring Animals and their Adaptation to Super-normal Temperatures".

M. C. Burkitt, of Trinity College, T. T. Paterson, of Trinity College, and Dr. E. J. Lindgren, of Newnham College, have been appointed delegates to the Second International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, to be held in Copenhagen on August 1-6.

The Board of Management of the Frank Edward Elmore Fund will shortly proceed to the award of a studentship for research in medicine. The studentships are open to male graduates of any university who were born in any country within the British Empire other than Scotland. The student appointed will work in the Department of Medicine in the University, under the direction of the regius professor of physic. The commencing salary will be £300 a year, and the appointment will be for two years in the first instance. Further information may be obtained from the Regius Professor of Physic, Department of Medicine, University of Cambridge, to whom applications should be sent not later than February 28, 1938.

LONDON.—The title of reader in entomology in the University has been conferred on Dr. O. W. Richards, in respect of his post held at the Imperial College Royal College of Science.

The following doctorates have been conferred: D.Sc. (Economics) on S. J. Madge, an internal student, of the London School of Economics; D.Sc. in botany on F. T. Bennett, an external student; D.Sc. in physics on C. E. Wynn-Williams, an external student.

Science News a Century Ago

The Royal Astronomical Society

IN the report of the Council read at the anniversary meeting of the Royal Astronomical Society on February 9, 1838, it was stated that the printing of the observations made at the Cape of Good Hope by Henderson on the declination of the principal stars and those made by Maclear relative to the reappearance of Halley's comet after its perihelion passage, had been done at the expense of the Government, "an evidence of the encouragement which the Government was disposed to give to science when favourable opportunities presented themselves". The Government had also granted £500 towards the repetition of the Cavendish experiment for determining the density of the earth. A eulogium was passed on the conduct of the British Association for the appropriation of £1,000 towards the improvement and reduction of astronomical catalogues. The report also referred to the arrival of the astronomical and pendulum observations made by the late Lieut. Murphy, during the voyage under Colonel Chesney down the Euphrates, the reduction of which had been undertaken by Sheepshanks and Baily. In conclusion, the Council congratulated the meeting on the flourishing state of the Society and expressed a hope that the same activity and unity of action would continue to influence and pervade their future proceedings. The president at this time was Francis Baily.

Structure of Shells

ON February 9, 1838, John Edward Gray (1800–75) assistant zoological keeper at the British Museum, lectured at the Royal Institution on "The Development, Growth and Structure of Shells". In the course of his lecture he said that the most simple form of crystalline structure is shown in the *Pinnæ* and a few other shells, where the calcareous particles, as they are deposited on the inner surface of the shell, assume a prismatic crystalline form, the crystals being perpendicular to the surface of the shell and extending from surface to surface, except where they are interrupted by any temporary suspensions of the growth of the animal. The most common form of crystalline structure which is found in most univalve shells is far more complicated, and exhibits one of the most beautiful examples of the extremely simple means by which Nature provides for the protection of her creatures. If man, he said, had but observed the process pursued by Nature in the formation of these shells, she would have taught him hundreds of years ago to combine strength with buoyancy in the perfection of naval architecture, instead of leaving it to be a modern discovery. Shells of this structure are formed of three concentric coats closely adhering together.

Biot's Experiments on Tartaric Acid

"M. BIOT has been making some important experiments and observations concerning the effect produced in rays of polarized light by different solutions of tartaric acid, either purely aqueous or combined with other bodies, which combinations alter the rays. The object of these experiments is to establish the laws of each combination, and the learned professor is still devoting his attention to the subject, in the hope of completing the system." (*Athenæum*, Feb. 10, 1838.)