

## SEVENTY YEARS AGO

NATURE, vol. 2, June 9, 1870

## The New Australian Mud-fish

P. L. SCLATER, F.R.S., secretary of the Zoological Society, describes and illustrates the newly discovered Australian mud-fish, basing his account on a paper sent to the Zoological Society by Mr. Gerard Krefft, curator of the Australian Museum, Sydney, who had named the fish *Ceratodus forsteri*. The general resemblance of the fish to *Lepidosiren* is remarked upon, and it is said to be so common that it is known as the "Burnett" or "Dawson salmon", from the two Queensland rivers in which it is principally found.

In conclusion, Mr. Sclater hopes that "this short notice may have the effect of calling the attention of some of the colonists of Queensland to the wonderful nature of this relic of the Devonian epoch that is now swimming about beneath their noses, and that they will cease, for the present at least, to kill it and eat it as 'salmon'. Any specimens that may 'rise to their fly' should be carefully kept out of the way of the cook, preserved in alcohol and transmitted to the British Museum or some other scientific institution".

## Fizeau's Experiments on "Newton's Rings"

PROF. G. CAREY FOSTER, F.R.S., compares the wave-lengths of the sodium doublet as determined by Ångström with observations made by Fizeau by the method of Newton's rings.

Fizeau produced Newton's rings by means of a convex lens and a plane glass illuminated "by the yellow flame of spirit of wine containing a little common salt". It was found that, on separating the lens from the glass, the rings contracted, disappeared at the middle, and were replaced by new rings. In this way, nearly 500 rings were counted, after which rings ceased to be visible; then after a period, a further 500 rings became visible again, and so on. The explanation is that the yellow light used consists of two parts of slightly different refrangibility. Each part is capable of producing a set of rings, and when they are put together, they nearly, but not quite, fit each other. The effect can be explained on the "undulatory theory" of light, and gives results in good accord with those derived from Ångström's wave-length measurements.

## The Natural History Collections

IN 1858, a memorial on the organization of the British Museum Natural History Collections was submitted to the Chancellor of the Exchequer by a group of four zoologists and five botanists. Nothing was done at the time, but the subject having again come before Parliament, the memorial was printed in NATURE in full, and readers, especially botanists, were asked to communicate their views to the Editor.

At a meeting of the German Chemical Society on May 23, A. Baeyer and M. Emmerling reported on the transformation of isatin into indigo. When treated with phosphorus in "chloride of acetylene or of phosphorus", isatin forms indigo-blue and indigo-red.

THE council of the Society of Arts has awarded the Albert Medal to M. F. de Lesseps, "for services rendered to arts, manufacturers, and commerce, by the realization of the Suez Canal".

MR. JOULE has been elected to the Section of General Physics of the Paris Academy of Sciences.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Monday, June 10

ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY, at 5 p.m.—E. J. Wayland "Forest versus Desert in Eastern Africa".

Tuesday, June 11

ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE, at 5 p.m.—E. J. Wayland: "Some Aspects of Uganda Prehistory".

ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON, at 5 p.m.—James Fisher: "The Status of the Fulmar in the British Isles". A Symposium on Taxonomy and Palaeontology (J. A. Moy-Thomas: "Problems of Palaeontological Classification"; E. B. Ford: "Palaeontological Classification from the Geneticist's Point of View"; Dr. L. R. Cox: "Problems facing the Invertebrate Palaeontologist").

## APPOINTMENTS VACANT

APPLICATIONS are invited for the following appointments on or before the dates mentioned:

INSTRUCTOR IN MECHANICAL ENGINEERING WORKSHOP PROCESSES AND PRACTICE—The Secretary for Education, County Education Offices, Northampton (June 12).

TECHNICAL ASSISTANTS (MECHANICAL ENGINEERING) IN THE DIRECTORATE OF AMMUNITION PRODUCTION—The Secretary, Ministry of Supply (S.E.3.b), Adelphi, W.C.2 (quoting Appds. 034/S.E.3.b) (June 12).

PROFESSOR OF MATHEMATICAL PHYSICS—The Secretary and Bursar, University College, Dublin (June 15).

HEAD OF THE CHEMISTRY DEPARTMENT—The Clerk to the Governors, Technical College, Normanton Road, Derby (June 15).

ASSISTANT LECTURER IN MECHANICAL ENGINEERING—The Principal, Technical College, Kingston-upon-Thames (June 18).

LECTURER IN EDUCATION—The Acting Secretary, University Court, Glasgow (June 20).

A METALLURGIST OR A METALLURGICAL CHEMIST at the Medway Technical College, Gillingham—The District Education Officer, Fort Pitt House, New Road, Rochester, Kent (June 22).

LECTURER (MAN OR WOMAN) IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE, FOR BIOLOGY, ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY—The Registrar, Loughborough College, Loughborough, Leicestershire (June 22).

GRADUATE ASSISTANT MASTER TO TEACH MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE—The Principal, Technical Institute, Beckenham Road, Beckenham (June 24).

ASSISTANT ENGINEER TO THE CENTRAL ROAD BOARD, BARBADOS—The Secretary, Central Road Board, Bridgetown, Barbados (July 13)

EDUCATION LECTURER AT THE PORTSMOUTH TRAINING COLLEGE—The Registrar, Municipal College, Portsmouth.

## REPORTS AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS

(not included in the monthly Books Supplement)

## Great Britain and Ireland

Proceedings of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Session 1939-1940. Vol. 60, Part 1, No. 5: The Periodic Lamé Functions. By Dr. E. L. Ince. Pp. 47-63. 1s. 6d. Vol. 60, Part 1, No. 6: The Estimation of Factor Loadings by the Method of Maximum Likelihood. By D. N. Lawley. Pp. 64-82. 1s. 6d. Vol. 60, Part 1, No. 7: Further Investigations into the Periodic Lamé Functions. By Dr. E. L. Ince. Pp. 83-99. 1s. 6d. Vol. 60, Part 1, No. 8: Reciprocity, Part 2: Scalar Wave Functions. By Prof. Max Born. Pp. 100-116. 1s. 6d. (Edinburgh: Robert Grant and Son, Ltd.; London: Williams and Norgate, Ltd.) [245]

Ministry of Health. International Agreement, Brussels, 1924. Venereal Diseases: Centres in the Ports at Home and Abroad where Seamen can obtain Treatment. (List 7a, revised.) Pp. 30. (London: H.M. Stationery Office.) 6d. net. [275]

## Other Countries

Southern Rhodesia: Geological Survey. Bulletin No. 35: The Geology of the Country around Bulawayo. By F. L. Amm. Pp. viii+307+27 plates. (Salisbury: Government Stationery Office.) 9s. 9d. [275]

Southern Rhodesia. Meteorological Report for the Year ended 30th June 1939. Pp. 48. (Salisbury: Government Stationery Office.) [275]

Common Marine Food-Fishes of Hong Kong. By G. A. C. Herklots and S. Y. Lin. Second enlarged edition. Pp. ii+89. (Hong Kong: G. A. C. Herklots, The University.) 2.50 dollars. [275]