

# SCIENCE

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<i>The British Association for the Advancement of Science:</i>	
<i>Form, Drift and Rhythm of the Continents:</i> PROFESSOR W. W. WATTS	203
<i>Scientific Events:</i>	
<i>Report of the British Forestry Commissioners; Petroleum Laboratories of the Bureau of Mines; Motion Picture Films of the National Archives of the United States; An Interne System for Museums; Federal Fellowships for Health Officers; Recent Deaths. Memorials</i>	213
<i>Scientific Notes and News</i>	216
<i>Discussion:</i>	
<i>Earthquake Prediction:</i> HARRY O. WOOD and PROFESSOR B. GUTENBERG. <i>Sensory Masking—a Peripheral or a Central Phenomenon?:</i> PROFESSOR I. MACLAREN THOMPSON. <i>Drinker Respirator Patents Held Invalid:</i> DR. JOSEPH ROSSMAN. <i>Ascorbic Acid in Cataract with Special Reference to Dinitrophenol Cataracts:</i> DR. EMANUEL M. JOSEPHSON. <i>The Development of Liver Therapy in Anemia:</i> DR. HYMAN I. GOLDSTEIN	219
<i>Scientific Books:</i>	
<i>Atomic Spectra:</i> DR. SAMUEL K. ALLISON. <i>Gymnosperms:</i> PROFESSOR J. T. BUCHHOLZ	223
<i>State Academies:</i>	
<i>The North Carolina Academy of Science:</i> PROFESSOR H. L. BLOMQUIST	226
<i>Reports:</i>	
<i>Report of the Sub-committee on Scientific Investigations of the Fisheries Advisory Board:</i> PROFESSOR R. V. TRUITT	227
<i>Special Articles:</i>	
<i>Further Data on the Existence of Extra-chromosomal Influence on the Incidence of Mammary Tumors in Mice:</i> DR. WILLIAM S. MURRAY and DR. C. C. LITTLE. <i>Adrenal Insufficiency in the Marmot and Opossum and Theories of Cortico-adrenal Function:</i> DR. S. W. BRITTON and H. SILVETTE. <i>The Peripheral Action of Barbiturates:</i> PROFESSOR THEODORE KOPPANYI, CHARLES R. LINEGAR and JAMES M. DILLE	228
<i>Scientific Apparatus and Laboratory Methods:</i>	
<i>A Simple Type of Ergometer:</i> DR. GEORGE B. RAY. <i>A Method for Measuring Sweat Output from Skin Surfaces:</i> DR. LEONARD E. ANDERSON	232
<i>Science News</i>	10

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## FORM, DRIFT AND RHYTHM OF THE CONTINENTS<sup>1</sup>

By Dr. W. W. WATTS

EMERITUS PROFESSOR OF GEOLOGY, IMPERIAL COLLEGE, LONDON

It is now sixty-seven years since the British Association enjoyed the hospitality of the city of Norwich, a privilege which is being renewed to-day under the most happy auspices.

At that meeting we find the scientific community was particularly interested in underground temperatures and tidal phenomena, in the application of the spectroscope to celestial objects, and in the discovery of the oldest Cambrian fossils and the earliest fossil mammals then known. Many papers were read on local natural history, including those on Norfolk farming and the drainage of the county and of the fens.

In his address at the meeting the president, Sir Joseph D. Hooker, made special reference to the work of Charles Darwin: not to the "Origin of Species,"

<sup>1</sup> Address of the president of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Norwich, September 4, 1935.

which had been acrimoniously discussed by the association on previous occasions, and notably at Oxford in 1860, but to some of the work that followed.

It should be remembered that Hooker was one of the three scientific men, representing botany, zoology and geology, whom Darwin had selected as judges with whose opinion on the soundness of his theory of the origin of species he would be content. The others were Huxley and Lyell; and of the three, Lyell was the hardest to convince, chiefly because the record of life in the past then furnished by the rocks was manifestly so incomplete and unsatisfactory that its evidence was insufficient to warrant a definite verdict.

Lyell had set out to "treat of such features of the economy of existing nature, animate and inanimate, as are illustrative of geology," and to make "an investigation of the permanent effects of causes now in

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## CONTENTS

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