

The Tercentenary of Cinchona in Medicine.

AS a nation we are much less inclined than some of our Continental neighbours to celebrate historical events. It is therefore somewhat surprising to find that the tercentenary of the introduction of cinchona bark into European medicine (see NATURE, Nov. 29, p. 850) is being commemorated in London. Dr. H. S. Wellcome, whose interest in everything that pertains to the history or the progress of medicine is well known, has arranged at the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum, 54 Wigmore Street, London, W.1, an extremely interesting exhibition of materials, manuscripts, and literature relating to this drug. The Museum itself is rich in specimens of cinchona bark of historic interest, and possesses many rare documents and books on the subject, as well as pictures of personalities who have achieved fame as explorers of the Peruvian cinchona forests, of whom Dr. Wellcome is himself an example. To this nucleus has been added for this occasion gifts and loans from governments, learned societies, and institutions in various parts of the world, with the result that never before has such a collection of material for the study of cinchona been gathered together. The exhibition will continue open for several weeks.

Among the items of general interest may be mentioned three of the original packages of cinchona bark brought from Peru by Ruiz and Pavon on their return from the expedition sent there by Carlos III. in 1777. These are shown by H.M. the King of Spain. The Secretary of State for India has contributed five blue-books and the volume of original correspondence in manuscript (1859-70) relating to Sir Clements Markham's expedition to Peru in connexion with the introduction of cinchona into India. No less interesting are some of the Museum's own treasures: for example, the original specimens of quinine and cinchonine isolated by Pelletier and Caventou in 1827, autograph letters of La Condamine and De Vrij, and the original 'permit' issued by the Peruvian Minister of Foreign Affairs to Sir Clements Markham to enable him to carry out work in the cinchona forests. For the more technical visitor there are the extensive collections of botanical material lent by the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew; Messrs. Howard and Sons, Ltd.; the Imperial Institute, and the Pharmaceutical Society of London. Not least important is the malaria section of the Wellcome Medical Museum at Endsleigh Court, which has been transferred *en bloc* to the exhibition. The task of the visitor has been made easy by the excellent arrangement of the exhibits, the clear numbering of the specimens, and the beautifully produced catalogue.

Not content with having produced this tribute to the pioneers who discovered and brought cinchona into medical use, Dr. Wellcome arranged a series of receptions at which addresses were given by authorities on the history and uses of the drug. At the first of these, on Monday, Dec. 8, which also served as an opening ceremony, the chair was appropriately taken by Cardinal Bourne and addresses were delivered by the Ambassadors for Spain and France, whilst the Minister for Peru gave a short but interesting critical survey of the usually accepted history of cinchona. At the evening reception on the same day diplomacy and the Roman Catholic Church were still predominant, the chair being taken by the Ambassador for Holland, whilst the address was given by Cardinal Bourne's able coadjutor, Archbishop Goodier, who continued and extended the criticism of the history of cinchona as usually written. Both critics combined to demolish part of the romantic story which has been woven

around the name of the Countess of Chinchon, and both declined to accept von Humboldt's statement that the natives of Peru were unaware of the virtues of cinchona.

At the receptions on Wednesday, Dec. 10, the addresses on the more technical aspects of cinchona began. In the afternoon Dr. Wellcome took the chair, whilst Sir David Prain gave the distinguished audience the fruits of his unique experience with cinchona, both as a botanist and in the capacity of a former Director of the Indian Government Cinchona Plantations, as a planter, and a quinine manufacturer. It was particularly interesting to hear this eminent authority account for the abandonment of cinchona planting in Ceylon, not by lack of enterprise or skill on the part of the British planters, but by unalterable natural causes, the chief being unsuitable soil. Sir David is also of opinion that it is unwise to devote so much attention to quinine, to the exclusion of the other cinchona alkaloids. This point was also emphasised by Prof. H. E. Armstrong, who paid a tribute to Dr. Wellcome's long-continued and generous support of chemical research, and hoped that part of the energies of the various Wellcome research institutions would shortly be devoted to solving some of the many problems which the proper and economical use of cinchona still presents for solution by chemists, pharmacologists, and clinicians.

At the evening reception the principal address was given by Sir Humphry Rolleston, who provided many interesting medical sidelights on the history of cinchona and finished with an admirable summary of the therapeutics of the drug. During the present week further receptions are being given, at which the speakers will include General Sir Charles MacWatt, formerly Director-General of the Indian Medical Service; Dr. Manson-Bahr, Dr. H. H. Dale, Dr. C. M. Wenyon, and others.

University and Educational Intelligence.

BIRMINGHAM.—The increase in number of students in the Department of Oil Engineering has necessitated the erection of additional buildings adjoining the existing Oil Block. The new buildings, which are nearly complete, include a laboratory for ordinary students, a 'large-scale' laboratory, and stores. An extension of space for research will thus become available and the congested conditions under which research work is at present being carried on will be relieved. The Department of Civil Engineering has also been extended by the erection of a large Cement Laboratory.

The Council of the University has agreed to make a contribution to the funds of the Port Erin Biological Station.

LONDON.—Applications are invited for two Keddey Fletcher-Warr studentships for the promotion of post-graduate research. Each studentship will be of the annual value of not less than £250 and tenable for three years. Application forms and further particulars may be had from the Academic Registrar, University of London, South Kensington, S.W.7, to whom completed forms must be returned by Feb. 20.

A VACATION course in photogrammetry is announced to take place in the Technical-Physical Institute of the University of Jena on Mar. 16-28 next, when lectures will be given on the elements of photogrammetry, the historical development of photogrammetry, terrestrial photogrammetry, and aerophotogrammetry. Applications for the course will be received until Mar. 1 by Mr. A. Kramer, Schützenstrasse 72, Jena, Germany.