

Jahangir, his successor, was born of a Rajput princess. It is worth remembering that his reign coincides almost exactly with that of Elizabeth of England. At a time when Europe still found the methods of the rack and stake acceptable, he instituted and enforced religious toleration. He grappled with the horrors of suttee two hundred years before Bentinck abolished it. He was the patron of learning and the arts. His justice knew no distinction of caste or creed or colour. Such was the man, who, while he lived, united India in mutual service. The fourth centenary of Akbar's birth will be celebrated by a meeting arranged by the British Council, the Royal Asiatic Society, the East India Association and the India Society to be held in the rooms of the Royal Society on November 23.

### Discovery of a Nova

A TELEGRAM from Lund announces the discovery of a nova, magnitude 2, by Finsler and Nakahara. It is about  $5^{\circ}$  north of Puppis. The telegram is dated November 13, but the time of discovery is not stated. Before receiving the telegram a telephone message which was sent by Mr. G. Ellis, Llandudno Junction, was received at the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, and this announced that Mr. Ellis, observing from a height of 400 ft. above sea-level, had discovered the nova on Nov. 13d. 4h. 25m. U.T., its approximate position being, R.A., 8h. 10 m., Dec.  $-34^{\circ}$ . Owing to its high southern declination it will not be an easy object to see in Great Britain. It crosses the meridian about 4h. 15m. U.T. on November 21, and in the latitude of Greenwich its greatest altitude does not exceed  $4.5^{\circ}$ . Mr. Will Hay has reported that he has observed the nova with the naked eye.

### Documentation and Microfilm

THE *Proceedings of the British Society for International Bibliography*, Parts 1 and 2, contain the papers and discussions at the twenty-second and twenty-third ordinary meetings on March 5 and April 23 last, respectively. In Part 1, Miss M. Shaw's paper "Documentation in an Industrial Laboratory" describes the library and information service in the laboratories of Messrs. J. Lyons and Co., Ltd. The function of this library is to keep the chemical staff supplied with the most recent scientific and technical literature, to see that this is adequately catalogued and indexed, and to supply information, as well as prepare bibliographies and translations. Any books borrowed must be in the laboratories during the day so that they are available for reference if required. With regard to abstracting, the actual reading of the periodicals and selection of matter to be indexed is carried out by the chemists themselves, the periodicals concerned being issued to the sections of the laboratory in turn, for periods of 2-3 days, and 7 days for the final section, which is responsible for noting anything missed by other sections. Indexing is carried out daily in the library before re-issuing a periodical. For copying scientific papers, the Lumiere-Van der Grinten diazo process is used and has given very satisfactory results since July 1938.

Part 2 of the *Proceedings* contains a paper by B. K. Johnson describing four pieces of apparatus for use with microfilming processes. These consist of a hand viewer for the recognition of titles and general identification of the film, a viewer for table use, a

microfilm projector for use by the typist when type-written copies of a document recorded on microfilm are required, and a camera for the photography of documents, etc. In a written communication in the discussion, Mr. E. H. Lindgren stressed the importance of proper safeguards in the storage of the film and referred to an intensive technical examination of the films in his possession which is being carried out with the view of obtaining fuller information on the storage question. Mr. K. S. Smith's paper in the same part describes the airgraph service, Mr. H. J. Dowden the Gesteprint process for duplicating foreign periodicals, etc., in which the stencils are prepared by a photographic process, and a paper by H. Rottenburg on "The Typewriter as the Foundation of the Printed Book" outlines the possibilities of replacing printer's type by a typewriter and discusses the advantages.

### Polarography

POLAROGRAPHIC methods continue to attract attention in Great Britain. Much knowledge has already been obtained and a concise summary of this, written in a simple objective manner, is to be found in a pamphlet, "Cambridge Polarograph", recently published by the Cambridge Instrument Company. For its size this pamphlet covers a great deal of ground and, if the theoretical background of polarography is largely omitted, this is compensated for by the presence of a considerable bibliography which contains references to most of the important papers on the subject. The difficulties of the polarographic method are not unduly emphasized; nevertheless, most of the major pitfalls are mentioned and it is frequently made clear that modifications of technique must be very critically tested. Use of the polarograph for the performance of amperometric titrations has not been overlooked.

A relatively small part of the pamphlet is devoted to a description of the Cambridge polarograph, and it is a pity that a wiring diagram of the instrument is omitted. Clearly, however, satisfactory electrical equipment is provided in a compact form to meet the needs of a present-day user of the polarograph. The text of the pamphlet is well illustrated with reproductions of actual polarograms, which give a very fair idea of the possibilities of the instrument and will no doubt stimulate the efforts of new users of the Cambridge polarograph. A table and chart of the half-wave potentials of inorganic substances, and the bibliography already mentioned, add to the value of the publication.

### Spectroscopy in Astrophysics

DURING a conference on spectroscopy arranged by the University of Chicago on June 22-25, several papers described results of recent research with the aid of the spectroscope. A short account of these papers is given in *Sky and Telescope*, September, by Dorrit Hoffleit. Dr. Andrew McKellar, of the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory, has made a critical study of the intensities of bands in the spectra of Comet Hassel (1939d) and Comet Cunningham (1940c). These bands correspond to temperatures ranging roughly from  $200^{\circ}$  to  $2,000^{\circ}$  K., and further research is desirable to explain this anomaly. The use of the spectroscope in settling the composition of planetary atmospheres has been followed by numerous theories to account for the diversity in the atmospheres of the planets, assuming that they all