

accorded many honours, but he probably appreciated as much as any the award to him in 1892 of the Albert Medal by the Royal Society of Arts. Only one American, Eads, the great bridge builder, had received it previously. Of Dutch descent on his father's side, Edison came of a long-lived family, and he could tire out any of his staff. His mother, to whom his debt was great, was of Canadian-Scottish descent. He himself was twice married and had six children. The Menlo Park laboratory has now been removed to Mr. Henry Ford's Industrial Museum at Dearborn, Michigan; it is a worthy memorial.

New York Academy of Medicine: Centenary Celebrations

THE first meeting of the New York Academy of Medicine was held on January 6, 1847, when the founders dedicated themselves to the establishment of an institution for the improvement of medical education, the advancement of the public health, the elimination of quackery and malpractice and the instruction of the public on matters of health and hygiene. Centenary celebrations will begin on March 6, with an assembly of the fellowship and the friends of the Academy, when the centennial discourse will be delivered by Prof. John A. Ryle, head of the Institute of Social Medicine at Oxford, who will speak on "Social Pathology and the New Era in Medicine". Following this meeting, a series of activities in the Academy building have been planned which will continue throughout March and April. Each of the eleven sections of the Academy will celebrate the centennial with a dinner of its own members, followed by a meeting in which eminent authorities in the specialty will participate. Each of the Academy's standing committees has arranged for a three-day conference, dealing with post-graduate medical education, public health, social medicine, hospitals and medical libraries respectively.

Various affiliated clinical and scientific societies such as the Harvey Society, the Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine, the New York Academy of Sciences and the New York Chapter of the American Chemical Society have accepted invitations to hold meetings in the Academy building during the period of the celebration. A historical exhibit of the Academy and its role in medical progress over the past one hundred years is being assembled and will be on view in the Academy throughout March and April. An exhibit is also being assembled in collaboration with the New York City Planning Commission and hospital authorities dealing with the history of the older municipal and voluntary hospitals of the city, at which plans for their post-war development will be shown. Special public exhibits on medical and historical subjects are being arranged at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the New York Public Library, the New York Historical Society, the Museum of the City of New York and at private art galleries which possess famous prints, collections and other *memorabilia* on the medicine of a hundred years ago. Dr. George Baehr, president of the Academy, will broadcast an address on "A Hundred Years of Medical Progress".

Atomic Research in India

IT is reported (*J. Sci. Ind. Res., India*, 5, 90; Aug. 1946) that the Atomic Research Committee of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, India, has recommended an intensive geological and physico-chemical survey of the thorium-bearing

minerals in Travancore, and set up a sub-committee to draw up proposals for a similar survey of uranium-bearing minerals in India. The Committee considers that atomic research should be given first priority and encouraged by the Government of India on a large scale. However, as it is likely that only small sums will be available for the purpose, it will be necessary to concentrate research at one centre in the country. The centre recommended is the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research in Bombay, where a 300 MeV. betatron, with a team of ten workers to operate it, is to be established. Grants, to Prof. M. N. Saha for operational expenses of a cyclotron, and to Prof. D. M. Bose for research on the trans-uranic elements, were also recommended by the Committee.

A New Polarizing Light-Filter

DR. BRUCE BILLINGS, of the Polaroid Research Laboratory (Polaroid Corporation, Cambridge 39, Mass.), has recently given to the American Astronomical Society and the American Association for the Advancement of Science an account of a new type of light filter, making use of the familiar process of building up a filter by the use of crystal plates. Dr. Billings has varied the method by using plates the optical characteristics of which change under the influence of an electric field. This admits of much more rapid and easily controlled changes in the wave-lengths transmitted through the filter than was possible with earlier types. No details are given in the account available as to the narrowness of the band of transmitted light; but it is claimed that it allows for changes in the velocity in the line of sight in prominence streamers so as to give a complete record of the motions of parts of a prominence from a series of pictures taken at different wave-lengths in rapid succession. This promises a marked advance in our knowledge of the three-dimensional structure and whirling motions in prominences, just when they are becoming of increased interest to the student of solar and terrestrial phenomena. Further details will be awaited with interest.

Kew Bulletin

IT will be welcome news to botanical systematists that publication of the *Kew Bulletin* has been resumed after a lapse of nearly five years. The last number to appear was No. 3, 1941, which was issued in March 1942, and publication was thereafter suspended until No. 1, 1946, which has just been issued (London: H.M. Stationery Office, Dec. 1946, 2s. 6d.). It contains a continuation of the additions to the flora of Borneo and other Malay Islands, a part of which was published in 1940, a key to the Carices of Malaysia and Polynesia, notes on some species of the genus *Cryptolepis*, and a description and figure of a new species of *Arisaema* as principal contents.

Spiral Cracks in Glass Tubing

W. P. THISTLETHWAITE, Merchant Venturers' Technical College, Bristol, writes: "A few days after the appearance in *Nature* of October 19 (p. 582) of a letter on this subject, a student brought to me a test-tube exhibiting a perfect spiral crack. The tube was new but notched at the mouth, and was being used to heat a mixture of sand and ammonium chloride. Apparently the crack appeared immediately on contact with a bunsen flame; it originated at the notch in the lip of the tube. That the crack was