

## NEWS AND VIEWS

**André-Jean Marie Brochant de Villiers (1772-1840)**

ON May 16 occurs the centenary of the death of the French geologist and mineralogist Brochant de Villiers, through whose initiative the construction of a complete geological chart of France was undertaken. Born at the Château de Villiers, near Mantes, on August 6, 1772, he was educated under the Oratoriens and acquired a taste for natural history. When nineteen, he went to Freiburg, in Germany, to study under Werner, by whom he was much influenced. In 1793, when the Revolutionary movement in France was at its height, he entered the *École des Ponts et Chaussées* and afterwards the *École des Mines*. In 1804, when the *École des Mines* had been removed to Pezay, in Savoy, Brochant de Villiers was made professor of geology and mineralogy, and he held this post for some years after the return of the school to Paris in 1815. He also became an inspector-general of mines and a member of the Paris Academy of Sciences.

So early as 1811, Brochant de Villiers had submitted a plan for a chart of France, but it was not until 1822, when a copy of Greenough's geological map of England was received in Paris, that any definite steps were taken to further his plan. That year, however, he was entrusted with the construction of geological charts for the whole of France, and with his two assistants, Elie de Beaumont and Dufrenoy, he visited England to become acquainted with British methods of geological surveying. With the help of the engineers of the Corps des Mines, steady progress was made, and by 1835, fifty-nine charts of various districts had been prepared, but Brochant did not live to see the first complete map, which was published in 1842. This map was on a scale of 1 in 500,000, but the geological chart of France undertaken later, and completed only a short time since, is on a scale of 1 in 80,000.

**Leopoldo Maggi (1840-1906)**

LEOPOLDO MAGGI, an eminent Italian protozoologist and craniologist, was born at Varese, on May 15, 1840. He was educated at Pavia, where he was assistant first to Paolo Panceri and then to Balsamo Crivelli, and in 1864 was appointed lecturer in mineralogy and geology. In 1874 he was appointed professor of zoology and comparative anatomy and physiology at Pavia, and afterwards, when zoology became a separate subject, he occupied the chair of comparative anatomy and physiology from 1875 until his death. He carried out studies in palaeontology as well as various zoological and anatomical researches, but his principal work was concerned with protistology and craniology. He was the first Italian to direct attention to Protozoa, to the knowledge of which he made important contributions. His chief publications were as follows: "Nuovi orizzonti della protistologia

medica" (1884), "A proposito dei protisti cholerigeni" (1885), "I piccoli benefattori dell'umanità" (1886), "Intorno alla determinazione della specie batteriche secondo Pflügge" and "I microbi vantaggiosi all'uomo" (1888). He died on March 7, 1905.

**International Spirit in Science**

THE award to Sir Harold Carpenter of the Honda Prize was announced in *NATURE* of March 30. It is of interest to know that this is the second occasion only when the prize has been awarded. The first award was to Prof. K. Honda himself, in whose honour the Japanese Institute of Metals established the prize a short time ago. Prof. Honda's work on the magnetic and other properties of metals is well known to scientific men in many countries outside Japan. It is a striking tribute to the international feeling among men of science that the Japanese Institute of Metals should have chosen, at the present time, a British scientific man as the recipient of what may be regarded as the first 'open' award of its highest honour. During the Napoleonic Wars a century ago, it was possible for scientific men, even those in belligerent countries, to maintain fairly free intercourse and to obtain safe conducts for visits. To-day, the difficulties of the international situation have made such relations most difficult, and the recent recognition by the Japanese of Sir Harold Carpenter's achievements is thus doubly precious.

**The Pharmaceutical Society: Honorary Members**

IT will be gratifying to medical circles in India to learn that Colonel Ram Nath Chopra, head of the Faculty of Pharmacology in the School of Tropical Medicine, Calcutta, has been elected an honorary member of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain. This distinction is conferred upon a very limited number of scientific workers, the list of honorary members being not more than twenty-five at the present time. Colonel Chopra has been, and still is, an earnest worker in the cause of reform of the drug trade in India; it was upon the recommendations of the Drugs Enquiry Committee, of which he was chairman, that the Indian Drug Bill, the provisions of which measure were commented upon in a recent issue of *NATURE* (May 4, p. 716), were based. At the May meeting of the Council of the Pharmaceutical Society at which the election took place, two other names were also added to the list of honorary members: Sir Ernley Blackwell, who was chairman of the Society's Statutory Committee during 1934-1939, and Sir William Willcox, the Visitor for the Privy Council to the Society's Examinations.

**Nuclear Fission of Separated Uranium Isotopes**

SOME recent accounts in the daily Press referring to the separation of uranium (235) would suggest developments arising from a letter in the *Physical*