

News and Views

Jean Antoine Claude Chaptal, 1756-1832

WHEN on July 30, 1832—a century ago—Chaptal died at the age of seventy-six years, France lost a man of science and statesman who had, perhaps, done more to further the progress of the arts, industries, and manufactures of the country than any of his contemporaries. The son of a pharmacist, he was trained as a doctor, but it was chemistry which absorbed his attention, and it was as a chemical manufacturer that he first made a reputation. Born on June 4, 1756, at Nogaret, in the Department of Lozère, he graduated at Montpellier in 1777, and four years later was appointed to a newly founded chair of chemistry at the University there. With the fortune left by an uncle he established works for the manufacture of acids, alum, white-lead, and other commodities, and his success was such that in 1793 the Committee of Public Safety employed him with Berthollet and Monge to superintend the manufacture of munitions. Under Chaptal, the output of the Grenelle powder factory was raised to $1\frac{1}{2}$ tons a day.

CHAPTAL became one of the first professors at the École Polytechnique, reorganised the Paris school of medicine, and after being made a Councillor of State, became Minister of the Interior. As such he energetically promoted trade schools, industrial exhibitions and chambers of commerce, and the construction of roads and improvements in public health. It was to Chaptal that Napoleon one day said, "I intend to make Paris the most beautiful capital in the world", and it was at Chaptal's suggestion that a canal was cut for bringing water to Paris from the River Oureq. Though his loyalty to Napoleon afterwards led to his name being removed from the list of peers, he continued to work for the common good until loss of fortune and old age overtook him. Among his many books, that on chemistry applied to the arts, published in 1806, was translated into most of the languages of Europe, and long remained a valuable work of reference. His tomb is in the Père Lachaise, where so many eminent men of science are buried. He was a member of the Institut de France from 1816 onwards, and his *éloge* was delivered before the Academy of Sciences by Thenard.

Centenary of the British Medical Association

THE annual general meeting of the British Medical Association, which marks the official opening of the centenary meeting of the Association in London, will take place on July 23 at the Association's house in Tavistock Square, London. On July 24 a pilgrimage to Worcester has been arranged. In this city, in 1832, the project for an organised alliance of medical practitioners first took shape, under the guidance of Charles Hastings, who was born at Ludlow on Jan. 11, 1794. In the morning, Dr. W. G. Willoughby will unveil a plaque on a house in which Sir Charles Hastings formerly lived, the Mayor of Worcester assisting at the ceremony. An original portrait of Hastings (1839),

by G. F. Faulkner, from the Board Room of the City Infirmary, will be handed over to the Association. From the house there will be a robed procession to the Cathedral to participate in a commemoration service, at which the sermon will be preached by Dr. E. W. Barnes, Bishop of Birmingham. A memorial window will be unveiled by the Right Hon. Lord Dawson of Penn. Lord Dawson will deliver his presidential address on July 26, at Queen's Hall, Langham Place, London, W.1. Next day the Lord Mayor and Corporation of London will hold a civic reception at Guildhall. A centenary dinner will take place at the Albert Hall, on July 28; Lord Dawson will preside and H.R.H. the Prince of Wales will be the principal guest. The clinical and scientific work of the meeting will be divided among twenty-four sections. In that devoted to the history of medicine (president, Dr. Charles Singer), in a discussion on various aspects of British medicine during the past hundred years, Sir Edward Sharpey-Schafer, the veteran physiologist, will open a discussion on the physiology of the period, while Dr. P. H. Manson-Bahr will open another dealing with tropical medicine. Personal letters and relics of British pioneers of tropical medicine will be shown by Dr. Manson-Bahr. A large number of Dominion and foreign guests is attending the centenary meeting.

Vienna Academy of Sciences

AT meetings of the Vienna Academy of Sciences held on May 30 and 31, Dr. Hans Molisch, emeritus professor of plant anatomy and physiology in the University of Vienna, was elected a vice-president, and Dr. Anton Eiselsberg, emeritus professor of surgery in the University of Vienna, was made an honorary member of the Academy. In addition to various Austrian members, the following foreign elections were made: Dr. Franz Kossmat, professor of geology in the University of Leipzig; Dr. E. B. Wilson, professor of biology at Columbia University; Dr. Michael Rostovtzeff, professor of ancient history and classical archaeology at Yale University; Dr. Hugo Obermaier, professor of ancient history at the University of Madrid, and Dr. Norbert Krebs, professor of geography at the University of Berlin, to be corresponding foreign members; and Dr. Friedrich Meinecke, professor of history at the University of Berlin; Dr. Eduard Schwartz, professor of classical philology at the University of Munich, and Dr. Jakob Wackernagel, professor of classical philology at the University of Basle, to be honorary foreign members. The following awards of prizes were also announced: The Ignaz L. Lieben prize, jointly to Dr. Georg Koller for his work on the acids of lichens and Dr. Alois Zincke for his researches on perylene; the Haitinger prize to Dr. Otto Redlich for his investigations on the constitution of water and aqueous solutions; the Hansgirt prize to Dr. Hans Krumpholtz for his determinations of the positions of double stars and comets; the Rudolf Wegscheider prize to Dr. Fritz Wessely for his work on glucosides, flavones, and natural coumarins;