

of Erasmus Darwin, Boulton, Watt, Priestley and Davy. The youngest of a family of eighteen and born in Stirlingshire, after attending the High School and University of Edinburgh he entered the Army and afterwards served for several years in the West Indies. Resigning his commission in 1768, he settled in the Midlands, became connected with various industrial enterprises and devoted himself to chemistry and geology. He was in turn a glass manufacturer at Stourbridge, an assistant to Boulton and Watt at Soho and the founder, with Alexander Blair, of a soap and alkali works. With Blair, too, in 1794 he opened the Tividale Colliery. In 1776 he translated Macquer's "Dictionary of Chemistry" and in 1777 published a treatise on elastic fluids or gases. He also contributed chemical papers to the Royal Society, and in 1785 was elected a fellow. A chemical dictionary of his own, of which he published the first part in 1789, he discontinued on his becoming convinced of the weakness of the phlogiston theory. For many years he lived at West Bromwich, where he died October 11, 1820, at the age of eighty-five years.

#### Adam Politzer, 1835-1920

ADAM POLITZER, one of the principal founders of otology, was born at Alberti in Hungary on October 1, 1835. He studied medicine in Vienna under Skoda, Rokitansky, Oppolzer and C. Ludwig, and qualified in 1859. In 1861 he was appointed lecturer in otology, and during the following years held a number of appointments in the University of Vienna connected with his speciality, being elected professor of otology in 1895 and director of the otological clinic in 1898. In addition to a textbook on otology first published in 1878, which ran through many editions and was translated into English in 1883 and 1902, he was the author of numerous articles on the anatomy and physiology of the ear and its diseases, especially suppurative otitis media and polypi. In 1864 he helped to found the *Archiv für Ohrenheilkunde*, and in 1895 the Austrian Otological Society. The Vienna ear clinic possesses a rich collection of anatomical and pathological specimens of the ear prepared by him. His name is attached to a method of inflation of the middle ear through the Eustachian tube by a pear-shaped rubber bag introduced through the nostril. He died in his eighty-fifth year on August 10, 1920.

#### Louis Ranvier, 1835-1922

LOUIS ANTOINE RANVIER, the eminent French histologist, was born at Lyons on October 2, 1835. His medical education took place in Paris, where he qualified in 1865, and two years later became Claude Bernard's assistant at the Collège de France. In 1875 he was appointed to the chair of general anatomy in the Paris faculty of medicine, and held this appointment for more than thirty years. In 1886 he was elected a member of the Paris Academy of Medicine and in the following year a member of the Academy of Sciences. He also became a member of numerous foreign academies and learned societies.

His principal works are the "Manuel d'histologie pratique", written in collaboration with Cornil (1869-76) and his "Traité technique d'histologie" (1875-82). He made numerous contributions to the proceedings of the Société de Biologie and Academy of Sciences, and published a large number of papers in the *Journal de l'Anatomie et de la Physiologie*, *Archives de Physiologie*, *Journal de Micrographie*, etc. The term 'Ranvier's nodes', which is familiar to every biological student, has been given to the annular constrictions of the neurilemma associated with discontinuity of the medullary sheath of the nerve fibre. Ranvier died on March 22, 1922, in his eighty-seventh year, at Vendranges, Loire, where he had been living in retirement for some years.

#### 'Legislative Anthropology'

DR. ARTHUR MACDONALD, of Washington, D.C., and formerly fellow of Johns Hopkins University, is well known for his advocacy of the claims of 'legislative anthropology', that is, study of the legislative, political, psychological, sociological and physical status of members of a legislature or parliament. He holds that as chosen servants of the people, members of the United States Legislature, for example, coming from all sections, are truly representative, and afford a good opportunity of establishing the anthropological status of the country. He goes further and argues that a similar study in other countries would afford a basis for comparison as between nations. At present, his opportunities are confined to material from the United States. He has made a study of certain physical characters of eighty-nine members of Congress, of which the results were published in the *Congressional Record* of the Seventy-second Congress, First Session, under date May 11, 1932. The figures then given established some interesting correlations, especially when studied in their geographical distribution according to States. Dr. Macdonald has now instituted some interesting comparisons between these members of Congress and a number of the insane, although he admits that the latter have no distinctive physical character. The number of individuals measured in this category was 360. They were chosen for their intelligence and included ex-army and naval officers and professional men. The majority, however, had no more than common school education, and for the most part had practised trades. The following are some of the measurements: *Congress*—length of head, 196 mm.; breadth of head, 156 mm.; height of head, 139 mm. *Insane*—length of head, 190 mm.; breadth of head, 151 mm.; height of head, 139 mm. It is to be noted, however, that while stature and weight in members of Congress are respectively 177 cm. and 183 lb., in the insane they are 170 cm. and 150 lb. Obviously the figures need further analysis before any significant conclusion can emerge.

#### An Education Film—"Northern Lights"

THE sound film entitled "Northern Lights" seen recently at a private view at the offices of the Western Electric Co. at Bush House, Aldwych, London, W.C.2,