

cows, investigations on the chemical composition of typical milk and of taints of milk, the lactic acid bacteria and cheese-ripening studies, and on pasteurization and tubercle bacilli in milk. Cases of contagious abortion among the Institute's herd of cows gave an opportunity for investigating *Brucella abortus* infection. Bacteriological testing of milk samples and market milk investigations have also been carried out, and the phosphatase test for efficiency of pasteurization has been re-examined. The financial condition of the Institute is considered, and an appeal is made for further funds to enable an extension of the work to be made.

Oxford and Present Needs in Science

REFERRING to the leading article in NATURE of February 20 under this title, a correspondent writes as follows: "As some readers may not be familiar with the names given to certain buildings in Oxford, it may be helpful to state that the 'Ashmolean Museum' now means the Museum of Art and Archaeology, chiefly classical, established in Beaumont Street in 1890, whereas the 'Museum of the History of Science' means the ancient scientific collections in the Old Ashmolean Building, which was the only science museum from 1683 until 1860. In this building Ashmole's old museum room is now full to overflowing of historic instruments and specimens; and money is needed for its extension. The changes contemplated in the various scientific departments of the University make it more than ever necessary to provide for the preservation of things of historic value that might otherwise be scrapped".

Early Man in Minnesota

PROF. A. E. JENKS, of the University of Minnesota, reporting recently on "Minnesota man", a female skeleton found in ancient lake deposits in 1931, attributes to it an age of approximately 20,000 years, and regards it as the oldest specimen of early man to be found in America. The teeth had all erupted, with the exception of the wisdom teeth, but as the long bones appear to be still immature, the age of the girl was probably about fifteen years. The teeth are larger than normal in prehistoric man. In summing up the characters of the skeleton, Prof. Jenks, it is stated by Science Service, regards it as *Homo sapiens*, of an early type of evolving Mongoloid, forecasting the aboriginal American, especially the Eskimo, rather than the modern Mongol. It has been computed that the Lake Pelican deposits, in which the skeletal remains were found, antedate those of the glacial Lake Agassiz by some two thousand years, thus warranting this increase in the age usually admitted for early man on the American continent.

Sanitary Aviation in Soviet Russia

THE sanitary aviation service maintained by the Red Cross and Red Crescent Society of the U.S.S.R. is fast becoming a regular institution for medical aid, particularly in outlying regions of the Union. Sanitary aeroplanes are kept in readiness in all parts of the Union to answer urgent calls for medical aid. In

1936, more than 400 patients were carried by air to hospitals and more than 500 specialists were taken by air to various places where they performed some fifty major operations and treated about four thousand seriously ill persons. In 1936 also, the sanitary aeroplanes of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Society carried more than 2,000 kilograms of medical supplies to different points of the Union.

Biochemistry in the U.S.S.R.

WE have received the first five numbers of the first volume of a new Russian journal, devoted to biochemistry. It is entitled *Biochimia*, and is edited by A. N. Bach and W. A. Engelhardt. The papers are in Russian, but each is provided with a summary in English or German. The average size of each number is about 120 pages. The papers deal with work on vitamins, enzymes and other biochemical problems. The journal should enable workers in other countries to gain some idea of the work which is being carried out in Russia in biochemistry.

Comets

A NEW comet was discovered by Dr. F. L. Whipple at Harvard on February 7. Its magnitude was 12 at the time of discovery, and it was described as diffuse with a central condensation, and a tail less than 1° in length. Dr. Whipple computed the following parabolic orbit:

T	1937	Jan.	22-070	U.T.	
ω			111° 27'	} 1937-0	
Ω			127 4		
i			41 4		
q			1.6610		

It is now about 1.5 units from the earth, which it is approaching, but it is not likely to become a conspicuous object. Mr. Simizi in Japan detected Daniel's Comet, 1909 iv, 1937 a, on January 31. Its magnitude was 13 and it was diffuse without any central condensation. Mr. Hirose computed an orbit the elements of which are given below. It is receding from the earth, and is now more than 1.4 units distant.

T	1937	Jan.	27-940	U.T.	
ω			6° 1'	} 1937-0	
Ω			70 19		
i			19 50		
q			1.537		
			Period	6.825.	

The Night Sky in March

DURING March, the duration of night in the latitude of London decreases by nearly two hours. On March 21^d 1^h the sun enters the sign Aries (Spring Equinox). The moon is new on March 12^d 19.5^h and full on March 26^d 23.2^h. No bright stars are occulted during the month, but the following disappearances may be noted: 108 Tauri (mag. 6.2) on March 18^d 19^h 39.0^m when the moon is 6 days old, and ϵ Leonis (mag. 5.1) on March 25^d 21^h 54.4^m, the moon being 13 days old. The planet Venus, which does not set until about 22^h, is a striking object and reaches its greatest brilliancy on March 12; the area of the illuminated crescent is then 0.28 that of the whole apparent disk. Mercury, being in superior conjunction with the sun

on March 16, is not accessible to observation. Mars rises at about midnight and is about $1\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ preceding the third magnitude star, β Scorpii. The planet brightens during the month from $+0.4^m$ to -0.3^m , its greatest brightness being reached in May. Jupiter, of stellar magnitude -1.6 to -1.7 , will be found low down in the morning sky. Saturn, being in conjunction with the sun on March 16, is above the horizon almost wholly in daytime. On March 8, Neptune (mag. 7.7) in Leo is in opposition; the planet's distance from the earth will then be nearly 2,714 millions of miles. The zodiacal light may be looked for on clear evenings after sunset at the beginning and end of the month. On or about March 3 and March 30, the night sky may also be scanned for any appearance of the aurora; auroras were observed 27 and 54 days earlier in northern England and Scotland respectively, and this 27-day sequence may possibly be continued in March. In any event, auroral displays may now be looked for generally on account of the active state of the sun, and there is also a higher frequency of magnetic disturbances at about the equinoxes. The following positions at 0^h U.T. of Comet Whipple (1937 b) are given in Circular No. 636 of the *Bureau Central des Télégrammes Astronomiques*:

	R.A.		Dec.	
	h	m	°	'
March 4	13	49.9	+45	42
" 8		54.3	47	25
" 12		58.3	49	6
" 16	14	1.8	50	44

Announcements

THE new ultra-centrifuge in the Department of Biochemistry of the University of Oxford will be inaugurated at 4 p.m. on February 27. The Vice-Chancellor of the University, the president of the Royal Society and Prof. The Svedberg, of the University of Uppsala, will be present.

AT the annual general meeting of the Quekett Microscopical Club, held on February 9, the following officers were elected: *President*, W. E. Watson Baker; *Vice-Presidents*, E. A. Robins, J. T. Holder, Dr. C. Tierney, and Chetwynd Palmer; *Treasurer*, C. H. Bestow; *Secretary*, W. S. Warton; *Reporter*, A. Morley Jones; *Librarian*, W. E. Stone; *Curator*, C. J. Sidwell; *Editor*, W. P. Sollis. *New Members of Committee*: F. C. Grigg, N. I. Hendey, A. E. McClure, F. E. J. Oekenden, C. C. Swatman.

AT a meeting of the president and fellows of Harvard College in Boston, held on January 18, it was voted "that the thanks of the President and Fellows be sent to Sir Robert Hadfield for his beautiful and welcome gift of a picture appropriately commemorating in this University the University of Oxford, with which during a period of three hundred years Harvard has enjoyed close associations; and that the picture, with the accompanying gifts of books, scientific papers and other mementos, be gratefully accepted and duly recorded in connection with the recent observance of the Tercentenary of Harvard College". (A note on the picture in question,

which gives an unusual view of Oxford from the Sheldonian Theatre, appeared in NATURE of December 12, p. 1005.)

IN conjunction with its annual general meeting in May 1938, the Iron and Steel Institute is to organize a symposium on "Steelmaking". Particular attention will be given to acid and basic open-hearth processes. Further information can be obtained from the Secretary, Iron and Steel Institute, 28 Victoria Street, London, S.W.1.

A DAVID ANDERSON-BERRY GOLD MEDAL, together with a sum of money amounting to about £100, will be awarded in July 1938 by the Royal Society of Edinburgh to the person who, in the opinion of the Council, has recently produced the best work on the nature of X-rays in their therapeutical effect on human diseases. A similar award will be made every three years. Applications for this prize are invited. They may be based on both published and unpublished work and should be accompanied by copies of relevant papers. Applications must be in the hands of the General Secretary, Royal Society of Edinburgh, 22 George Street, Edinburgh 2, by June 1, 1938.

THE Annual Malaria Control Course for Laymen will be held at the Ross Institute of Tropical Hygiene, Keppel Street (Gower Street), London, W.C.1, commencing on June 21, at 10 a.m., under the direction of Sir Malcolm Watson, director of the Institute. The course lasts five days, and is designed for planters and mining engineers, but it will be of interest to all (including missionaries) who are proceeding to the tropics. Application to attend the course should be sent in as early as possible to the Organizing Secretary at the above address. Admission is free.

THE Medical Society of Vienna will celebrate the centenary of its foundation in conjunction with the Union for Postgraduate Instruction on May 19-29.

THE next congress of the Society of German Men of Science and Medicine will be held at Stuttgart in 1938.

A NATIONAL medical council on birth control has been formed in the United States to control and supervise medical policies of the American Birth Control League, and to initiate, encourage and carry out appropriate scientific research in the medical aspects of birth control.

THE American Association for the Study of Goitre offers the Van Meter Prize of 300 dollars and two honourable mentions for the best essays on experimental and clinical investigation of the thyroid gland. The award will be made at the next annual meeting of the Association, which will be held at Detroit, Michigan, on June 14. The MSS., which should not exceed 3,000 words, must be presented in English, and a type-written double-spaced copy sent to the secretary, Dr. W. Blair Mosser, 133 Biddle Street, Kane, Pennsylvania, not later than April 1.