

Had it been possible for Greenaway to complete his chemistry training in Germany, as was then the custom, there is evidence that he might have become distinguished in his chosen profession. There is also evidence that had he not devoted his life to chemistry he might have become a distinguished artist. As it was, he was overburdened in his younger days with routine and irksome teaching from which he had to break away. In 1877, he published a paper, with the late R. J. Friswell, on thallos platinumocyanide, and in 1881, while still teaching, he translated and edited, with the late Prof. W. R. Hodgkinson, Wislicenus's "Short Text-book of Organic Chemistry". At a time when he must have been fully occupied with editorial work he edited in 1891 the translation of the fifth edition of Mendeléeff's "Principles of Chemistry"; he also edited with the present writer a volume of the Faraday Lectures for the Chemical Society and he wrote a charming personal account of his friend, Prof. W. H. Perkin, who died in 1929. Greenaway became a fellow of the Chemical Society in 1874 and was elected a vice-president in 1924. He was an original fellow of the Institute of Chemistry (1877).

For the Chemical Society, John Greenaway did outstanding and self-sacrificing work, and to him the Society must always be greatly indebted. He will long be remembered for his personal charm and modesty by many whom he taught to appreciate, as he did so intensely, beautiful things.

CHARLES S. GIBSON.

WE regret to announce the following deaths:

Prof. S. Alexander, O.M., F.B.A., honorary professor of philosophy in the University of Manchester, on September 13, aged seventy-nine years.

Dr. Charles Carpenter, C.B.E., formerly president of the South Metropolitan Gas Company, on September 7, aged eighty years.

M. de La Baume Pluvinel, member of the Section of Astronomy of the Paris Academy of Sciences, known for his solar researches and for numerous instrumental developments, on July 18, aged seventy-seven years.

Sir Basil Mott, C.B., F.R.S., president in 1924 of the Institution of Civil Engineers, on September 7, aged seventy-eight years.

## News and Views

### Herman Boerhaave (1668-1738)

HERMAN BOERHAAVE, eminent alike as physician, chemist and botanist, was born at Voorhuit, a village near Leyden, on December 31, 1668. He first intended to become a clergyman, like his father, and after studying philosophy, theology and mathematics, qualified as a doctor of philosophy at Leyden in 1690 with a thesis on the distinction between the mind and the body. He then took up medicine, in which he qualified in 1693 with a dissertation on the importance of examining the excreta in disease. In 1702 he was appointed lecturer in the institute of medicine, his inaugural address being devoted to the importance of the study of Hippocrates. In 1709 he was made professor of botany and medicine, and five years later succeeded Bidloo in the chair of practical medicine, becoming in the same year rector of the University of Leyden. In 1718 he became professor of chemistry, on which subject he published several works, the most notable being "Elementa chemiæ" (1724), regarded by Garrison as the best work on chemistry in the eighteenth century. His other principal works are "Institutiones medicæ" (1708) and "Aphorismi de cognoscendis et curandis morbis" (1709). Moreover, in conjunction with Albinus, the greatest contemporary anatomist, he edited the collected works of Vesalius. In addition to Peter the Great, he counted among his pupils such eminent physicians as Haller, Pringle, Cullen, De Haen and van Swieten, the last of whom published a commentary on the Aphorisms. Boerhaave enjoyed a world-wide reputation, and many of his

works were translated into different languages including Turkish and Chinese. His many honours included that of fellowship of the Royal Society and membership of the Academy of Sciences of France. His death took place on September 23, 1738.

### Boerhaave Celebrations

THE Dutch Medical Association, the Leyden Faculty of Medicine and the Society of the History of Natural Sciences of Leyden are organizing a celebration beginning on September 23 to commemorate the two hundredth anniversary of the death of Herman Boerhaave. Visits will be paid to the old St. Cecilia Hospital, where Boerhaave gave clinical lectures, his country house "Poelgeest" near Leyden and the village of Hardewyk on the Zuyder Zee, the seat of the ancient university where Boerhaave presented his inaugural thesis on July 15, 1693. A commemoration volume will be published.

### The Royal Flemish Academ, of Belgium

KING LEOPOLD OF BELGIUM has recently appointed the first thirty members of the Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium. The Academy comprises three classes: Sciences, Letters (including Political and Moral Sciences) and Fine Arts. A decree creating a Flemish Academy of Medicine may be expected to follow soon. This will form a complete equivalent of the old Académie Royale de Belgique, the official language of which is French. By thus putting both Academies on the same footing, instead of merely organizing a bilingual system within the Académie



de Belgique, the Belgian authorities have achieved a further step towards cultural autonomy of the Flemish and French-speaking parts of the kingdom—following upon the creation of the Flemish University at Ghent soon after the Great War. For the present, each of the three classes of the new Flemish institution will consist of ten members appointed by royal decree. Further members will be co-opted, the total number being confined to twenty per class.

THE original members are: *Sciences*: J. De Smedt, A. Dumon, W. Robyns, G. Verriest (all of the University of Louvain); J. Gillis, J. Meuwissen, A. Schoep, H. L. Vanderlinden, A. J. J. Vandeveld (all of the University of Ghent); H. Schouteden (director of the Congo Museum); *Letters, etc.*: P. Bellefroid (University of Nymegen), E. De Bruyne, H. J. De Vleeschauer (both of the University of Ghent), E. Van Dievoet (University of Louvain), H. de Man and R. Victor (both of the University of Brussels), J. Denucé, C. Huysmans, F. Prims and F. Van Cauwelaert (all of Antwerp); *Fine Arts*: P. Gilson, L. Mortelmans, J. Van Nuffel, composers; C. Permeke, A. Servaes, W. Vaes, painters; H. Vandeveld, architect; E. Wynants, sculptor; S. Leurs, University of Ghent; R. Maere, University of Louvain. Provisionally, Messrs. Van Cauwelaert and Schoep will act respectively as president and secretary of the Academy, the full title of which is "Koninklijke Vlaamsche Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schoone Kunsten van België".

#### Control of Nickel Distribution

IN a valuable paper on "The Control of War Metals as a Peace Measure", by F. E. Lathe and S. J. Cook, of the National Research Laboratories, Ottawa, the view is expressed that, although Canada produces more than 80 per cent of the world's output of nickel, control of distribution would not be a simple matter because only about 20 per cent of the annual production is used for war purposes, and the metal frequently passes through several hands before reaching the ultimate consumer. The calculations are based on 1934 figures, but the estimates are believed to be still substantially correct. The pamphlet has been forwarded to NATURE by way of comment on a suggestion made in the course of an article on "Science and a World Foundation" published in our issue of August 6, p. 227. Two further possibilities must be borne in mind. Reserves of the metal could be readily accumulated by the Government of a country which anticipated war; and, in the event of shortage, no effort would be spared to discover substitutes for essential metals. For an extended war, however, extremely large stocks would be required of such metals as iron and steel, copper, zinc and lead. The aim, therefore, should be to introduce restrictions of a temporary or unexpected character. But the only real hope of effective restriction lies in international action, and it would be most effective in the case of tin, antimony, nickel, copper and iron. This conclusion adds point to the proposal that scientific

workers of all nations should, as a group, combine with other groups to give what help they can in promoting the evolution of a World State, capable when necessary of exercising suitable control over the distribution of such commodities.

#### Smoke-like Swarms of the Harlequin Fly

REFERRING to the letter from Mr. A. S. E. Ackermann entitled "A Curious Atmospheric Phenomenon", in NATURE of September 10, several correspondents suggest that the curious grey columns described by him were due to swarms of *Chironomus*, the Harlequin fly. Swarms of these insects dance about in the air at evening time and are commonly called "gnats", to which they have considerable resemblance, though they differ from them in being entirely harmless. They often appear in columns on a calm evening and the columns may break up and re-form with a wavy motion. Capt. C. J. P. Cave writes: "I once saw a number of such columns on a very still evening in Lombardy. At first I took them to be very small narrow pillars of smoke from burning weeds, but a closer view showed them to be swarms of gnats. The whole description given by Mr. Ackermann tallies with my recollection of the phenomenon."

#### National Museum of Southern Rhodesia

DR. G. ARNOLD, director of the National Museum of Southern Rhodesia, Bulawayo, writes to point out that some confusion would appear to have arisen in reference to the proposal to establish a museum for Zimbabwe, reported incorrectly to be intended as a 'National' museum (see NATURE, July 9, p. 65). The proposed museum, Dr. Arnold states, is to be a small one-roomed building, in which will be exhibited some of the original antiquities which have been found in that neighbourhood, and also plaster casts of finds which are now the property of the British Museum and of other museums in Southern Rhodesia and Cape Town. The National Museum of Southern Rhodesia, already in existence at Bulawayo, was formerly the Rhodesian Museum, which was founded in 1901 by the Rhodesia Scientific Association and the Rhodesia Chamber of Mines jointly. From 1902 the Government of Southern Rhodesia contributed to maintenance an annual grant equal in amount to the subscriptions guaranteed by the founding bodies and an annual contribution from the Bulawayo Municipality; but in 1936 the Government, acting on a recommendation made by the Museums Commission, of which Sir Henry Miers was chairman, took over the Museum under an Act of Parliament of Southern Rhodesia, and constituted it the National Museum of Southern Rhodesia. The control is vested in a Board of Trustees appointed by the Governor. It includes departments of zoology, entomology, geology, and ethnology, prehistory and national history. Under the provisions of the Act, the Board is also empowered, subject to the approval of the Governor, to acquire by agreement any existing museum in the Colony, and also, if directed by the Governor, to establish and maintain any new museum in the Colony. The number of visitors in the first year