

assistant lecturer in Prof. A. C. Hardy's new department there. Two years later, the department was enlarged to one of Zoology and Oceanography, and Mr. 'Espinasse then became lecturer with enlarged responsibilities on the zoological side. In 1942, when Prof. Hardy was appointed to the regius chair of natural history at Aberdeen, the Department was split into two: one of zoology with Mr. 'Espinasse as head (several departments in the College have non-professorial heads), and one of oceanography under Dr. C. E. Lucas. Zoology now again has a chair.

Prof. 'Espinasse is a versatile zoologist. While he is keenly interested in genetical theory and has written several papers on it, his researches have been mainly in the fields of micro-anatomy, embryology and the more physiological side of zoology. He worked out the development of the hypophysial portal system in man, has done much work on the action of the hormone œstrone and made important contributions to our knowledge of feather growth. While his skill as a microtome has enriched his Department with beautiful series of histological and embryological preparations, he brings to his teaching something even more valuable: a love of discussion and a deep interest in the philosophy lying behind biological theory.

Centenary of Anæsthesia

ON October 16, 1846, W. T. G. Morton, a dentist of Boston, Massachusetts, successfully administered ether to a patient named Gilbert Abbot during an operation, performed by J. C. Warren, for removal of a tumour from the neck; and this date has just been celebrated as the anniversary of the first practical application of anæsthesia for the purpose of abolishing pain during a surgical operation. An editorial article in the *British Medical Journal* (p. 546, Oct. 12, 1946), and six other articles in this issue, mark this centenary and give an epitome of our knowledge of anæsthetics. Dr. J. H. Burn and H. G. Epstein discuss theories of anæsthetic action, Dr. C. Langton Hewer discusses the remarkable recent advances in anæsthetic practice, A. C. King contributes an illustrated article on the history of anæsthetic apparatus, and Dr. E. Ashworth Underwood, director of the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum, discusses, in another illustrated article, the history of man's knowledge of the use of substances for the purpose of abolishing pain. This latter article, which is a valuable contribution to the history of medicine, begins with a reference to the neolithic age, when unknown substances may have been used for the purpose of abolishing pain during the operation of trephining the skull, which appears to have been performed quite often in those times. The controversies which raged around the work of Clarke, Wells, Morton, and the others, and their experiences with nitrous oxide and ether, are here discussed. Chloroform, first used by James Young Simpson in Edinburgh, came a year or so later. Thereafter, the stage was set for the remarkable subsequent development of what Sir William Osler has called "medicine's greatest single gift". These developments are the subject of an exhibition at the Wellcome Historical Museum, which was opened by Lord Moran on October 16.

In two of the articles in the *British Medical Journal* we are reminded of the close relationships which have always existed between medicine and literature. It was Oliver Wendell Holmes who sug-

gested the terms 'anæsthesia' and 'anæsthetic'; and, when W. E. Henley, who had already lost one foot, had to have the other one amputated, he sought the aid of Lister and was under his care in the Edinburgh Old Infirmary during the years 1873-75. There, with the aid of what he has described as "the thick, sweet mystery of chloroform", he lost his other foot. In his "Hospital Verses", which are extensively quoted in this issue of the *British Medical Journal* in an article by Gunilla Liddle, he gives us a vivid picture, not only of Lister himself, but also of life in the wards of those days and of his own experiences in them. The centenary of the first practical use of anæsthetic substances has also been celebrated by a meeting, held on October 16, of the Royal Society of Medicine, and the *British Medical Bulletin* has a special issue devoted to anæsthetics which has the thoroughness and comprehensive scope characteristic of that journal.

Research in Chronic Rheumatism

AS a result of investigations begun so long ago as 1922, the Medical Advisory Committee to the Ministry of Health recommended in 1945 that a number of diagnostic and research centres should be established for the study of chronic rheumatism and for the improvement of existing facilities for diagnosis and treatment; and it was proposed that the special centres should be located in university medical schools and teaching hospitals, where resources are available for a combined attack on the disease in all its forms. A rheumatism centre of the kind envisaged by the Ministry is to be established at the University of Manchester, with the assistance of a grant from the Nuffield Foundation of £100,000 spread over ten years. In broad outline it is proposed to establish a diagnostic and research centre at the teaching hospital, the Manchester Royal Infirmary, to deal with short-stay in-patients and out-patients. For long-stay in-patients there will also be a clinic at a base hospital near the centre, provided by the Manchester Public Health Committee, and a second base hospital, the Devonshire Royal Hospital at Buxton. At the base hospitals lengthy investigations will be carried out, and problems of rehabilitation and re-settlement will be studied. At the centre the work will cover two main fields: the clinical, sociological and industrial aspects of the disease, and the fundamental study of the disease process by pathological, bacteriological and biochemical methods. The clinical work will be under the direction of a physician who will have the full co-operation of the Departments of Orthopædics and Physiotherapy of the Manchester Royal Infirmary as well as of the University Dental School. The social aspects of the disease, and its industrial implications, will be studied in co-operation with the University Department of Industrial Health. Fundamental research into the causes of diseases of the bones and joints will be under the direction of a whole-time pathologist who is an expert in this field.

National Laboratories in India

ACCORDING to *The Statesman* (Calcutta and Delhi) of October 14, plans for four more national laboratories in India have been approved recently by the Governing Body of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Minister for Food and Agriculture, will lay the foundation stone of the Fuel Research Institute at Digwadih, near Dhanbad, on