

in 1715 under the title "Nova et tuta variolas excitandi per transplantationem methodus; nuper inventa et in usum tracta" and at once copied into the *Philosophical Transactions*. "The most trustworthy account of the Constantinople practice" (Charles Creighton), it dates back to 1701, in which year Pylarino inoculated three children with smallpox virus. He had learned the technique from a Greek woman, but dropped the symbolism, using the skin of the forearm instead of the face at the four points touched in making the sign of the Cross and at the points of the hands and feet pierced by the nails in the Crucifix. It is interesting to note that he spoke of "transplantation" and Timoni of "inoculation"—both figures of speech taken from the gardener's art. Following the publication of Pylarino's description, the Royal Society became really interested in inoculation, and the pages of the *Philosophical Transactions* were filled with further accounts. These were regarded as "virtuoso amusements" (William Douglass) until 1721 when inoculation began to be tried tentatively in London. Pylarino was then no longer living, having died at Padua in June 1718.

City Literary Institute: Science Lectures

A NEW series of lectures sponsored by the City Literary Institute, Stukeley Street, London, W.C.2, and under the auspices of the University of London Department of Extra-Mural Studies, under the general title "Tools of Scientific Discovery: A Review for the Layman and Non-specialist", will begin on January 6, when Prof. G. O. Jones will give an introductory lecture. The other lectures are as follows: "Low Temperatures", Prof. G. O. Jones (January 13); "Radio Telescopes", Mr. Martin Ryle (January 20); "High Temperatures", Dr. R. Latham (January 27); "X-Rays", Dr. H. Judith Milledge (February 3); "Accelerators", Prof. J. Rotblat (February 10); "Isotopes", Prof. J. Rotblat (February 17); "Rockets", Prof. H. S. W. Massey (February 24); "Computers", Dr. R. A. Buckingham (March 3); "Television Techniques", Prof. J. D. McGee (March 10); "Electron Microscope", Mr. C. D. Curling (March 17). The fee for the course is 8s. Further information can be obtained from the Principal of the Institute.

The Night Sky in January

NEW moon occurs on Jan. 9d. 05h. 34m. U.T., and full moon on Jan. 24d. 19h. 32m. The following conjunctions with the Moon take place: Jan. 5d. 11h., Jupiter 2° S.; Jan. 18d. 23h., Mars 5° N. In addition to these conjunctions with the Moon, Mercury is in conjunction with Saturn on Jan. 11d. 04h., Mercury being 0.7° S. Mercury is too close to the Sun for easy observation. Venus is an evening star, visible low in the south-west for a short time after sunset. It sets at 18h. 25m. on January 31; its stellar magnitude is -3.3. Its distance decreases during the month from 170 to 159 million miles. Mars is moving eastwards among the stars and is in Aries throughout January. It sets at 3h. 55m., 3h. 20m. and 2h. 46m. at the beginning, middle and end of the month, respectively. Its stellar magnitude decreases from -0.6 to +0.3, its distance from the Earth increasing from 68 to 94 million miles. Mars is in an excellent position for observing during the evening. Jupiter rises at 4h. 25m., 3h. 40m. and 2h. 45m. on January 1, 15 and 31 respectively; it is in Libra. The stellar magnitude of Jupiter is -1.4; conditions for

observation are not very favourable. Saturn is a morning star in Sagittarius, rising at the end of the month at 5h. 30m.; it is too close to the Sun for easy observation. Occultations of stars brighter than magnitude 6 are as follows, observations being made at Greenwich: Jan. 1d. 05h. 08.8m., ν Leo. (*D*); Jan. 1d. 05h. 31.2m., ν Leo. (*R*); Jan. 22d. 22h. 09.8m., 26 Gem. (*D*); Jan. 26d. 03h. 04.9m., 6 Leo. (*R*). *D* and *R* refer to disappearance and reappearance, respectively. The Quadrantid meteors are active on January 3; the radiant is near R.A. 15h. 28m., Dec. +50°. The Earth is at perihelion on January 2, its distance from the Sun being 91.4 million miles.

Announcements

SIR HENRY DALE has been elected an honorary member of the Biochemical Society. Sir Henry is one of the original members of the Society, and the appointment to honorary membership marks not only his distinction as a scientist but also his many years of service to the Society.

MR. EDMUND J. COOPER, who has had extensive experience of the development of voluntary associations, has been appointed general secretary of the Scientific Film Association.

MR. W. A. FERGUSON, of the Director's office of the British Museum (Natural History), has been appointed secretary of the Museum in succession to Mr. T. Wooddisse, who will retire on reaching the age limit on April 1.

THE Institution of Mining and Metallurgy is to make grants in 1959 from the Bosworth Smith Trust Fund to assist postgraduate research in metalliferous mining (excluding mineral dressing but including surveying and geophysical prospecting). Projects may be supported for more than one year. Forms of application can be obtained from the Secretary, Institution of Mining and Metallurgy, 44 Portland Place, London, W.1, before February 28.

THE Council of St. John's College, Cambridge, proposes not later than the end of April 1959 to make an election to the Kenneth Craik Research Award for the assistance of persons engaged in postgraduate research, preferably in physiological psychology. The value of the Award will be £450 a year. It will be tenable from October 1, 1959, for such period, not less than one year nor more than three years, as the Council shall decide. Applications should be sent to the Master, St. John's College, Cambridge, so as to reach him not later than March 14.

THE Bradford Chemical Society, in conjunction with the Department of Chemical Technology of the Bradford Institute of Technology and the Yorkshire Council for Further Education, is holding a symposium on "Radiation Chemistry" on February 13 and 14 at the Bradford Institute of Technology, Great Horton Road, Bradford 1. Further information can be obtained from Dr. W. R. Moore at the above address.

THE British Polarographic Research Society, 55 Oriental Road, Woking, Surrey, is organizing an intensive five-day course in polarography, to be held during January 12-16. Instruction in techniques will be given by specialists from the Technical Advisory Panel of the Institute. Further details can be obtained from the Secretary of the Institute.