

edge of languages. Applications should be addressed to the Bureau du Personnel, Institut International d'Agriculture, Villa Borghese, Rome.

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, JR., has given \$60,000 a year for five years to the Memorial Hospital for laboratory and clinical research into the causes of cancer, the education of specialists who could diagnose cancer in its early stages and for improving and enlarging the nursing and medical staffs.

ONE hundred seismological stations are being built throughout the Soviet Union by the Academy of Sciences, which is undertaking to forecast earthquakes in the hope of saving life and property. Professor Nikiforoff is in charge of the work.

*Nature* states that the Astronomer Royal has arranged for the supply of enlarged photographic prints of the fine picture of solar prominences and inner corona secured at Giggleswick during the total eclipse of the sun on July 29. The moon's disc on the picture is  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter, and the structure of the prominences and corona is remarkably fine and clear on the print. Copies may be purchased upon application to Mr. F. Jeffries, Royal Observatory, Greenwich, London, S. E. 10.

THE University of Leyden has held a special exhibition of the portraits and scientific instruments of Dutch physicians, biologists and instrument makers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in the physical laboratory of the university on the occasion of the sixth Congress of the History of Medicine, which was held in July, in Leyden and Amsterdam. *Nature* states that Drs. C. A. Crommelin, W. P. Jorissen, C. J. Van der Klaauw and W. H. Van Seters, have collaborated in producing a catalogue of the 139 objects exhibited in illustration of the work of 's Gravesande, the Munchenbroecks, Huygens, Leeuwenhoek and Swammerdam. Two of the exhibits, two object glasses made by Constantijn Huygens, junior, and signed by him "C. Huygens, 10 May 1686, Ped. 122" and "C. Huygens, 19 Jun. 1686, Ped. 84," are of great interest, because they are accurately dated documents which, taken in conjunction with the three object glasses in the possession of the Royal Society of London, and dated June 4, June 26, and July 23, 1686, are evidence of the great industry and rapidity of working of the maker. We also note the reappearance of a quadrant made by J. M. Kleman for Boerhaave for use at his country house at Oud-Poelgeest. Although not stated in the catalogue, this quadrant, after being exhibited at Oxford in 1919, was given to the University of Leyden by the late Sir William Osler.

THE annual report of the Rockefeller Foundation for 1926 shows the total amount available for disbursement was \$15,818,156, of which \$9,741,474 was disbursed on account of appropriations, leaving an undisbursed income on December 31, 1926, of \$6,076,682. Against this were unpaid appropriations of \$4,200,284, leaving a balance of \$1,876,398 available for 1927 appropriations. The income for 1926 was \$9,075,022, which, with undisbursed income on hand January 1, 1926, and refunds during 1925 on prior year appropriations of \$6,743,134, brought the total amount available for disbursement to the above figure. Disbursements under the general budget in 1926 included \$2,516,758 for the International Health Board, \$1,412 109 for the China Medical Board, \$674,294 for the Division of Medical Education, \$759,162 for the Division of Studies, and \$152,737 for the Central Administration, while capital expenditures were \$1,567,688 for the International Health Board, \$61,164 for the China Medical Board, and \$2,597,652 for the Division of Medical Education. The total assets of the foundation on December 31, 1926, were \$180,397,799, including undisbursed income of \$6,076,682. The book value of the principal fund was \$165,204,624, to which \$77,000 was transferred in 1926 from the special fund. Land, buildings and equipment at the end of 1926 were valued at \$9,039,493, of which \$8,991,753 were abroad and \$47,740 in New York offices.

## UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL NOTES

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY receives \$500,000 under the will of Miss Emily O. Butler, of Scarsdale, N. Y. Most of Miss Butler's estate, which is valued in excess of \$1,000,000, has been left for public uses, among other important legacies being one of \$150,000 to the Union Theological Seminary. The will provides that any property remaining after all the bequests are paid shall be divided equally between New York University and Union Theological Seminary.

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY is the remainder legatee under the will of Dr. Clarence A. McWilliams, well-known surgeon, who left an estate of \$105,178. The estate is left in trust to Dr. McWilliams's sisters during their life time.

DR. ROBERT LANGLEY PORTER, former San Francisco city physician, who has spent the past two years in study at Rome, has been appointed dean of the Medical School of the University of California in San Francisco. He will relieve Dr. Lionel S. Schmitt, acting dean, who has been serving at that post for five or six years.

DR. F. L. RANSOME, formerly geologist of the U. S. Geological Survey, has resigned from the faculty of the University of Arizona and has accepted the professorship of economic geology at the California Institute of Technology, Pasadena. W. P. Woodring, of the survey, has been appointed professor of invertebrate paleontology.

DR. LAURENCE IRVING, of Stanford University, has been appointed associate professor of physiology in the University of Toronto.

DR. J. H. MUIRHEAD, professor of philosophy at the University of Birmingham, England, and Bedford College, London, will serve as visiting professor of philosophy at the University of Southern California in the second semester.

DR. D. L. MACKINNON has been appointed as from August 1 to the chair of zoology in the University of London, tenable at King's College.

DR. JULIUS RUSKA, professor of the history of science at the University of Heidelberg, has been appointed director of the recently established Institute for the History of Science at Berlin.

## DISCUSSION

### A NEGLECTED NOTE BY A NEGLECTED MAN

IN the course of a study being made on some of the chemical and physical properties of hydrofluoric acid,<sup>1</sup> a somewhat extensive review of the literature was instituted. It was of interest during this work to consider the historic development of this acid from the time of its discovery.

This search has been rewarded by the uncovering of a note that to my knowledge has not hitherto been recorded. None of the treatises on historical chemistry or mineralogy, nor any of the extant bibliographies of the literature on this acid that I have had the opportunity of perusing has made any mention of this reference.

The note referred to appears as a short (eleven pages) appended section to the second edition of Dr. John Hill's treatise "Theophrastus's History of Stones. With an English Version and Notes, etc." London, 1774.<sup>2</sup> This note (pages 267 to 278 incl.) is,

<sup>1</sup> Berliner and Hann, *SCIENCE* 61: 498 (1925).

<sup>2</sup> Printed for the author, in St. James's-Street and sold by L. Davis, in Holborn; Norse, in the Strand; White, in Fleet-Street; Cater, in Holborn; Bell, in the Strand; Fletcher, at Oxford; Woodyear, at Cambridge; and Bell, at Edinburgh. 385 pp., 8°.

This also appeared in a separate reprint the same year; the only alteration being the renumbering of the pages. 16 pp., 8° (pages 1 to 5 are the title and cover pages).

no doubt, based on a communication, or a series of communications, between the author and Karl Wilhelm Scheele, who announced his discovery of hydrofluoric acid in 1771 (*Vetensk. Acad. Handl.* 1771).

This note is entitled "Observations on the new Swedish acid and of the stone from which it is obtained." This note is of much interest in that it so completely and accurately describes the production and properties of hydrofluoric acid and the mineralogical and chemical properties of fluorite.

The "observations" are divided into two sections, the first dealing "Of the mineral acid in general" and the second "On the stone from which the Swedish acid is obtained." Many interesting and remarkably accurate observations are included in these few pages. It may be of interest to give the details of the experiment:

The Process by which I tried the Substance was this:  
Two Pounds of the green Kind of the Stone were powdered, and put into a Glass Retort;  
Two Pounds of Oil of Vitriol were added to this;  
And a Quart of Spirit of Wine was put into the Receiver.

No Heat, nor Ebullition whatsoever, followed the Mixture for some Time; and in the End but little.

The Vessels were closed; and kept in a Reverberatory Furnace for fourteen Hours.

The Fire was slow at first; else the Matter would have risen over.

No phosphorescent Light was visible at any Time.

The Fumes were some Times visible, in the Receiver; at others not. Whereas in the marine Acid they are never visible; unless Air be admitted.

They were elastic; and had a Smell like those from Spirit of Salt.

The Surface waved, and rose a little; and there was on it an icy, and gelatinous Substance.

The upper Part of the Receiver became covered with a thin stony Crust.

The *Swedes* speak of a Crust of absolute Flint, upon the Surface of the Liquor in the Receiver. But they put Water there: This was the same Substance; And it remained fix'd on Part of the Receiver: While Part was displaced; probably by some light Vapour from the Spirit of Wine.

The Corrosion of the Glass of the Retort seems to be an Effect of that peculiar Sublimation which rises in the Distillation; nay, and begins to rise, even without that Operation; For watching attentively the Effect of mixing the vitriolic Acid with the Stone, I perceived, that tho' they seemed to meet without any Effervescence, yet by Degrees there appeared a slight Commotion; which increased for a considerable Time, and, during which, this

This is also printed for the author and sold by B. White, in Fleet-Street; and J. Robson, in Bond-Street.

My attention was called to this reprint, of which there is a copy in the Surgeon-General's Library at Washington, D. C., by Dr. L. L. Woodruff.