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<i>The University and the Medical Profession:</i> PROFESSOR JAMES EWING	173
<i>Roosevelt, the Naturalist:</i> DR. C. HART MERRIAM	181
<i>Obituary:</i>	
<i>Robert DeCourcy Ward:</i> DR. W. J. HUMPHREYS.	
<i>Recent Deaths</i>	183
<i>Scientific Events:</i>	
<i>The Banting Research Foundation; Exhibition of the Royal Meteorological Society; The Westchester Institute of Sciences; The Field Museum of Natural History; The Engineering Societies Library</i>	185
<i>Scientific Notes and News</i>	188
<i>Discussion:</i>	
<i>Discovery and Discoverers:</i> DR. ARNOLD C. KLEBS. <i>A New Autotrophic Bacterium which Oxidizes Ammonia directly to Nitrate and Decomposes Petroleum:</i> DR. CHAS. B. LIPMAN and L. GREENBERG. <i>Growth Inhibition of Potato Sprouts by the Volatile Products of Apples:</i> DR. O. H. ELMER. <i>Breaking the Dormancy of Tree Seedlings by Chemical Treatment:</i> WILLIAM C. BRAMBLE. <i>Dust Particles:</i> JEROME ALEXANDER. <i>The Nervous Control of Hematopoiesis:</i> DR. JOSEPH KRAFKA, JR. <i>The Position of Wood in Beaver Dams:</i> EDWARD R. WARREN	191
<i>Special Correspondence:</i>	
<i>A New Connection between Magnetism and Electricity:</i> ALEXANDER W. STERN	195

<i>Scientific Apparatus and Laboratory Methods:</i>	
<i>A Simple Apparatus for Mercury Distillation:</i> DR. MAX KLEIBER. <i>Improved Staining Techniques for the Demonstration of Non-acid-fast Tubercle Bacilli and Granules:</i> ELEANOR G. ALEXANDER	196
<i>Special Articles:</i>	
<i>Poliomyelitis as an Essential Nerve System Disease throughout its Course:</i> DR. HAROLD K. FABER. <i>The Non-identity of "Pure" and "Isoelectric" Gelatins:</i> PROFESSOR ROGER J. WILLIAMS, LEO FRIEDMAN and DON M. WOODS. <i>Air Filtration in Bacteriological Laboratories:</i> NATHAN R. SMITH	198
<i>Science News</i>	8

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THE UNIVERSITY AND THE MEDICAL PROFESSION¹

By JAMES EWING, M.D.

PROFESSOR OF PATHOLOGY, CORNELL UNIVERSITY MEDICAL COLLEGE, NEW YORK CITY

THE university has always been the best expression of the intelligence of a community. The university first appeared in ancient Greece, later became highly developed in Alexandria, survived the upheavals of the Dark Ages, and under Moslem influence reappeared at Salerno in 1120, where it proved to be the first step toward the revival of learning and the Renaissance, while in later centuries it has been the chief agent in the advance of knowledge. There must be some very substantial qualities in an institution which has survived all these vicissitudes, and it is worth while inquiring into the nature of the qualities. What is a university and what is the university idea?

¹ Anniversary address, New York Academy of Medicine, November 5, 1931. The historical basis of many of the statements in this address has been omitted from the present copy. The full text may be found in the Bulletin of the Academy, January, 1932.

The university idea involves the cooperative intellectual and moral effort to collect, disseminate and apply knowledge for man's needs.

Cooperation between the various branches of knowledge is perhaps the first essential of a university and becomes more necessary as the complexity of problems increases. Most of the great advances in medicine have resulted from the reflection of new knowledge in one science upon the problems of another. In order to have cooperation, the men in a university must have the social instinct and understand the significance of the social relation. Here, at the outset, is a very difficult and complex problem, how to secure voluntary united effort among scholars, without interfering with individual effort and ambition. It can not be secured by mandate, but it may be conserved by deliberate efforts of university organ-

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