13, 1863, a son of a professor of Moscow University, and educated first in that city and later at St. Petersburg University, from which he was graduated in 1886. He was appointed a docent of mineralogy of Moscow University in 1890 and received his master's degree in 1891. In 1897 he was awarded a Ph.D. degree for his thesis, "The Phenomena of Gliding Planes in Crystalline Substances." He soon won fame for his classical research on silicates. One of his most important works on that subject is: *"Sur le groupe de la sillimanite et le rôle de l'alumine dans les silicates"* (1892).

Being a brilliant lecturer and educator he reformed the teaching of mineralogy in Moscow University and was practically the founder of chemical mineralogy based on historical methods. Outstanding Russian mineralogists, such as the late V. Archangelsky and A. Fersman, were students of Vernadsky. His widely known voluminous "Essay on Descriptive Mineralogy" (1908) is a standard work on mineralogy in Russia.

In 1906 he was elected a member of the Academy of Sciences. Since that time, he turned his attention to geochemistry and study of the isomorphism of chemical elements. In 1915 he took a leading part in the organization of the Commission for the Study of Natural Resources of Russia, from which a number of scientific institutes later emerged. Vernadsky was made in 1922 the head of the Radium Institute and engaged energetically in study of the role of the radioactive elements in the history of the development of our planet. He was first to introduce the method of the determination of the age of rocks and minerals by the rate of their radioactivity and he made great contributions in that field of science.

He was also very interested in the problem of the role of micro-organisms in the biogeochemical processes in the earth's crust, and for the purpose of its solution, he founded in 1918 the Biogeochemical Laboratory of the Academy of Sciences and was its director since 1920 until his death.

The last period of Vernadsky's activity was devoted mostly to the study of geochemistry. His classical work "Ocherki geokhimii" ("Essays on Geochemistry") sustained four editions and was translated into French, German, Japanese, etc.

This in no way exhausts the list of the activities of Professor Vernadsky. We can mention only briefly his attainments in other fields of science: the study of physical and morphological properties of meteorites, the organization and development of balneologic centers and the founding of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, of which he was president in 1918, etc.

He visited Europe many times and was very well known in European scientific circles. His outstanding work was recognized by both the Imperial and Soviet governments and by the science world and he was the recipient of many honors and distinctions. In 1942 he was awarded the full prize of 200.000 roubles for his research in geochemistry and genetical mineralogy.

His colleagues in the Academy of Sciences and in Moscow University mourn him not only as a famous scientist but as a noble, simple and good-natured man and as a faithful friend.

VLADIMIR C. ASMOUS

ARNOLD ARBORETUM,
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

DEATHS AND MEMORIALS

THOMAS J. MANEY, research professor of pomology in the Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station, died on October 12 at the age of fifty-seven years.

DR. HENRY B. KUMMEL, from 1902 to 1937 state geologist of New Jersey, died on October 23 at the age of seventy-eight years.

DR. JAMES H. BEAL, senior past president of the American Pharmaceutical Association, Remington medalist, died on September 20 at the age of eighty-four years.

DR. E. J. WILLIAMS, F.R.S., professor of physics at University College, Aberystwyth, Wales, died on September 29 at the age of forty-two years.

DR. PAUL RUGGLI-BLUME, professor of chemistry at the University of Basel, died on September 4 at the age of sixty-one years.

ON the opening of the fall session of the Medical Branch of the University of Texas at Galveston, the auditorium of the out-patient clinic building was named Randall Hall in honor of Dr. Edward Randall (1860–1944), who served as professor of materia medica and therapeutics from 1890 to 1929, when he became professor emeritus and chairman of the Board of Regents of the university.

A MEMORIAL meeting in honor of the late Professor Pio del Rio Hortega was held on October 31 by the Montreal Neurological Institute. The speakers were Dr. Wilder Penfield, Dr. Pierre Masson, Dr. Miguel Prados and S/L William Gibson.

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

THE ARMY MEDICAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD

A BOARD to be known as the Army Medical Research and Development Board has been constituted in the Office of the Surgeon General. It will be responsible for the planning and general supervision of all Medical Department research and development activities. The membership will include the chiefs of the various

professional services and divisions of the Office of the Surgeon General; the air surgeon; the ground surgeon; the chairman of the Division of Medical Sciences of the National Research Council (by invitation); and the chairman of the Committee on Medical Research, Office of Scientific Research and Development (by invitation). The board has two operating divisions, the Research Division and the Development Division, to carry out its plans. It is the intent of the Surgeon General to carry on an active program of research and development during the postwar period and the new board should provide the means for maximum coordination of effort within the military service and cooperation with civilian and Federal research agencies. The immediate tasks facing the board are three in number. Essential research must be continued in the existing research and development laboratories of the Medical Department in spite of the personnel difficulties of the period of demobilization. Plans must be made and implemented for the continuation or actual expansion of research and development in the postwar period. The demobilization of the Office of Scientific Research and Development necessitated finding other sponsorship for those research contracts of the Committee on Medical Research which warrant continuation even though hostilities have terminated. A group of these contracts will be taken over by the Medical Department and administered by the board.

THE MOUNT PALOMAR TELESCOPE

CONSTRUCTION of the world's largest telescope—(200-inches) at the summit of Mount Palomar in California—is being resumed after a wartime interruption. Between one and two years will be required for its completion according to an announcement made by the Carnegie Institution of Washington, which cooperated with the California Institute of Technology in the design and operational plans. The uncompleted reflecting telescope is now at the observatory on Mount Palomar, sixty-six miles north of San Diego.

The 200-inch glass disc was poured on December 2, 1934, at Corning, N. Y., and was taken across the country to be placed in the observatory. With the outbreak of war both the optical and mechanical work had to be suspended.

Plans have been formulated by the Carnegie Institution, which operates Mount Wilson Observatory in California, for a cooperative research program between Mount Wilson and the Mount Palomar Observatory as soon as the equipment at the latter is completed. According to the announcement both institutions have approved a program whereby "the two observatories will be placed under a single administrative management, having a director who will be chairman of an advisory management committee with representatives from both organizations."

THE ATOMIC ENERGY ACT

AN appeal for more complete consideration of the Atomic Energy Act, signed by one hundred and fifty-five scientists of the Boston area, was telegraphed to President Truman on the morning of October 23. Those signing the telegram—including Dr. Karl T. Compton, president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Dr. Leonard Carmichael, president of Tufts College—are members of the National Society of the Sigma Xi. The need for resumption of hearings on the bill is emphasized. The telegram follows:

> The undersigned scientists of the Boston area, members of The National Scientific Research Society, feel deep concern over the very brief and inadequate discussion of the Atomic Energy Act of 1945. Widespread fears have been expressed regarding the sweeping nature of the powers delegated to the Atomic Energy Commission in the proposed bill, and without attempting to take a stand on this point, we feel it is imperative to give the fullest opportunity for discussion on this and other points both in Congress and by the public at large. Whatever the urgency of such legislation, the need for full and complete understanding of the momentous issues at stake is much greater. We urge strongly that hearings on the bill be resumed and that the fullest public consideration of the question be encouraged.

Copies of the telegram have been sent to John W. Snyder, director of War Mobilization and Reconversion; Representative Andrew J. May, chairman of the House Military Affairs Committee, sponsor of the bill; Representative Chet Holafield, member of the House Military Affairs Committee, and John W. McCormick, House of Representatives. Those signing the telegram from Harvard University included Professor Harlow Shapley, director of the Observatory; Dr. Lionel S. Marks, Gordon McKay professor of mechanical engineering, emeritus; Dr. Percy W. Bridgman, Hollis professor of mathematics and natural philosophy; Dr. John H. Van Vleck, professor of mathematical physics; Dr. Jabez C. Street, associate professor of physics, and Dr. Kirtley F. Mather, professor of geology.

NEWS FROM ABROAD

THE following is a translation of a letter from Professor J. Timmermans, president of the Bureau of Physico-chemical Standards, International Union of Chemistry; University of Brussels, Belgium, addressed to Dr. Marston T. Bogert, as president of the International Union of Chemistry:

August 29, 1945

Dear Colleague:

As Professor Dony-Henault will already have told you,