

# SCIENCE

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## SIR JOSEPH HOOKER<sup>1</sup>

With the passage of time the importance attached to persons and events becomes strangely altered. History, to be of value to posterity, must be both more and less than a faithful chronicle of the past. Less, if only to bring it within intelligible limits; more, because it must see causes in relation to effects, emphasizing the inconspicuous beginnings of new developments. For such reasons, the judgment of posterity will nearly always differ from that of contemporaries; not necessarily because posterity is endowed with superior wisdom, but rather because the basis of judgment is different. Sir Joseph Hooker and his father, Sir William Hooker (1785–1865), were both botanists of the highest eminence, their combined activities covering more than a century. As we review their careers, we do not know which to admire most. The son, without the slightest false modesty, always insisted on his father's preeminence, giving good reasons for his judgment. It was William Hooker who, with extraordinary energy and enthusiasm, had created great botanical centers, first at Glasgow, and then for the whole British Empire at Kew. When the work was most difficult and recognition hardest to obtain, he had won support and respect; and had laid the foundations on which his son was to build. It is difficult for us, to-day, to realize the labor and vision required to build up the establishment at Kew, in the face of ignorance and opposition. It is difficult for posterity to do full justice to the elder Hooker, just because we can no longer clearly visualize the environment in which he lived. His work, everywhere woven into the fabric of modern botany, has few outstanding or picturesque features. In the case of Sir Joseph Hooker, the imagina-

<sup>1</sup> *Life and Letters of Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker*. By LEONARD HUXLEY. 2 vols. New York, D. Appleton & Co. 1918.