

of the emergency special committee held in Philadelphia last November and in Chicago last December, brought out a rather confusing lack of agreement as to the effects of preventive measures, and of modes of treatment, upon the form of the epidemic wave, and as to the kinds and character of statistical data available. The work and recommendations of the other three registration and tabulation sub-committee will result in bringing before the coming meeting data that are more uniform, and so better adapted to comparative study towards discovering the quantitative relationships which hold in this epidemic and which it holds in common with other epidemics.

Towards having epidemiology take another step or two away from qualitative methods and towards quantitative research, an earnest invitation is hereby extended to members of the medical profession, to physical chemists and biochemists, to bacteriologists, to those interested in mathematical statistics and climatology, and others to attend the meetings on September 19 and 20, at Columbia University, and other meetings to be announced, and to participate freely in the deliberations of the committee. Meanwhile the chairman invites correspondence addressed to Pomona, N. Y.

Professor Svante Arrhenius pointed out in his Tyndall lectures that "physical chemistry allows us to follow quantitatively the influence of temperature and of foreign substances upon these interesting organic products, which are of the greatest importance in industry, in the physiological processes of daily life, and in diseases and their therapy." In the *Proceedings* of the Royal Society of Medicine, May, 1918, Vol. XI., No. 7, pages 85-132, John Brownlee, M.D., director of statistics, medical research committee, develops a theory in which "the organism producing the epidemic loses infecting power according to the law of a monomolecular reaction." Whether fitting curves to Pearsonian types or to those of immuno-chemistry shall lead to statistical light on influenza remains to be seen. These and other questions remain to be discussed by this committee

in a spirit of scientific open-minded search for the truth.

CHARLES C. GROVE,
Chairman

THE NEW ENGLAND FEDERATION OF NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETIES

THE fall meeting of the Federation will be held at Fall River on Friday and Saturday, September 26 and 27, with the Fall River Society of Natural History. The meeting will be in the parish house of the First Baptist Church on Pine Street just below Main. Take cars from the depot to Pine Street. For information in regard to hotels or other local matters write to Mr. Norman S. Easton, Fall River.

The Fall River Society will make a large exhibit illustrating the Natural History of the country around the city. Other exhibits are desired from societies and individuals. The exhibition will be open to the public all day Friday and Saturday. Packages may be sent to the parish house in care of the janitor.

Friday evening, September 26, there will be a public meeting at which there will lectures and addresses by several members. Saturday morning there will be excursions into the country for observation and collecting led by local members. Saturday at 2 P.M. there will be a meeting for business, for reports from the societies of the federation and or discussion of the exhibits and the mornings collections.

J. H. EMERTON,
Secretary

30 IPSWICH ST.,
BOSTON, MASS.

THE MARY CLARK THOMPSON MEDAL

THE president of the National Academy of Sciences, on authority of the Council of the Academy, has appointed the following committee to serve as the committee for the award of the Mary Clark Thompson Gold Medal, to be awarded annually for meritorious services in geology and paleontology: John M. Clarke, *Chairman*, Gano Dunn and Henry Fairfield Osborn.

The Academy accepted the gift in the following resolution:

That the gift of ten thousand dollars presented by Mrs. Mary Clark Thompson, the income thereof to be applied to a gold medal of appropriate design to be awarded annually by the National Academy of Sciences for high recognition of exceptional service to geology and paleontology, and the medal to be known as the Mary Clark Thompson Gold Medal, be accepted and that the academy express to Mrs. Thompson its appreciation of her desire to reward those interested in researches in geology and paleontology. (Adopted June 24, 1919.)

The committee is considering a design for the medal.

THE ROCKEFELLER INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH AND THE WAR

THE Rockefeller Institute has received the following letter from Merritt W. Ireland, Surgeon-General of the United States Army, commending its war-time activities:

During the war which is now happily past, your institute proved to be one of America's strongholds. I am informed that from the beginning to the end of hostilities the entire institution was placed by you at the disposal of the War Department and that you did work of the greatest value, not alone for the Medical Department but for the Chemical Warfare and Air Service; that your hospital as well as your laboratories became in effect as much a part of the army as the hospitals and laboratories established by the War Department in our cantonments.

I have also been informed that this great work, extending over the whole period of our participation in the war, was paid for entirely out of your own funds, and was without further support from the government than the routine payment of salaries of such members and assistants of the institute as became part of the Medical and Sanitary Corps.

I thank you for your work of patriotism and your generosity in placing so fully at the disposal of the Medical Department your great and productive facilities for research, for teaching, and for the care of the sick.

SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS

PROFESSOR VITO VOLTERRA, who holds the chair of mathematical physics in the University of Rome and is a member of the Italian Senate, will deliver a series of Hitchcock lec-

tures at the University of California from October 6 to 17. This will be the second series of Hitchcock lectures this semester, Professor W. J. V. Osterhout, of Harvard University, having just completed the first series on the general subject, "Fundamental life processes." Professor Volterra will lecture on "The propagation of electricity" and "Functional equations."

PROFESSOR JAMES H. BREASTED, of the University of Chicago, has sailed for Europe in order to lead an archeological expedition to Egypt and western Asia, for which permission has been granted by the British government. Before leaving Professor Breasted arranged for publication in *The Scientific Monthly* the lectures on the William Ellery Hale foundation entitled "The origins of civilization," which he delivered before the National Academy of Sciences last April.

MAJOR-GENERAL WILLIAM C. GORGAS, formerly Surgeon-General, U. S. Army, who has been investigating the sanitary matters in Central and South America, has, it is reported, offered to assume technical directorship of the sanitation of Guayaquil, Ecuador, provided the money for the work is supplied by the municipality or the republic. At the request of the Peruvian authorities, General Gorgas is about to proceed to Piura, which is infected with yellow fever. He and his party left Guayaquil for Callao on September 1.

THE Duke of Abruzzi has planned an expedition to the upper reaches of the Wady Scebel, a river which, rising in north Italian Somaliland in the outlying spurs of the Abyssinian mountain ranges, joins the Fafan River. He will be accompanied by his aide de camp, Marquis Radicati; a doctor, a photographer, and four naval under-officers who have taken part in his former expeditions.

MR. E. HELLER has charge of an expedition sent by the Smithsonian Institution to South Africa to make collections for the National Museum.

PROFESSOR A. S. HITCHCOCK, systematic agrostologist in the Bureau of Plant Industry, will leave New York for British Guiana, on