

of the Panama Canal, where he carried out the same line of work in the cleaning up the Isthmus. When the French, under de Lesseps, began to work on the Panama Canal in 1880, the Isthmus was one of the plague-spots of the world and during their nine years of occupation, they lost 22,189 laborers from disease. When the United States government took charge of the Canal in 1904, the death rate was high and a yellow fever epidemic was going on. In less than a year yellow fever was wiped out and there has not been a single case since May, 1906. Gorgas was made a member of the Isthmian Canal Commission in 1907, and remained in charge of sanitation until the winter of 1913, when he went to South Africa, at the invitation of the Chamber of Mines of Johannesburg, to investigate the high death rate from pneumonia among the natives working in the mines of the Rand. By applying the army methods of increasing the air space of sleeping quarters the death rate was materially lowered. He was appointed surgeon general of the U. S. Army on January 16, 1914, and was given the rank of major general in 1915. In 1916, he spent several months in South America in making a preliminary survey of localities still infested with yellow fever the "endemic foci" of the disease, for the Rockefeller Foundation. Upon his retirement from active duty in the Army in the fall of 1918, he resumed this work and had just started upon an investigation of the African foci at the time of his death. If completed, this work may result in the eradication of yellow fever from the globe. General Gorgas conducted the administration of the Surgeon General's Office in Washington during the war period, and shortly before his retirement, accompanied the secretary of war to France. He was a member of many medical societies and received many honors during his life. He was awarded gold medals by the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine in 1907, by the American Museum of Safety in 1914, and shortly before his death was decorated by King Albert of Belgium and knighted by King George IV. In March, 1914, he received the degree of doctor of

science from the University of Oxford. General Gorgas was a man of attractive character, and highly popular with the medical profession. In 1885, he married Miss Marie C. Doughty, of Cincinnati, Ohio, who survives him with a daughter. He was the author of many articles on the subject of yellow fever.

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#### SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

##### THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE REGISTRAR GENERAL OF ENGLAND AND WALES

THE eighty-first annual report of the Registrar General which deals with the births, deaths and marriages in England and Wales for the year 1918, has been issued.

According to an abstract in the *London Times* the report shows that the marriage rate was 15.3 per 1,000, being 1.5 above the low rate in the preceding year (13.8), and 0.1 below the average in the last 10 years, 1905-1914, which were unaffected by war conditions (15.4). The provisional figures for 1919 indicate a further rise to 19.7 per 1,000, the highest rate on record.

The birth-rate in 1918 was 17.7 per 1,000, being the lowest on record. This rate was 0.1 per 1,000 below that recorded for 1917, and 6.1 below that for 1914, which, particularly so far as the birth-rate was concerned, might be regarded as the last year unaffected by war conditions. Even this large reduction, however, amounting in all to nearly 26 per cent. in 1918 as compared with 1914, was believed to compare very favorably with the experience of other belligerent countries. The provisional figures for 1919 indicate a recovery, showing an increase of 0.8 per 1,000.

The civilian death-rate in 1918 was 17.6 per 1,000, being 3.2 above the rate in the preceding year. The increased mortality was due to the epidemic of influenza. Apart from this, the year was one of extraordinary healthiness. The provisional figures for 1919 indicate a fall of about 3.8 per 1,000, notwithstanding the continuance of the epidemic into the early part of the year.

Infantile mortality was 97 per thousand

births, being one per thousand above the rate in the preceding year, but 10 per thousand below the average of the 10 years 1908-17. It is one of the four lowest rates hitherto recorded. The provisional figures for 1919 show a rate of 89 per thousand births, or two per thousand births below that of 1916, which at 91 per thousand was the lowest hitherto returned.

The estimate of the total civilian population for the whole of England and Wales is given as 13,777,100 civilian males and 19,697,600 females, making a total of 33,474,700 persons. The marriages during the year numbered 287,163, and the marriage rates of 51.9 for males and 41.0 for females represented a considerable advance on the low records of the previous year.

The births registered during 1918 numbered 662,661, or 5,685 fewer than in the previous year, during which 210,750 fewer births had been registered than in 1914, while the deaths of 611,861 were registered during the same period. Of the deaths, 314,704 were of males and 297,157 of females. The males included 24,033 non-civilians.

#### THE WORLD'S PRODUCTION OF GOLD

THE Geological Survey has given out some preliminary figures showing the promotion of gold throughout the world in 1919. The production in the United States was \$58,285,196; Canada is reported to have produced \$14,687,000; India \$10,028,000; Australia (not including New Zealand or the Islands), \$29,268,000; the Transvaal, \$171,640,123; Rhodesia and West Africa, \$18,631,070. There was a probably large decrease in the production of gold in Russia and Siberia in 1919. Some increase was probably made in the output of Central America and South America, which however, was doubtless offset by decreases in the output of other countries. The incomplete returns now available indicate that the world's production of gold in 1919 was between \$345,000,000 and \$350,000,000. The world's production in 1918 amounted to \$380,924,500.

The survey further states that information

received during the first six months of 1920 indicated a still further decrease in the production of gold in the United States and that the output for the year will probably be less than \$50,000,000. The production in Alaska, Colorado, California, Oregon and Montana will be much less in 1920 than it was in 1919, because water is very short for placer mining and many stamp mills are closed. Canada as a whole may increase its output, although the production of the Yukon districts will be smaller than last year. The output of Russia can not be estimated. That of Australia will show a decrease. That of South Africa and South America will probably show no radical decrease. According to the survey the indications are that the decrease in the world's production of gold in 1920 will not be so great as it was in 1919.

#### PROFESSOR VAN BENEDEN OF LIÉGE

A LIFE-SIZED bronze statue of Van Beneden, professor of zoology in the University of Liège, who died four years ago, was unveiled on May 24. The statue stands at the entrance to the Zoological Institute where Van Beneden worked and taught for over thirty years. We learn from the *British Medical Journal* that the ceremony was attended by a large number of his old colleagues, by representatives of other Belgian universities and scientific societies, and by delegates from British universities. Both King Albert and the Belgian Parliament were represented. The representatives of the British universities were Professor Sarolea (Edinburgh), Sir Leslie Mackenzie, of the Local Government Board of Scotland (Aberdeen), and Professor Sir Thomas Oliver (Durham). Professor R. W. Hegner, represented the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore. When fully mustered the company marched in procession to the class-room where Van Beneden had taught and in which was gathered a large number of old and present students and his widow and relatives. The Rector was in the chair. Dr. Nolf, professor of pathology in the university, delivered a memorial address, during which a beautifully executed bronze mural tablet, pronounced to