

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

EDWARD JENNER¹

It is a hundred years since the remains of Edward Jenner were laid to rest in a vault in the chancel of Berkeley Church. He died on January 26, 1823, and was buried on February 3. He had been born in 1749 in the vicarage of Berkeley, and spent a large part of his professional life in his native village as a general practitioner—one of the most illustrious who has ever adorned the ranks of medicine. His great teacher and friend, John Hunter, wanted him to enter on a different career; but Jenner was a born naturalist, fond of a country life, so that even when, in the interests of vaccination, he was persuaded to take a house in London, he quickly repented, and later on returned to Berkeley.

The oft-told story of his great conception of preventing small-pox by means of cow-pox is classical in its simplicity and brevity. In his master's surgery at Sodbury he heard a countrywoman remark that she could not take small-pox because she had already had cow-pox. The little incident remained in the mind of the busy village doctor for many years, to be mused over, discussed with friends lay and medical, set aside and returned to with a curious mixture of perseverance and dilatoriness which was no doubt in his mind when he remarked in his *Inquiry* that people may not be aware "how often men engaged in professional pursuits are liable to interruptions which disappoint them almost at the instant of their being accomplished. Ultimately, however, in 1796, he put the matter to the touch—he inoculated with cow-pox, tested the effect by inoculation with small-pox, and found that immunity had been achieved. The rest of his life was devoted mainly to the promotion of vaccination. . . .

The centenary of Jenner's death follows close on that of Pasteur's birth. Their lives overlapped by a month, Pasteur having been born thirty days before Jenner died. Their life's labors were closely related. Apart from variolation with its serious disadvantages, vaccination was the first example of the operation of the principle of individual immunization. For the greater part of a century it remained

an oasis in a desert, and for long there seemed no prospect of its further application. Now, however, since Pasteur brought into existence the science of bacteriology, the sphere of immunization by different methods has been wonderfully extended, and the armamentarium of preventive medicine correspondingly strengthened. In a remarkable passage in one of his books Sir John Simon wrote that "if departed great benefactors of our race could now and then look down on the harvest fields where mankind age after age is gladdened by the fruits of their labor, they would in general find themselves less remembered than perhaps their terrestrial ambitions had desired"; but, he adds, "let the noble compensation be noted that often the thoroughness of a reformer's victory is that which most makes silence of the reformer's fame. For how can men be adequately thankful for redemptions, when they have no present easy standard, no contrast between yesterday and to-day by which to measure the greatness of them?" That question applies specially to the case of Jenner, but neither Jenner nor Pasteur can ever be forgotten. It was, if we recollect aright, in an address at the centenary of the death of Robert Burns that Lord Rosebery, speculating about the duration of personal fame, prophesied that if there were every hundred years a roll call of the famous departed, the "Adsum" of Burns would sound clear and strong all down the coming time. In the much more prosaic sphere of preventive medicine and the benefactions of science, so it will be with Edward Jenner and Louis Pasteur.

THE LONDON ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS¹

IN consequence of the retirement on pension of Mr. R. I. Pocock, F.R.S., who attains the age of sixty in March after having been superintendent of the Zoological Gardens and curator of mammals since 1904, the council has rearranged the staff at the gardens. Dr. G. M. Vevers, at present a Beit Research Fellow and on the staff of the London School of Tropical Medicine, has been appointed superintendent, and, under the direction of the secretary, will be the principal officer there. Mr. D. Seth Smith, at present curator of birds and inspector of works, has been promoted to be curator of

¹ *The British Medical Journal*.

¹ From the *London Times*.

mammals and birds with a residence in the gardens. Mr. E. G. Boulenger retains his curatorship of the reptiles, but will also be in charge of the new aquarium. Miss Cheesman remains curator of insects, Dr. Sonntag, anatomist, and Dr. Lucas, pathologist, are also to be in charge of the sanatorium (which is being re-equipped), in consultation with Professor Wooldridge, honorary veterinary surgeon to the society, and the superintendent and curators. A panel of experts under the honorary direction of Professor Leiper, of the London School of Tropical Medicine, has undertaken the collection and examination of the parasites. Dr. R. W. A. Salmons, M.D., F.Z.S., honorary radiologist at University College Hospital, has been appointed honorary radiologist to the society.

Mr. R. I. Pocock, the retiring superintendent, was formerly on the staff of the British Museum (Natural History), an appointment which he resigned in 1904 when he went to the gardens. His chief zoological work until 1904 was on arachnids and myriapods, on which difficult groups he was a recognized authority. Since 1904 he has devoted himself chiefly to mammals, and he has published a large number of memoirs in technical scientific journals on the classification of many groups and especially on the bearing of external characters on the systematic position of mammals. For many years he has been a regular contributor to the *Field*, on the staff of which he remains, and he is the author of a number of papers on natural history. He is a vice-president of the Linnean Society and was elected to the Royal Society in 1911. His knowledge of the species and varieties of mammals is very great, and he was able to identify any mammal brought to the gardens, however rare, almost at a glance and to say whether it was new to the collection.

Dr. Vevers is thirty-three years old. When the war broke out he was in his fifth year as a medical student at St. Thomas's Hospital, but joined the army at once. In 1915 he was sent back from France with other former medical students in their fourth and fifth years and, after qualifying, was given a commission in the R. A. M. C., and served in France until the middle of 1918, when he was sent home for duty in this country. On being demobilized in 1919 he engaged in private practice for a few

months and was then appointed to the London School of Tropical Research. Soon afterwards he gained a Beit Memorial Research Fellowship for work in parasitology. He was honorary parasitologist to the society for two years and already has a good knowledge of the gardens. In 1921 he was sent on a scientific mission to British Guiana, where he was able to make some collecting expeditions into the bush. He has undertaken to devote his scientific work in future to the problems relating to animals, including their psychology, which can be better studied in a collection of living animals than in a museum or laboratory.

LIST OF SCIENTIFIC PERIODICALS

At a meeting of the Conjoint Board of Scientific Societies held at the Royal Society on January 24 a definite constitution was given to a scheme to prepare and issue a list of all scientific periodicals containing the results of original research, with an indication of the chief libraries in Great Britain where they may be consulted.

As has already been reported in *SCIENCE*, an influential committee representing different branches of science has been arranging for the preparation and publication of a complete list. The trustees of the British Museum, recognizing the importance of the work to scientific research and bibliography, consented to allow the preparation of the list to be undertaken by the staff of the keeper of printed books. Material has been sent in by many scientific societies and libraries, and there is good hope that the list will be published before the end of the year. As the result of a preliminary circular, between three and four hundred copies have already been subscribed for at £2 each. The Carnegie United Kingdom Trust have guaranteed the cost of publication up to £1,000 on condition that libraries at a larger number of centers in Great Britain than was originally intended should be included. Sir Robert Hadfield and Mr. Robert Mond have each given a further guarantee of £250.

The Conjoint Board, after having heard the satisfactory progress already made, agreed to vest the World List in three permanent trustees—Sir Arthur Schuster, F.R.S., Mr. Robert Mond and Dr. Chalmers Mitchell, F.R.S.—the trustees to have complete financial control.