gerous. Sometimes I insert after the word air "by the agency of light and chlorophyll." The clause relating to ancestors, however, makes the diagnosis of a plant quite impossible, and indeed introduces some very hypothetical material. We try to reach the conclusion that the statement of a real definition requires the contents of at least one book on general botany, with suitable lectures and laboratory experience or field work, and that the definition can be improved by more and more of such study. If there is a better definition, let us have it.

HENRY S. CONARD

GRINNELL COLLEGE

"EROBIC"

I HAVE read with very great interest the article on the "Bacteriology of Influenza," but I want to make one suggestion in reference to the spelling of "Erobic" and "Anerobic." This, it seems to me, ought to be "Ærobic" and "Anærobic."

I am fully converted to the use of the "e" instead of "æ" and "œ" as a rule, but in "erobic," for instance, "er" misleads one as to its meaning, as it comes from the Greek "ær." The same is true of "anerobic." It seems to me very clear that "æ" should be retained in this case, as an exception.

I confess, when I first read "erobic," I wondered what the word meant. My first idea was of an obscure reference to "eros" in "erobic." I was quite misled, and it took me an appreciable time to determine that it meant "ærobic." I hope that the spelling of these two words in this number of SCIENCE will not be continued.

I am a member of the consulting committee of the Simplified Spelling Board, and therefore am prejudiced in favor of the "e" instead of "æ" or "œ," but this, I think, goes beyond the mark that even the Simplified Spelling Board justifies.

W. W. KEEN

PHILADELPHIA

FEBRUARY 15, 1923.

QUOTATIONS

GIFT TO THE ROYAL SOCIETY

THE magnificent gift, which we announce this morning, by Sir Alfred Yarrow to the nation, through the Royal Society, of £100,000 for the advancement of scientific research should serve two purposes. It should be of most substantial help to numbers of investigators who are hampered or depressed by want of funds, and, as it throws the heavy responsibility of administration upon the Royal Society, it should serve to rehabilitate the illustrious institution in the eyes of those who are concerned not so much with science itself as with the politics of science. To touch on this second point first. There can be no question that Sir Alfred Yarrow, who is himself an honored member of the Royal Society, has done wisely in entrusting his fund to the society, for there is no other body possessed of traditions, prestige and authority to equal it in the kingdom, or, indeed, in the world. But of late years there has been a strong disposition to criticize the society's attitude towards the practical affairs of life. It has been felt that it has often preferred a dignified position of aloofness towards current interests, and it has seemed to let go by default some of its unique claims to be the real leader and adviser of the nation in scientific administration. It ought, one might argue, to be the invariable channel through which private benefactions to science should be directed. It ought to have a controlling voice in the application of government grants for scientific purposes; it ought, in short, to be as thoroughly active in practical matters as its individual members are in their own spheres of study. The obligations which this princely endowment now casts upon it should help substantially to enhance its authority. From this point of view alone Sir Alfred Yarrow's gift will, we believe, be welcome; for the Royal Society is of such a composition that its voice can never be negligible; its opinion on all matters connected with science must always be of paramount influence, and no one who has the interests of science or of knowledge at heart would care to see it miss its opportunities. We urged considerations of this kind last December, when the new council was appointed; and now the society has a brilliant opportunity of making good the ground that some of its sincerest well-wishers may have feared that it had lost.

As for the need of such an endowment for

research there can be no question. The nation is not nearly scientific enough, or, to say it plainly, does not know nearly enough. Yet on knowledge, and on the pursuit of knowledge, the welfare of its citizens and the prosperity of its industries increasingly depend. Sir Alfred Yarrow's reasons for making this gift for scientific research are stated in his letter, and they are incontestable. He recalls the dangers to which lack of science, or ignorance, exposed us in the war and the advantage which the country reaped then and before from the labors of its scientific investigators. This testimony to "pure" science, as it is called, is all the more forcible in that it comes from a mind which has been devoted over many years not only to the application of acquired knowledge in shipbuilding and engineering, but also to its theoretic extension in the laboratory. It is on quiet laboratory work that everything in the long run depends. The Royal Society by its rules and traditions consists chiefly of persons engaged in the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, and they are therefore least likely to be misled by the desire for immediate fruits. Sir Alfred Yarrow has left the society free as to the mode in which the capital or the income of his gift is to be expended, but he declares his preference for the adequate payment of scientific workers and for the provision of apparatus and facilities rather than the erection of costly buildings. He recognizes that conditions may alter from time to time, and suggests that if rules are framed for the administration of the fund, these should be revised at least every ten years. The suggestions are as prudent as the gift is generous. The nation will expect the Royal Society to translate into action the wise intentions of the donor with corresponding sagacity.—*The London Times.*

SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

DR. JORDAN'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY[1]

DR. JORDAN has chosen a most apt title for his autobiographical volumes. It is a "man," in the meaning of the accented use of the word, of whose life from childhood to seventy we are told in this book; and the activities and achievements of this life are revealed rather in the form of a record of the succeeding days and days' work of this life, with all their crowding and various activities of student, teacher, scholar, administrator and publicist, than in the form of an organized grouping of these activities and interests according to subject. This manner of treatment, chronological, inclining toward the diary form, has its drawbacks of diffuseness and mixing of subject matter and, one must perhaps admit, of overmuch detail, to the reader interested primarily in one or more of those important subjects, such as reform in university methods, introduction of the evolutionary point of view into the teaching of biology, the relations of science to every-day life, the encouragement of internationalism and pacifism, and what not else to which Dr. Jordan has so valuably contributed. But it has its great advantages to the reader interested in following closely the development and unremitting activity of a great personality. It reveals the methods of a highly intelligent and informed man, of robust, forthright character, working always with a steadfast aim to be useful to the youth and to the public and government of the American nation; the methods of a man intent on making use of every least as well as largest opportunity, with entire disregard of personal advantage or hurt, to contribute up to the very limit of his power to the advancement of the higher civilization of America and the world. As such it is a fascinating, stimulating and really ennobling record of the "days of a man."

Dr. Jordan tells interestingly of his childhood, in a manner always influenced, but never deadened, by the scientific student of heredity. He describes his days as pupil at home in the village of his birth in Western New York, then in a near-by academy, and finally as college student, beginning with seventy-five dollars in his pocket, at Cornell. His double interest in science and literature, maintained all through life, revealed itself from the beginning of his days of understanding. This story of adolescent development is seizing; one wishes there were more of it.

[1] *The Days of a Man*, being memories of a naturalist, teacher and minor prophet of democracy. By David Starr Jordan; two volumes, illustrated, 1922. World Book Company, Yonkers-on-Hudson.