THE PATHOGENICITY OF NEISSERIA SICCA

NEISSERIA SICCA is a small gram-negative, aerobic diplococcus. Its growth on agar consists of irregularly round, raised, opaque, slightly yellowish colonies which may reach a diameter of 3 mm. The colonies are dull, dry, with a deeply furrowed surface and a crenated edge. Attempts to remove these colonies show them to be very firm and some of them adherent to the surface of the medium. The removed colony is found to be difficult to disintegrate, and impossible to emulsify. When grown in a liquid medium the organism agglutinates spontaneously. Most of the writers on the subject state that acid, but no gas, is produced from dextrose, maltose, levulose and saccharose. The action on saccharose was delayed in the organism which I studied. Besides the rough type of colony described above, a smooth type has been noticed. Variants of a smooth type were observed in my cultures.

As to the specificity of *N. sicca* and other members of the genus Neisseria found in the nasopharynx, Wilson[1] states:

> It seems probable that the gram-negative cocci of the nasopharynx form a single species within which are a few more or less constant subspecies, each of which is itself subject to variation. Until we know more of the extent of this variation it does not seem justifiable to assign names to the numerous types that have from time to time been described by different investigators.

But this is a controversial point.

Under the title, "Acute vegetative endocarditis with multiple secondary foci of involvement due to M. Pharynitides siccae," Schultz[2] described a case of clinical endocarditis from the blood of which a pure culture of a gram-negative diplococcus was grown. This organism was not agglutinated by polyvalant antimeningococcus serum. Acid, but no gas, was produced from dextrose, saccharose and maltose; there was no reaction in mannite or litmus milk.

Kretschmer and Hufnagel[3] isolated a similar organism from the pus of a kidney at operation.

Recently, I identified *N. sicca* from the blood stream of a boy, 12 years of age, who had been ill with clinical endocarditis for two weeks. He complained of headache; a petechial rash extended over the abdomen, and valvular disease of the heart was present. *N. sicca* was isolated on three occasions from the blood stream. Several cultures made of the spinal fluid proved negative.

Detection of the growth of *N. sicca* in the blood culture made in liquid medium may be readily overlooked, due to the adherence of the organisms to each other, and to its not forming a diffused growth.

Neisseria sicca appears to be a pathogen and more of a clinical entity than we have suspected.

FREDERICK W. SHAW
DEPARTMENT OF BACTERIOLOGY,
MEDICAL COLLEGE OF VIRGINIA,
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

[1] Wilson, *J. Path. and Bact.*, 31, 477, 1928.
[2] Schultz, *J. A. M. A.*, 71, 1739, 1918.
[3] Kretschmer and Hufnagel, *J. A. M. A.*, 82, 1850, 1924.

CHROMOSOME NUMBERS IN ALTHEA ROSEA

BECAUSE of its economic importance, cotton has been the subject of much cytological investigation. Denham, in 1924, compared the chromosome numbers of the New World and Egyptian cottons with those of the Asiatic varieties. He reports the haploid number of the former as 26 and that of the latter as 13. The chromosome numbers of the other genera of the family have not been reported so far as known.

Flower buds of *Althea rosea* were collected during the summer of 1931 and fixed in various solutions. Chromosomes were counted in both homeotypic and heterotypic divisions and it appears that the haploid number of the species is 13.

Further study of the different genera is planned together with a more detailed cytological work.

GEORGE W. BURKETT
DEPAUW UNIVERSITY

ON "ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN SPAIN"

IN SCIENCE for April 15, Father P. H. Yancey, S.J., suggests a boycott by American educators as a protest against the "brutal attack" on academic freedom perpetrated by the Spanish government in forbidding members of the Jesuit order to teach in Spain, and confiscating their property. Such a statement by an educator and a member of that order deserves notice, since I am unable to understand how academic freedom is directly involved in the issue.

An inclination to comment on this matter is due to my having been born and reared in Spain. I received my education there, graduating from the University of Madrid. I have known rather intimately the conditions which led to the fall of the monarchy, and I have been in touch with the situation in Spain since leaving that country.

The suppression of the Jesuits with the advent of a new order was a foregone conclusion in the minds of both liberal Catholics and dissenters. Certainly, the teaching activities of the members of this order have not been the cause of objection, nor their personal beliefs, which they have been free to express wherever and whenever they chose. The Society of Jesus has been forbidden to carry on its appointed tasks in Spain because its members take, in addition

to three vows which are not objectionable, a fourth vow of absolute submission to a power residing outside the state. The Spanish people through their elected representatives insist on the sovereignty of the state over its subjects, regardless of the form of government, which may be modified by popular will. This attitude, recently emphasized by the arrest and deportation of communist agitators holding membership in the Third Internationale, is in sharp contrast with the complacency of the monarchy, which allowed in its midst groups of nationals engaged in social and political activities while bound by oath to obey a foreign power.

The measures taken by the Spanish government against the Jesuits, although they may incidentally have encroached upon their academic freedom, are, therefore, primarily a national move for self-preservation. In a way they are less severe than they might appear, for it must be remembered that the members of the order were actually expelled from Spain in 1767, not by a republican government, however, but by His Most Catholic Majesty Charles III. The Society of Jesus was expelled from France in 1594, restored in 1603, again expelled in 1764, and for the last time in 1880. Its members have also been expelled at various times from other Catholic communities, and the order suppressed in 1773 by Pope Clement XIV, but it was revived in 1814.

One may question the wisdom of such harsh measures, but in so far as they are aimed not at individuals but at groups or corporations whose activities may ultimately be inimical to the sovereignty of the state, they do not fall under the category of attacks on academic freedom as it is generally understood.

JOSÉ F. NONIDEZ
CORNELL UNIVERSITY MEDICAL COLLEGE

REPORTS

RECENT WORK ON AMERICAN INDIAN LANGUAGES

FOR a long time students of the American Indians have felt the need of more intensive work on American linguistics. After the attempts of Dr. Albert Gallatin to give a summary of distribution of American languages in the *Transactions* of the American Ethnological Society, the problem was taken up anew by Daniel G. Brinton, who worked particularly on the manuscripts accumulated in the University of Pennsylvania and published the Library of Aboriginal American Literature; and by J. G. Shea in his "Library of American Linguistics," Volumes 1 to 13. The Bureau of American Ethnology collected the data for Powell's Linguistic Map of North America and continued from time to time the publication of text material in various Indian languages. A more systematic attempt at a presentation of the fundamental structures of American Indian languages was not made until in Bulletin 40 of the Bureau of American Ethnology a series of grammatical sketches of American Indian languages were presented. In the time between 1911–1922 the following sketches of language were published in this bulletin:

Athapaskan, by Pliny E. Goddard
Tlingit, by John R. Swanton
Haida, by John R. Swanton
Tsimshian, by Franz Boas
Kwakiutl, by Franz Boas
Chinook, by Franz Boas
Maidu, by Roland B. Dixon
Algonquian, by William Jones and Truman Michelson
Dakota, by Franz Boas and John R. Swanton
Takelma, by Edward Sapir
Coos, by Leo J. Frachtenberg
Siuslawan, by Leo J. Frachtenberg
Chukchee, by Waldemar Bogoras

During the same period the collections of texts in American languages increased considerably. The American Ethnological Society published a series of thirteen volumes; and Columbia University, the University of California, the American Museum of Natural History, the Bureau of American Ethnology, the University of Washington, Seattle, and the Geological Survey of Canada also published considerable text series.

Work on American languages was taken up more systematically and energetically when the American Council of Learned Societies included this work in its program and interested the Carnegie Corporation in it. The American Council of Learned Societies was able to give considerable financial support to this undertaking through appropriations made for the purpose by the Carnegie Corporation. A Committee on Research in Native American Languages was appointed consisting of Franz Boas, *chairman,* Leonard Bloomfield and Edward Sapir to carry on the work with the help of a general committee consisting of M. J. Andrade, J. de Angulo, Father Berard, R. B. Dixon, J. P. Harrington, M. Jacobs, D. Jenness, A. V. Kidder, A. L. Kroeber, T. Michelson, F. M. Olbrechts, G. A. Reichard, F. G. Speck and J. R. Swanton. Since the period for which the committee was first established has reached its end it seems appropriate to make a general statement in regard to the field work accomplished and the material published.