SCIENCE

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MSS. intended for publication and books, etc., intended for review should be sent to The Editor of Science, Garrison-on-Hudson, N. Y.

A NEW AGENCY FOR THE POPULARIZATION OF SCIENCE

IN a democracy like ours it is particularly important that the people as a whole should so far as possible understand the aims and achievements of modern science, not only because of the value of such knowledge to themselves but because research directly or indirectly depends upon popular appreciation of its methods. In fact the success of democratic government as well as the prosperity of the individual may be said to depend upon the ability of the people to distinguish between real science and fake, between the genuine expert and the pretender.

The education of children in schools and of a few in colleges is not sufficient for this. It must be carried into maturity through such channels as the newspapers and the motion pictures. Unfortunately the rapid advance and increasing complexity of modern science has made it difficult for the general reader to follow its course and he has often given up the attempt in despair. Consequently we find the reading public divided into two classes as may be discerned in any public reading room; a minority that habitually read the scientific journals and a majority that never touch even the most popular of them.

In the effort to bridge this gap and to aid in the dissemination of scientific information, a new institution, the Science Service, has been established at Washington. It is chartered as a non-profit-making corporation and all receipts from the sale of articles, books or films will be devoted to the development of new methods of popular education in science. The governing board of fifteen trustees consists of ten scientists and five journalists.

The charter is a wide one, authorizing Science Service to publish books and magazines, to conduct conferences and lecture

courses and to produce motion pictures. Its first conference was held last summer at San Diego, California, on the problems of the Pacific, and another is planned for next summer on urbanization and ruralization.

Science Service will not at present undertake to publish any periodical of its own, for it is believed that much better results can be obtained by devoting the same effort and expense to reaching a wider range of readers through newspapers and to directing attention to the various well-edited periodicals of popular science already in existence rather than attempting to rival them.

Science Service will aim to act as a sort of liaison officer between scientific circles and the outside world. It will endeavor to interpret the results of original research as they appear in the technical journals and proceedings of societies in a way to enlighten the layman. The specialist is likewise a layman in every science except his own and he, too, needs to have new things explained to him in non-technical language.

We may not all go so far as Tolstoy who said that you can explain Kant to a peasant if you understand Kant well enough. But it is evident that part of the indifference of the public to scientific questions is due to poor presentation. When we can find writers who know their subject and are willing to devote as much attention to putting it in effective form as though it were a poem or short story there will be less reason to complain of lack of interest. Science Service will spare no pains or expense in the endeavor (1) to get the best possible quality of popular science writing and (2) to get it to the largest possible number of readers. If in doing this it can make both ends meet, so much the better. If not, it will do it anyway.

Through the generosity of Mr. E. W. Scripps, of Miramar, California, the Science Service has been assured of such financial support from the start as to insure its independence. It will not be under the control of any clique, class or commercial interest. It will not be the organ of any one association. It will serve all the sciences. It will supply any of the news syndicates. It will not indulge in propaganda unless it be propaganda to urge the value of research and the usefulness of science.

The first board of trustees of Science Service is composed as follows:

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Dr. W. E. Ritter is president of the board, Mr. R. P. Scripps, treasurer, and Dr. Vernon Kellogg, vice-president and chairman of the executive committee. This committee is composed of five members, one selected from each group of trustees from the different organi-

zations represented on the board. The present members of the committee are the president and vice-president of the board, Dr. J. McKeen Cattell and Dr. J. C. Merriam. A member from the journalistic group is yet to be selected.

The headquarters of Science Service have been provisionally established in the building of the National Research Council, at 1701 Massachusetts Avenue, Washington, D. C.

As editor the board of trustees has selected Edwin E. Slosson, Ph.D., who for twelve years was professor of chemistry in the University of Wyoming and for seventeen years literary editor of *The Independent,* New York. He has been associate in the Columbia School of Journalism since its foundation and is the author of "Creative Chemistry," "Easy Lessons in Einstein," "Great American Universities," "Major Prophets of To-day," lives of Rumford and Gibbs and other scientific and literary publications.

As manager of the new enterprise the board has selected Howard Wheeler, formerly editor of the San Francisco *Daily News,* Pacific coast manager of the Newspaper Enterprise Association, managing editor of *Harpers Weekly,* and for five years editor of *Everybody's Magazine,* war correspondent and author of "Are We Ready?"

The editor of Science Service desires to receive advance information of important researches approaching the point of publicity in order to arrange for their proper presentation in the press. He also wishes to secure correspondents in every university and center of research who have the time, disposition and ability to write for non-technical journals. He particularly wants to get in touch with young men and women in the various sciences who have literary inclinations and would be willing to submit to a rigorous course of training with a view to making the writing of popular science a part of their life work.

The manager wants to learn from newspapers and periodicals what sort of scientific news they need. If editors will notify Science Service by mail or telegraph whenever they want an article on any scientific subject, an effort will be made to find the best authority to write it. EDWIN E. SLOSSON

THE DISTRIBUTION OF HOOKWORMS IN THE ZOOLOGICAL REGIONS

INCIDENTAL to the pursuit of some public-health problems in the Orient I observe what seems to me to be a peculiar zoological and geographical distribution of two species of hookworms which parasitize man, *Ancylostoma duodenale* and *Necator americanus* and I feel confident that a study of the distribution of these obligate parasites of man will throw some light on problems dealing with the migrations of races of mankind in the past as well as other problems in ethnology.

Ancylostoma duodenale and *Necator americanus* parasitize man with equal facility. It is as easy for a white man, Chinese, Polynesian, East Indian, Malay or Negro to become infected with *A. duodenale* as with *N. americanus* and they may become infected with either or both species of worm, but it was rather remarkable to find that just as the races of man were primarily distributed in Urasia, Africa and Oceania so there seems to have been a primary and distinctive distribution of *A. duodenale* and *N. americanus* for I found that Japanese, East Indians and Chinese from north of say twenty-three degrees north latitude, that is men of the Holarctic region, harbored a very marked predominance of *A. duodenale.* On the other hand southern East Indians, *i.e.,* Tamils and Malabaris say from south of twenty degrees north latitude as well as Malays from Sumatra, Borneo, the Malay Peninsula and Java, that is to say, men of the Oriental region, harbored a marked predominance of or were exclusively parasitized by *N. americanus.*

In studying the hookworm content of an uncontaminated group of Fijians, a mixed Polynesian and Melanesian stock, I found *A. duodenale* to be entirely absent. *N. americanus* and a few *A. ceylanicum,* picked up from dogs, represented the worms harbored.

In South Africa among Kaffirs from south of twenty-two degrees south latitude and among some tropical natives, that is to say