

## Medical Matters.

### ANÆSTHETICS.

Sir Francis Cruise, M.D., in a letter addressed to the press warns the public that anæsthetics, the greatest boon of modern times to suffering humanity, are not free from danger to life, and that the fatal cases almost always occur with chloroform. As no one can tell the day he may need an anæsthetic, all should be adequately informed. Roughly speaking, he states, that fatalities with chloroform amount to 1 in 3,000 administrations; with ether 1 in 17,000. Chloroform is often preferred, as more agreeable to the patient, less likely to be followed by nausea and vomiting, and as simpler for the anæsthetist, but Sir Francis Cruise holds that such reasons are not sufficient to counterbalance its much greater danger to life. Some hearts are especially sensitive to chloroform, and yet give no previous indication or warning. When administered an apparatus which secures a definite low percentage of chloroform vapour in the air should always be used.

### INSECTS AND DISEASE.

It is announced that in view of the intimate relation which is recognised as existing between certain insects and the propagation of diseases of both man and animals in tropical Africa, and of the similar relation between insects and economic plants, which is becoming more evident as settlement in the continent progresses, the Earl of Crewe has appointed a scientific committee whose object it will be to further the study of economic entomology, with special reference to Africa.

This body will be known as the African Entomological Research Committee, and the Earl of Cromer has consented to act as Chairman. Mr. A. C. C. Parkinson, of the Colonial Office, is acting as Secretary to the Committee, and Mr. Guy A. K. Marshall as Scientific Secretary.

Arrangements are now being made to despatch a trained entomologist to the east side of tropical Africa and another to the west for the purpose of stimulating official and other residents to collect and observe noxious insects, and of affording instruction in the use of scientific methods. By this means it is hoped to obtain throughout these territories an organised body of investigators who will communicate all their collections and observations to the Committee. These collections will be classified by a number of British, and, in some instances, Continental, entomologists, and named specimens will be distributed to such institutions as may require them for purposes of instruction both at home and in Africa. The Committee will also keep in

touch with the work which is being done in this branch of science in Egypt and the Soudan and in South Africa.

The scientific results, including all observations and experiments made by the collectors, will be published from time to time in a journal or bulletin to be issued by the Committee.

It is hoped that by such organised co-operation the knowledge of these matters will be materially increased, so as to render possible the application of effective remedial measures. Offers of cordial assistance have been received from such institutions as the British Museum (Natural History), the London and Liverpool Schools of Tropical Medicine, and the leading universities, in all of which valuable work has already been done in the same direction.

Mr. Robert Newstead, M.Sc., Lecturer in Economic Entomology and Parasitology, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, a member of the African Entomological Research Committee, informed a representative of the *Morning Post* that four sub-committees have been formed to deal with (a) insects in their relation to the diseases of human beings and animals, (b) of plants, and (c) with publications. It is now recognised by the Colonial Office that economic entomology has become one of the most important of the subjects with which it has to deal. There are to be considered the fate of crops which have to be reaped and gathered, the fate of domestic animals, and, most important of all, the lives of the inhabitants themselves, all of which depend upon the results of the inquiry which this Committee has been formed to carry out. Such institutions as the National Museums, the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford, and the Schools of Tropical Medicine of London and Liverpool have all taken part, in some form or another, in the great work which has been carried on during the last few years in research, chiefly with tropical diseases which affect human beings, animals, and plants. Up to the present, however, no systematic work has been carried out such as will now be done, and it will be to the western and to the eastern portions of the great African Continent that particular attention will be paid by the appointed investigators. Mr. Newstead also pointed out that the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine had at all times kept in close and constant touch with students and others engaged in research work, and had assisted them as far as possible in identifying material of all kinds in relation to medicine and agriculture. The new Committee would really act in the capacity of an advisory board to men actually engaged in research work in the Tropics, both in medicine and agriculture.

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