

I would like to suggest that this colouring of eggs was in some way originally analogous to the change of colour observable in the chameleon and certain lizards, though by no means, at the same level of development. Although it is quite possible that the colouring in some cases is protective, or has become so, it does not seem that this is a fixed rule. Why should the egg of a starling, which generally builds on house-tops, be blue? The hedge-sparrow's, again, is blue, while the thrush's is blue spotted with black, and the blackbird's is green, though the position of their nests is vastly similar. Again, on examining the excellent "clutches" at the Natural History Museum which exhibit the additional cuckoo's egg, one is struck by the variation in shade, which, according to observers, is matched by the bird itself.

It seems to me that the elucidation of this problem would be of great value in such vexed questions as the inheritance

THE PROPHYLAXIS OF TROPICAL DISEASES.

THE history of tropical medicine, or what might be called its recent twentieth century renaissance, will go down to posterity as one of the most remarkable chapters in medicine. In a book entitled "Mosquito or Man? The Conquest of the Tropical World,"¹ Sir Rubert Boyce endeavours, in his own words, to epitomise this wonderful movement, a movement initiated in England by the then Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, and by Sir Patrick Manson, a physician who had practised in the East, and had returned home imbued with the idea that the diseases of the tropics stood, so to speak, by themselves, and thus required special teaching in the medical schools of this country. The idea



FIG. 1.—Water-logged Anopheline Breeding Land, Belize. From "Mosquito or Man?"

of acquired characteristics, and might be really illustrative of the exact processes of evolution. R. L. LESLIE.

13 Electric Mansions, Brixton, S.W., December 1.

The Terminal Velocity of Fall of Small Spheres in Air.

At the recent Winnipeg meeting of the British Association we presented some results on the terminal velocity of fall of approximately spherical spores, which were not in agreement with Stokes's formula (see NATURE, October 14, p. 472). We have succeeded since in making minute spheres of paraffin wax, a certain black wax, and mercury, and have determined their terminal velocities over a wide range of sizes by the same method as in the preceding investigation. The velocities obtained for these spheres are in close agreement with Stokes's formula. The reason for the deviations in the former cases is not clear.

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gained ground; two tropical schools, one in London, one in Liverpool, were founded, as Sir Rubert describes in his first chapter, and from that day onwards things have never looked back. Discovery after discovery have poured from these schools until now we stand on the threshold of a new world, a tropics as healthy as a temperate clime.

There apparently is nothing new under the sun, not even in medicine; the author describes in his fourth chapter how Sir Henry Blake, when Governor of Ceylon, had been shown a medical work written fourteen hundred years ago, in which the mosquito was stated to be a carrier of disease, and in which malaria was described as being transmitted by flies or mosquitoes—a truly prophetic utterance. More recently than this certainly, but yet, as things go now, of older

¹ "Mosquito or Man? The Conquest of the Tropical World. By Sir Rubert Boyce, F.R.S." Pp. xvi+267. (London: John Murray, 1909.) Price 10s. 6d. net.