

Science News a Century Ago

The Entomological Society

At a meeting of the Entomological Society held on April 4, 1836, the Barons Ocskay de Ocsko, and De Chaudoir, M. Fahraens, Governor of the Province of Gottenburg, and several other distinguished entomologists were balloted for and elected foreign members of the Society.

The Horticultural Society

An exhibition by the members of the Horticultural Society was held on April 5, 1836. This exhibition, said the *Athenæum*, was of much greater interest than recent displays, "and though late in the season for Camellias, was very rich in specimens of that beautiful tribe, it being understood that medals would be bestowed for the best Chinese varieties and English seedlings. Those plants that were still in bloom therefore in the collections of the most celebrated growers of these plants, were brought into contrast. . . . The Camellias from Mr. Donald's nursery were remarkable on account of their being from the open ground and only slightly protected in the winter; the plants averaging in size from two to four feet in height and from six to nine feet in circumference".

Louise-Philippe and the French Surgeon Desault

QUOTING from *Galignani's Messenger* on April 6, 1836, *The Times* said: "It is well known that his Majesty Louis Philippe, in his youth, besides the usual studies of his age and rank, applied himself to the acquirement of many of the useful arts and sciences, and, among the rest, to surgery, in which he became the pupil of the celebrated Desault. Being informed that a subscription was being made for raising a monument to the memory of this restorer of surgery in France, in his native town of Lure, in the Upper Saone, he desired the list of subscribers to be brought to him, and inserted his name for the sum of 300 f., writing at the same time the following note:—'Desault was my master and professor in surgery. I assisted him as one of his dressers, and it was he who put the lancet into my hands, causing me to bleed patients at the Hôtel-Dieu of Paris'."

Desault was born on February 6, 1744, became surgeon of the Hôtel-Dieu in 1788 and died on June 1, 1795.

Progress in Medicine

In his inaugural address (*Gazette des hôpitaux*, April 7, 1836) at the Hôpital de la Charité, M. Bouillaud, professor of clinical medicine in the Paris Faculty, said it was difficult to understand how some persons could assert that there was no progress in medicine. Every discovery of facts, every theory, doctrine or system was progress, so that to deny the existence of progress was almost as ridiculous as to deny the existence of motion. Physics at the present time was not that of antiquity, the chemistry of Fourcroy was not that of Berzelius, Thenard, etc., nor was modern philosophy that of Socrates or Plato. Physics, chemistry and all the other accessory sciences were indispensable to the physician, for how could the

theory of movement, the chemistry of the organs, circulation, etc., be interpreted without a more or less profound knowledge of the laws governing inorganic bodies? The ancients knew nothing of physiology. They did not possess the knowledge of etiology which we have, although Hippocrates had studied the influence of air, waters and places. Treatment, the corollary of pathology, had made undoubted progress, though it was still far from perfection, for it was often irrational and empirical. Without going into further details, percussion, auscultation and mensuration were obvious proofs of the progress of medicine. Men of progress were rare. If one compared the progress of medicine from Hippocrates to Morgagni with that made from Morgagni and Bichat down to the present time, one would realise the immense strides made by medicine in the last century. France was one of the most progressive countries and one in which medicine had not lagged behind the other sciences.

The Adelaide Street Gallery of Science

IN *The Times* of April 8, 1836, appeared the advertisement: "SPLENDID EXHIBITION. Adelaide Street Gallery.—The Council of this Institution, anticipating numerous visitors at this season, have directed for *Exhibition* the most familiar yet brilliant chymical and other experiments, the Microscope (very frequently repeated), Magnets, Cosmoramas, Steam-Gun, Combustion of Steel, Rope Dancers, Chinese Jugglers, Silk Looms, Printing Press, Minerals, Paintings, Tapestry, Sculpture, Models—Nautical, Mechanical, Architectural, etc. Open from 10 till 6 o'clock. Admission 1s. or annual subscription £1."

Statue of Cuvier

ON April 9, 1836, the *Athenæum* said: "M. David has now finished his second statue of Cuvier. It is in an erect posture and robed in the costume of Counsellor of the University, and is to be placed in the new gallery of Mineralogy at the Jardin du Roi. M. David has aimed at the expression of consummate genius in the head, as he had, in the previous statue for Montbelliard, conveyed the impression of deep thought. The same distinguished sculptor has just executed a colossal bust in marble of the great Berzelius, whose nuptials in Sweden have just been celebrated."

Epidemic Disease in France

ACCORDING to a note in the *Gazette médicale de Paris* of April 9, 1836, the Royal Society of Medicine of Marseilles was offering a prize of 500 francs for the best essay in French or Latin dealing with the following two questions: Has the recent occurrence of cholera in France sufficiently settled our views as to its mode of propagation as to justify a modification of the existing sanitary legislation? (2) Up to what point have our ideas on the propagation of typhus, yellow fever and plague been modified by the great epidemics in France, and to what extent may the legislation on these diseases be modified? The Society, in accordance with the views held by the great majority of French practitioners, regarded cholera as not contagious. This conviction, however, was not obligatory for candidates, who were free to express their personal opinions on the subject.