

completed, if nothing untoward intervenes, by May next. It was intended that the School should open there for the session 1940-41. In the recently issued annual report for the session 1938-39, the first of Lord Harlech's chairmanship of the Governing Body, it is recorded that, in response to an appeal which he, as Mr. Ormsby-Gore, when Secretary of State for the Colonies, had put forward, the Colonial Office has promised a sum of £4,380 per annum in subvention of the work of the School, while a grant of £2,500 has been made by the University Court for the remainder of the quinquennium for the establishment of five posts—one lectureship in Japanese, one in Turkish, and three in Arabic dialects, while a later grant of £500 for a period of not less than three years was made for a lectureship in Sinhalese. The number of students, though representing a slight decrease, was still more than four hundred. While the numbers from Great Britain and the Empire showed a decrease, there was a considerable addition to those from Germany and the United States.

IN the course of the report, reference is made to the valuable assistance towards African studies given by grants from the Rockefeller Foundation which during the last seven years have amounted in sums allocated to public bodies and to individuals to a total of £18,000. It will be remembered that it was through the assistance of a grant from this source, spread over five years, that the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures was enabled to plan and carry out its valuable scheme of organized African research in the field, of which the benefit is now becoming apparent not only in the monographs in course of publication but also in the projects for further research which directly or indirectly have sprung from that scheme.

#### Dr. Jean Paul Marat

IN a recent paper (*Hippocrate*, 7, 379; 1939) Dr. Henri Candiani protests against the unjust and cruel treatment which Marat has received not only from scientific pamphleteers but also from reputable historians such as Michelet, Taine and Carlyle. While not attempting to refute all the legends and calumnies concerning the "Friend of the People", Dr. Candiani confines himself to the scientific and medical aspects of his hero. So far from being a charlatan or merely a horse-leech, as Carlyle called him, he was a properly qualified medical man of St. Andrews who, during his residence in London, had a good practice in Soho when that district was a fashionable quarter. His "Essay on Man" (1775), more than half of which is devoted to anatomy, is a philosophical and psychological work, in which he has been recognized as the precursor of Cabanis, Broussais and Gall. In his "Essay on Gleans", published the same year, he criticized certain errors of treatment current at the time, including the use of hard and irritating bougies, for which he substituted softer instruments. In 1776 he made an important contribution to ophthalmology in his "Enquiry into a Singular Disease of the Eyes",

in which, as Prof. Truc of Montpellier has shown, he gave a description of astigmatism which preceded the classical account of Thomas Young by more than twenty years. But it was as a pioneer in electrotherapy, on which he wrote in 1782 and 1783, that Marat chiefly deserves mention in the history of medicine. According to Dr. W. G. Turrell of Oxford, his work on this subject was on far more scientific lines than the writings of any of his predecessors or even than the publications of many of his successors. In conclusion, Dr. Candiani describes Marat as a conscientious experimenter, resolutely hostile to absurd theories or hasty generalizations.

#### Food of Game Ducks

VARIOUS causes have contributed to reduce, to a serious extent in some cases, the numbers of game ducks in the United States and Canada, and the interest of the public and the self-interest of the multitude of shooters alike demand that measures should be taken for the encouragement and multiplication of the duck population. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has responded to the demand by the publication of a pamphlet (Washington, D.C.: *Tech. Bull.* No. 634; 1939) of 156 pages and 153 plates, with the aim of spreading dependable information on which programmes for the improvement of breeding and feeding grounds may be based. To minimize waste of funds and loss of effort through the introduction of unsuitable foods, it is essential that the important plant and animal foods of the various species be known and that consideration be given to the range of particular species and environmental and other limiting factors. By making use of data accumulated through many years by the Biological Survey, the authors, A. C. Martin and F. M. Uhler, have presented a thorough-going treatise which from three aspects gives a lead to duck conservation and propagation. The first section presents a census of foods, based upon analyses of nearly 8,000 stomachs or gullets of eighteen species of game ducks, and indicates the regions in the United States where each food is preferred. The second part, by means of photographs and concise descriptions, is designed to facilitate recognition of these foods; and the third part contains practical suggestions on the propagation of the food of waterfowl and the development of feeding grounds.

#### Fauna of the Marquesas Islands

ISOLATED in the central Pacific Ocean, farther from the continents than any others, with one exception, themselves the relics of volcanoes perhaps of Pliocene age, the Marquesas Islands afford a perfect setting for the study of an oceanic island fauna. The study has been carried out with thoroughness by A. M. Adamson, who spent fifteen months collecting on the Islands and has made a survey of the literature bearing on the problem (*Bull. Bernice P. Bishop Museum, Honolulu*, 159, 93; 1939). Marquesan animals are related to those of the island groups lying to the west and south-west, Samoa, Society, Cook, etc., but they show little affinity to the fauna of Hawaii. The

faunal drift has been ultimately from the Indo-Malayan region, with a sprinkling of Australian forms, but whether the Islands were populated by oceanic dispersal or by way of hypothetical land bridges seems difficult to decide, and the author gives the arguments for and against both possibilities. Whatever the origin of the fauna, it dates from not later than early Tertiary times, and as might be expected isolation has resulted in the development of a high proportion of species distinctive of the Islands, although between the isolated islands of the group, variations are pronounced only in certain families. Naturally the fauna contains a varied assortment of species, particularly mammals and birds, introduced by man, some, such as the so-called 'native' rats and pigs, probably by the early Polynesian voyagers, and all the other mammals, with the doubtful exception of dogs and mice on some of the Islands, by white adventurers.

### European Rural Life

A PUBLICATION of much interest has been produced by the International Institute of Agriculture in Rome. It is entitled "Documentation for the European Conference on Rural Life, 1939", but in spite of its title it contains much of real value and much that has not previously been collected into one volume. Especially valuable is the long chapter on land reclamation and improvement in the different countries of Europe, including statistical information. This leads to a chapter on the improvement of crops, stocks and rural industries, where again various State efforts are discussed. In addition, there are useful summaries of land tenure systems in Europe and a full discussion of the present and potential density of agricultural populations as well as discussion on the economics of farming in different countries. The publication runs to nearly four hundred pages, and has various references to other sources of information.

### Music in Mental Diseases

DR. ARTHUR H. HARRINGTON, late superintendent of the State Hospital for Mental Diseases, Howard, Rhode Island, states that in some public institutions in the United States the value of music systematically applied with a therapeutic purpose has been recognized as an aid in institutional activities (*Mental Hygiene*, 23, 601; 1939). He has found that though technical instruction for groups of patients has only a very limited value, and does not produce sufficient return for the time and effort expended, mass and group singing of properly selected compositions under proper direction with the psychological aim always in mind, has a definite therapeutic value. Instrumental music of a subdued type seems to have a desirable psychological effect at meal-times, when it produces quiet and repose. In Dr. Harrington's experience the physical act of singing increases a number of bodily functions, stimulates respiration and heart action, gives increased oxygenation to the tissues and often has a favourable effect upon morbid mental states.

### Memorandum on Influenza

THE Ministry of Health has issued a revised edition of the Memorandum on Influenza, first published in 1919 and revised in 1927 (Memo. H.M. Stationery Office. 2*d.* net). It is pointed out that since the great and fatal pandemic in 1918-19, influenza epidemics in England and Wales have shown a decided preference for the first quarter of the year. The disease is caused by a filterable virus, and the incubation period is about 48 hours. Infection is conveyed from the sick to the healthy by the secretions of the respiratory surfaces. Beyond adequate ventilation, with perhaps gargling with an antiseptic solution after close contact with infection, little can be done for personal protection. At the first feeling of illness, the patient should go to bed in a room by himself, keep warm, and seek medical treatment.

### Health Problems of Industry

THE investigations carried out under the direction of the Industrial Health Research Board, Medical Research Council, during the year ended June 1939 are contained in the nineteenth annual report of the Board, recently issued (H.M. Stationery Office. 6*d.* net). These include a research on the toxicity of various volatile organic substances, now increasingly used as solvents in industry, work on mental integration with special reference to accidents and vocational fitness, and on vocational aptitudes, and researches on the physiological problems of heating and ventilation. Environmental conditions, such as lighting and vision, noise and deafness, and the effects on health produced by inhalation of dusts met with in industry, have also been investigated, and summaries of the results obtained are included in the report.

### National Research Council of Japan

A RECENTLY received report of the National Research Council of Japan (2, No. 8) covers the period April 1938-March 1939. In addition to particulars of the serial publications issued, the report includes summarized accounts of the annual general meeting and of the various divisional and committee meetings, with notes on the thirteenth conference of the International Union of Chemistry and the Tenth International Congress of Pure and Applied Chemistry and other international meetings at which the Council was represented. Besides details of the officers, members and committees of the Council, the report includes a long obituary notice of Baron J. Sakurai by Dr. N. Matsui (see also *NATURE*, Aug. 5, 1939, p. 234), reviewing not only his scientific work but also his work in promoting research activity in Japan and her international cultural relations. Appendixes list serial publications received from abroad and tabulate those of the Council already issued.

### Phytopherol: a Standardized Solution of Vitamin E

VITAMIN E is now being manufactured in Great Britain on a commercial scale and has been put within the reach of all by the British Drug Houses, who issue it as capsules of an oily solution containing