

with vision and forethought, and should give a further stimulus to that growing movement to use to the full the opportunities which the tragedies of war itself now afford us of rectifying the mistakes and failures of the past and our failure to plan harmoniously either the industrial towns or the countryside of Great Britain.

### Indian Farming

THE journal *Indian Farming*, now in its third year of publication, is issued by the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research of India and is a praiseworthy attempt to bridge the gap between cultivator and scientific worker. It is a monthly with a pleasant appearance of format and is copiously illustrated. It includes articles on breeds of Indian livestock, livestock products and crops, and the erosion problem receives due recognition. Shorter articles and reviews from all parts of the country help to provide a reasonably full conspectus of Indian agricultural problems and of the manner in which technical effort is being directed to meet them. All original papers have a practical bias, as, for example, the recent paper entitled "More Light on the Red-spot Epidemic", by B. L. Chona and G. W. Padwick (3, 70-73; 1942). This gives details of the infection of sugar-cane by *Colletotrichum falcatum*, which has led to sudden and almost complete failure of the variety Co 213 over a wide area: a new strain of the fungus, not observed before the epidemic, is described. A note on animal quarantine in the Provinces and States discloses that the Central Provinces alone have anything like a comprehensive organization. As a good example of the educative article may be mentioned "Propagation of the Apple in Kumaun", by R. S. Singh. The solar treatment of loose smut of wheat—a method evolved at Lyallpur from Jensen's hot-water treatment—has been described by J. C. Luthra (2, 416; 1941); it is very effective and furnishes a striking instance of extreme simplicity in a control measure well adapted for farmers. A new heavy-yielding and strong-growing variety of sugar-cane (Co 421), described by Ch. Kh. Mohammad (2, 140; 1941), seems to be especially suited to the Punjab, and its seed is being multiplied as rapidly as possible. V. R. Rajagopalan (2, 136-39; 1942) has established calcium deficiency as the cause of an outbreak of non-bacterial abortion in equines. *Indian Farming* gives much attention to processing and marketing, including the canning and dairying industries, and the grading of eggs and oranges, and whenever possible simple devices adapted to Indian conditions are described in order that quality shall be improved.

### Montesquieu and Medicine

THE issue of the bilingual *Schweizerische Medizinische Wochenschrift* of May 2 contains an article in French by Dr. Camille Dreyfus of Mulhouse on this subject, in which he declares that the author of "L'Esprit des Lois" and the "Lettres Persanes" deserves a place in the history of medicine which has not yet been accorded to him. In 1718, the Academy of Bordeaux, of which Montesquieu had been elected a member two years previously, had chosen as the subject of a prize "The use of the renal or atrabiliary capsules", the modern equivalent of which would be "The physiology of the suprarenal capsules". Montesquieu made a report on the essays

submitted, in which he showed that none of the competitors was worthy of the prize, which was, therefore, not awarded. His "Observations sur l'Histoire Naturelle", which he submitted to the Academy in 1721, contained microscopical studies of the pigmentations of insects, the parasitic life of the mistletoe, the abdominal circulation of the frog, the foramen ovule and ductus Botalli and experimental researches on the nutrition value of vegetables. In spite of his satires on medical practitioners in "L'Esprit des Lois" and the "Lettres Persanes", it would be wrong to suppose that he was prejudiced against the medical profession generally. In a letter to his friend the Abbé de Guasco, he expressed his admiration and affection for Van Swieten, the celebrated Dutch physician, whom Maria Theresa had invited to Vienna to reorganize medical education. Montesquieu was also a friend of the Chevalier Louis de Jancourt, who contributed articles on physiology and pathology to the "Encyclopédie". The high esteem in which Montesquieu himself was held by a leading medical man of the time is shown by the following appreciation of him by Antoine Portal, the celebrated professor of anatomy at the Collège de France and the Jardin du Roy: "If Montesquieu had devoted himself to the study of anatomy he would perhaps have advanced this science as much as he did moral science." In conclusion, Dr. Dreyfus relates that Montesquieu was the author of a thought which alone should win him immortality: "If I knew something useful to my country but injurious to Europe and the human race, I should regard it as a crime."

### American Health in Early War Months

ACCORDING to an editorial in the April issue of the *Statistical Bulletin*, the organ of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company of New York, the United States have enjoyed a period of remarkably good health during the months they have been at war. An improvement in mortality-rate during the first three months of 1942 over that in 1941 was reported for almost all the important causes of death, and no less than nine diseases have shown death-rates lower than ever before. These diseases included not only typhoid fever, scarlet fever, diphtheria, whooping cough, syphilis and appendicitis, but also such important diseases as influenza, pneumonia and tuberculosis, in which the mortality has been low in recent years. The 1942 record for the most important diseases of middle and later life, namely, cancer, diabetes and cardiovascular renal diseases is favourable compared with that of 1941, the death-rate from diabetes being down 10 per cent and cancer and the cardiovascular renal diseases each 3 per cent. One of the few diseases to show a rise in 1942 as compared with 1941 are diseases of the puerperal state, of which the rate rose from 4.1 to 4.5 per 100,000, or approximately 10 per cent. It is probable that the increase was due to the rise in the birth-rate and in the number of women exposed to the risks of pregnancy and child-birth. Another group of conditions in which there has been an increase in the death-rate were external causes, with the exception of suicide, which had declined. Homicides and accidents, especially accidents due to motor-vehicles, were higher than in 1941. The war deaths reported to the Company in the first three months of 1942, amounting to 5 per 100,000, accounted for a part of the rise in the death-rate from external causes.