

India.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS.)

THE SCHOOL OF TROPICAL MEDICINE AT CALCUTTA.

The Laying of the Foundation Stone by Lord Carmichael, Governor of Bengal.

On February 24th the foundation stone of the School of Tropical Medicine in Calcutta was laid by Lord Carmichael, Governor of Bengal, in the presence of a distinguished gathering. Lord and Lady Carmichael were received by Colonel Harris, Inspector-General of Civil Hospitals, and Colonel Calvert, Principal of the Medical College, who presented the College Council to their Excellencies.

Colonel Harris opened the proceedings with a lengthy speech, in which he reviewed the history of medical research in India from the early days of Annesley and Twining to the present time. He pointed out the immense advantages of Calcutta as the locality of the first school of tropical medicine to be founded in a tropical country. He referred to the work of American doctors in Cuba, the Philippine Islands, and Panama as evidence of the practical importance of medical research in reducing the mortality of tropical diseases and making it possible for Europeans to carry out great works in hot climates. He next described the arrangements of the laboratories of which the stone was being laid, and stated that, including the biological laboratory for the students of the Medical College and the site for a small hospital for tropical diseases, they would cost 11½ lakhs (£76,667). The Government of India had already given 6 lakhs, and an extension to accommodate teaching for a diploma in public health at a cost of 1 lakh was under consideration. The fees for the courses would cover only a very small part of the cost of upkeep. Colonel Harris made an eloquent appeal for liberal endowments from all parts of India to enable full use to be made of the new laboratories in the investigation of the many important problems in tropical medicine in India. An additional sum of 2½ lakhs was urgently required to build the hospital for tropical diseases to enable the researches to be carried out on the most practical lines, and further large sums for the endowment of beds in the hospital. The staff would consist of a professor of tropical medicine, with fully 40 beds under his control; a professor of bacteriology and pathology, a professor of protozoology, a professor of entomology and helminthology, a professor of biochemistry and serology, and a professor of pharmacology (to investigate in a scientific manner Indian drugs), with an adequate staff of demonstrators. One of the professors would presumably be appointed Director of the Institute, a post which will not be permanently tied down to any particular chair. The staff would be whole-time men, and prohibited from engaging in general private practice. A diploma in tropical medicine would be granted, and as the institution would be an imperial one the nominations to the chairs would be made by the Government of India, so as to obtain the best men in or outside the Government services.

Surgeon-General Sir C. P. Lukis, K.C.S.I., Director-General of the Indian Medical Service, in a brief speech conveyed the goodwill and best wishes of the Government of India for the success of the Calcutta School of Tropical Medicine, and dwelt on the immense importance of the work before it. He expressed keenest personal interest in the scheme, which had originated from him in March, 1910, and the pleasure it gave him to witness the laying of the foundation stone of an institution which he was convinced would at no distant date develop into one of the most important centres of medical research, not merely in the Far East, but in the whole world.

The stone was then laid by Lord Carmichael, and on his return to the dais Lieutenant-Colonel Leonard Rogers presented his report as Honorary Secretary of the School of Tropical Medicine Endowment Fund, and announced that in the few weeks which had elapsed since his appeal had been issued, donations had been given or promised amounting to a total of Rs. 1,17,952 (£7,865). The tea, jute, and mining industries were favourably considering his appeal for Rs. 20,000 a year for five years from each to enable additional research workers to be employed.

Seven members of the Calcutta Trades Association had contributed Rs. 1,650, while it was hoped that substantial help would be received from the Chamber of Commerce and the Calcutta Corporation, as well as from the great Indian railway companies.

A number of Indian gentlemen who had contributed liberally to the endowment fund were then presented to His Excellency, including Kumar Birendra Chandra Singha of the Paikpara Raj, who is generously giving Rs. 50,000.

Lord Carmichael said that no official act as governor had given him greater pleasure than to lay the foundation stone of an institution which would be so useful to mankind. He hoped that money would be liberally subscribed in India as it had been subscribed for similar institutions in America and in England. In India the money so subscribed was likely to yield even more fruitful results, for the opportunities for research were greater. Colonel Leonard Rogers had told him that in more than one-third of the cases he had examined *post mortem* at the Medical College death was due to tropical disease; no other city could afford such an opportunity. The variety of clinical and pathological material available would be greater than it could be in England, and there would be a five months course of instruction in place of the two or three months required in the English schools. The question put by those who proposed to give money to the school might be: Will it pay? To that there could be but one answer: It would pay. There was the classic instance of the Panama Canal. There was the case of Khartoum, where the work of the Wellcome laboratories had been paid for again and again, and there was the instance of Malta fever where the money expended in ascertaining its cause had not only been amply repaid, but had resulted in a substantial saving to the Government. He believed that the time was at hand when it would be possible to deal effectually with dysentery, cholera, and leprosy. Kala-azar took so great a toll of life in Bengal, that it was an even greater cause of mortality than malaria. What was known of that disease really amounted to the knowledge that there was very much more to be known. A war must be carried on not only against mosquitos but other insects which were disease carriers, and money spent in finding out how to deal with them would be money well spent. After a reference to the possibility of the introduction of yellow fever into India, His Excellency said that there were many other subjects waiting for Colonel Rogers and other enthusiasts to learn and to teach, and it was for the public to help Colonel Rogers and his co-workers to do what they believed they could do, for they had shown that they had good reasons for that belief. He appealed to Europeans who made careers and sometimes fortunes in India, and also to native Indians proud of their motherland, and mentioned that a bed in the proposed special hospital could be endowed for Rs. 5,000. The Government was ready to do all it could, and he only regretted that the Viceroy, who took a deep interest in the scheme, had not been able to be present to lay the foundation stone; he had, however, received the following telegram from Lord Hardinge:

My heartiest good wishes for to-morrow's ceremony in which, and in all that it stands for, I am deeply interested. I am sanguine that the school of which you are about to lay the foundation-stone will make a great name for itself in the field of tropical medicine for the study of which this country offers such unrivalled opportunities.

Calcutta, in the establishment of the school of tropical medicine, was leading the way in the East, and Lord Carmichael believed that her citizens would take care that whatever other places might do, Calcutta would always keep the lead, and in keeping it win the admiration not only of all Indians but of all civilized peoples.

The proceedings terminated by a hearty vote of thanks to His Excellency proposed by the Hon. Mr. A. M. Monteath, and seconded by Rai Dr. Kailash Chundur Bose Bahadur, C.I.E., through whose good offices a large number of the donations to the endowment fund had been received.

THE medical practitioners of Blois have issued a collective circular to their patients requesting them not to send for them or to call at their houses on Sundays, except for really serious cases, confinements, and accidents.