Most people forget about the third worker on the site, mistakenly thinking him to have left England permanently before the excavations were complete or being unwilling to implicate such a famous man. In fact, Teilhard de Chardin returned to England in 1914 before the last fossils were found. He was an anthropologist who had lectured on chemistry at Cairo University. There are two further pieces of evidence that point in his direction. One is a Stegodon tooth "found" at Pilt-down and now shown to be radioactive. Such teeth come only from Ichkeul near Bizerta in Northern Tunisia. Teilhard is known to have camped near there while in North Africa. The other is an elephant bone tool typical of the Dordogne. Teilhard was born not a hundred miles away and was familiar with local artefacts.

His motive? To support his strange harmonisation of evolution and religion which he described in *The Phenomenon of Man*. Malcolm Bowden in his book *Apeman—Fact or Fallacy* has further implicated Teilhard in covering up evidence that would have discredited Peking man and with planting further evidence in Java. If Bowden is right then Teilhard certainly deserved the title "Faker of the century."

Underside of a stone

How secure is our body of scientific knowledge? Is more of it fraudulent than we suspect? In his book *Advice to a Young Scientist* Sir Peter Medawar writes of a scientist who plagiarised a number of photographs and several paragraphs of text from a fellow worker and included them in a prize essay. One of his judges was the man from whom the work had been stolen. In the furore that followed the culprit was quietly redeployed into

another institution and has pursued a moderately successful career of petty crime ever since. Medawar does not name the criminal, but if he is known about, how is he allowed to prosper? Is it that he is showing the underside of a stone that none of us would like to turn over in our own lives? A questionnaire in *New Scientist* in 1976 uncovered 189 instances of fraud known to its readership.

Sometimes in the long nights this worries me. Christmas is a good time for confession. If you have a nagging secret in your curriculum vitae that worries you write and tell me about it. If you prefer to do it anonymously I won't betray your confidence. I'd just like to know.

Having spent so much of my time talking about people whose work was unoriginal, I should mention that little of my article is based on original work but has been derived from the publications of others. Among these I should particularly like to mention:

Arther Koestler: *Case of the Midwife Toad*. London, Hutchinson.
Malcolm Bowden: *Ape Men—Fact or Fallacy*. Bromley, Sovereign Publications.

William J Broad: *Science* 208:1438-40, 209:249, 210:38-41, 171-3.

Colin Tudge: *World Medicine* 1974 Jul 17:34.

Leon Kamin: *New Society* 1976 Dec 2:460-1.

Marjorie Sun: *Science* 1981;212:1366-7.

D D Dorfman: *Science* 1978;201:1177-88.

Ian St James Roberts: *New Scientist* 1976 Nov 25:466-7.

C Joyce: *New Scientist* 1981 Apr 9:68-9.

D Dickson: *Nature* 1981;289:227.

Nature 1980;286:433, 831-2.

Lancet 1976;ii:1066-7.

British Medical Journal 1980;281:41-2.

(Accepted 22 September 1981)

Good servants are scarce

R G GUEST-GORNALL

"The cook was a good cook as cook's go, and as cooks go she went."—SAKI.

In the 1880s the newly established post of medical officer of health was looked on with suspicion both by the general public and by the profession, and it was still a time when people would enter wholeheartedly into medical controversies in the "Wakley" tradition.

It made it so easy to put a foot wrong, as my grandfather found when, recently appointed to such a post, he attended the International Congress of Hygiene, where he drew attention to the heavy pall of black smoke that hung perpetually over the borough he represented. On his return he found that his remarks had brought down on him the full wrath of the "city fathers"; for was not this heavily polluted atmosphere the finest sign of the town's prosperity.

It was not until 70 years later that he received some belated recognition of his stand from Dr Edith Summerskill¹ in the debate on the Clean Air Bill when she quoted that "the scene from the top of the parish church spire, far away below you, is exactly like the three weird sisters in *Macbeth*. The adjacent

chimneys belch their blackness out into the poisoned air; a score of other chimneys close at hand contribute to the gathering cloud; and over the remoter portions of the town it broods in one unbroken pall," adding that "poor Dr Gornall, the medical officer of health, once got into dreadful trouble by referring to this frightful local scourge at a sanitary congress."

Compulsory vaccination

Having learnt his lesson on that, surely he could not be faulted on vaccination, of which he was a dedicated exponent all his life, despite the absurd charges made by the anti-vaccination league and even the opposition of some leaders of the profession. The first Vaccination Act (1840) had not been very successful but it did prohibit the more dangerous practice of variolation: smallpox was still endemic with occasional fierce outbreaks, but compulsory vaccination (1853) had come in while he was training, and he had learnt the arm-to-arm technique from his uncle, to whom he was apprenticed; dry points were often in short supply.

Before he had been in office many years as medical officer of health and public vaccinator, the Government established an animal vaccine depot and the arm-to-arm procedure was forbidden (1881). The supply of lymph (some of it calf) now being assured and, despite much evasion of the compulsory vaccination, he thought he was all set to make a good showing if an epidemic hit the town. There was also a bonus for him in the help of his son, straight from the pioneer pathological labora-

Warrington, Cheshire

R G GUEST-GORNALL, MD, MRCP, retired physician

tories at St Thomas's Hospital, where he had been studying bacteriology under Cory and Blaxall, where Sherrington was lecturing, and, indeed, where in 1893 Copeman published his results on perfecting glycerinated calf lymph, which was to eliminate most of the unfortunate complications of the older techniques and the use of human lymph.

The epidemic did come, they coped with 600 cases, their promotion of revaccination was acclaimed, and the findings were reported in all the leading journals.²⁻⁶

Although the aerial spread of viruses is now accepted with regard to smallpox, especially since the Meschede outbreak in 1970,⁷ it was then in dispute, and they were able to contribute, by the study of wind directions and by maps showing the distribution of infected houses, to the view that, "on the whole there is a very strong case in favour of air-borne infection."⁸

Fatal rebellion

Credit for all this good work, however, was nearly dissipated overnight by the need to keep a good table for a large Victorian family. Exercising her right (despite compulsory vaccination), cook refused the protection, took smallpox, and died. The storm broke—in vain it was protested that everyone else in the doctor's family had been vaccinated but her. Nevertheless, the verdict of the local press was that, although outside his home he wielded his authority as a doctor and a magistrate, in his home "for the sake of domestic luxury he had allowed this fatal rebellion on the grounds that she was a good servant and good servants are scarce."⁹

What a rumpus stirred up by the media just because the poor woman exercised her right and harmed no one but herself. His job was in jeopardy as again the city fathers pointed an accusing finger,¹⁰ but happily more reasonable views prevailed as the epidemic came under control. With the disappearance of smallpox as announced by the World Health Organisation on 8 May 1980 all these problems of the past slip into obscurity—provided that the laboratory stores of the virus, now the only existing sources of infection, are kept under control and no one ever uses them for sinister purposes.

References

- ¹ House of Commons Official report (*Hansard*) 1955 November 3.
- ² Gornall JG. A case of varicella simulating variola. *Br Med J* 1893;ii:291.
- ³ Anonymous. A case of eruptions resembling that of variola; remarks. (Under the care of Mr Gornall.) *Lancet* 1893;ii:589.
- ⁴ Gornall JG. On some points in the diagnosis of smallpox, as illustrated in the Warrington epidemic. *Lancet* 1893;ii:485-8.
- ⁵ Gornall JG. The classification of smallpox. *The Practitioner* 1893;51:313-20.
- ⁶ Anonymous. The Oaths Act, 1888. *Lancet* 1893;ii:310.
- ⁷ Anonymous. Airborne transmission of smallpox. *Br Med J* 1970;iv:127.
- ⁸ Gornall JG. Report on the epidemic of smallpox in the years 1892-3 in the borough of Warrington. Warrington: Mackie and Co, 1893.
- ⁹ *Warrington Guardian* 1892 Dec 2.
- ¹⁰ Anonymous. Dr Gornall and the Warrington Guardians. *Br Med J* 1893;ii:873.

(Accepted 1 July 1981)

MATERIA NON MEDICA

Festivals are fun

Nobody ever gives you what you secretly want for Christmas, so, preparing myself to go to a bookshop on 27 December to buy what I had not been given, I was delighted to see that Jonathan Cape had sent the *BMJ* a review copy of Bernard Levin's *Conducted Tour* (£7.50). Over 30 years I have managed to get to seven of the 12 music festivals Levin describes; he, lucky man, was paid to go to all of them, talk about them on Radio 3, have his talks reprinted in the *Listener*, and then prepare a new book based on his travel diaries—not to mention being asked to repeat the exercise in the USA this year. The Mad King Ludwig could hardly have asked for more. The result is sheer delight, to be treasured with two other non-medical books of 1981, Donald Mitchell's *Britten and Auden in the 1930s* and Robert Grant Irving's *Indian Summer: Lutyens, Baker, and Imperial Delhi*.

In *Conducted Tours* Levin is mostly generosity and benignness; all but a few of his adverse comments are wrapped up in the way that Philip Hope-Wallace was such a master of in the *Guardian*. We are not spared his gourmandising—how anybody gets through lunch at Gravetye Manor, tea and "a substantial dinner" at Glyndebourne, not to mention a giant supper of bacon and scrambled eggs, sausages, and grilled tomatoes, and enjoys *Die Entführung* is a phenomenon that I leave to the gastric physiologists to explain. A more interesting sideline is his accounts of conversations with the interesting and the great—Peter and Natasha Brook, Janet Baker, and Michael Tippett. And the book is more than a mere account of the music at festivals ranging from Adelaide to Aix and Barcelona to Hohenems: there are Levin's musings on the Renaissance, local democracy in Britain as exemplified by the minutes of Aldeburgh town council, and the passing of time.

There are also marvellous set comic pieces, of which the most quoted by the reviewers was the night when the Wexford stage hands forgot the lemon juice which stopped the Formica floor from being slippery, with the result that the cast kept upright only by forming a kind of operatic daisy chain. My favourite, however, is his account of John Piper reading the lesson: "Mr Piper cannot get his head at the right distance from the words, or his neck at the right angle for reading them, and he gives a most engaging impersonation of the bewilderment felt

by a short-sighted chicken pecking at what it thinks is a grain of corn but which turns out to be only a mark on the floor."

But the book will be bought by those mostly interested in the festivals themselves—and how good Levin is on Mozart, Schubert, Wagner (of course), and Britten and how restrained in explaining the hate/love relationship of Edinburgh for its festival; though admitting that he was glad to be elsewhere in Europe on all three evenings that the Florence Maggio Musicale devoted to the music of Stockhausen, his tastes are wide and he speaks warmly of Shostakovich and Penderecki, Colin Matthews and Richard Blackford.

In his preface Levin defines the special attractions of a festival: the visitor is on holiday; the city is gracious; the performers are striving extra hard; and the food, weather, and surrounding countryside all tend to be above average. I would add another, for an Englishman at least: cleanliness of the streets. Buxton is potentially one of the most charming of all the festivals. The buildings are elegant; the theatre is a restored Edwardian masterpiece; and to the beauties of the countryside are added some of Britain's finest country houses. The festival is, moreover, still informal enough to enable an approach to the director in the street to ask what next year's programme is going to be. The programme is likely to be unusual and well designed: in 1980, when Bernard Levin did this tour, Buxton offered a delicious account of *Beatrice and Benedict*, a dramatised version of the *Fantastic Symphony* and *Lelio*, an exhibition of paintings of Shakespearian heroines, and the Russian film version of *Hamlet*. But, to put it at its politest, the streets were grubby, the gutters were full of litter, the lawn in front of Carr's great crescent was strewn with bottles and cans, and I could swear that the weeds were in the same places in the pavements as they had been at the first festival the year before. The scene has been the same on my visits to Bath, another festival venue which also lives largely on tourism. Though filth is now an accepted feature of most British urban areas (except the City of Westminster), surely the councils of our special towns have a duty to try to repay something of what their visitors spend by providing Continental standards of cleanliness. But this is to stroke a sour note at the end; to those wanting to anticipate jadedness on New Year's Day, may I recommend them to buy Bernard Levin's new book—they will emerge from reading it informed, amused, and refreshed.—STEPHEN LOCK, Editor, *BMJ*.