

The Epidemiological Society, founded 1850 : the commemoration volume, containing an account of the foundation of the Society, and an index of the papers read at its meetings between 1855 and 1900.

Contributors

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Royal College of Surgeons of England

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Sir John Simon K.C.B.

141.

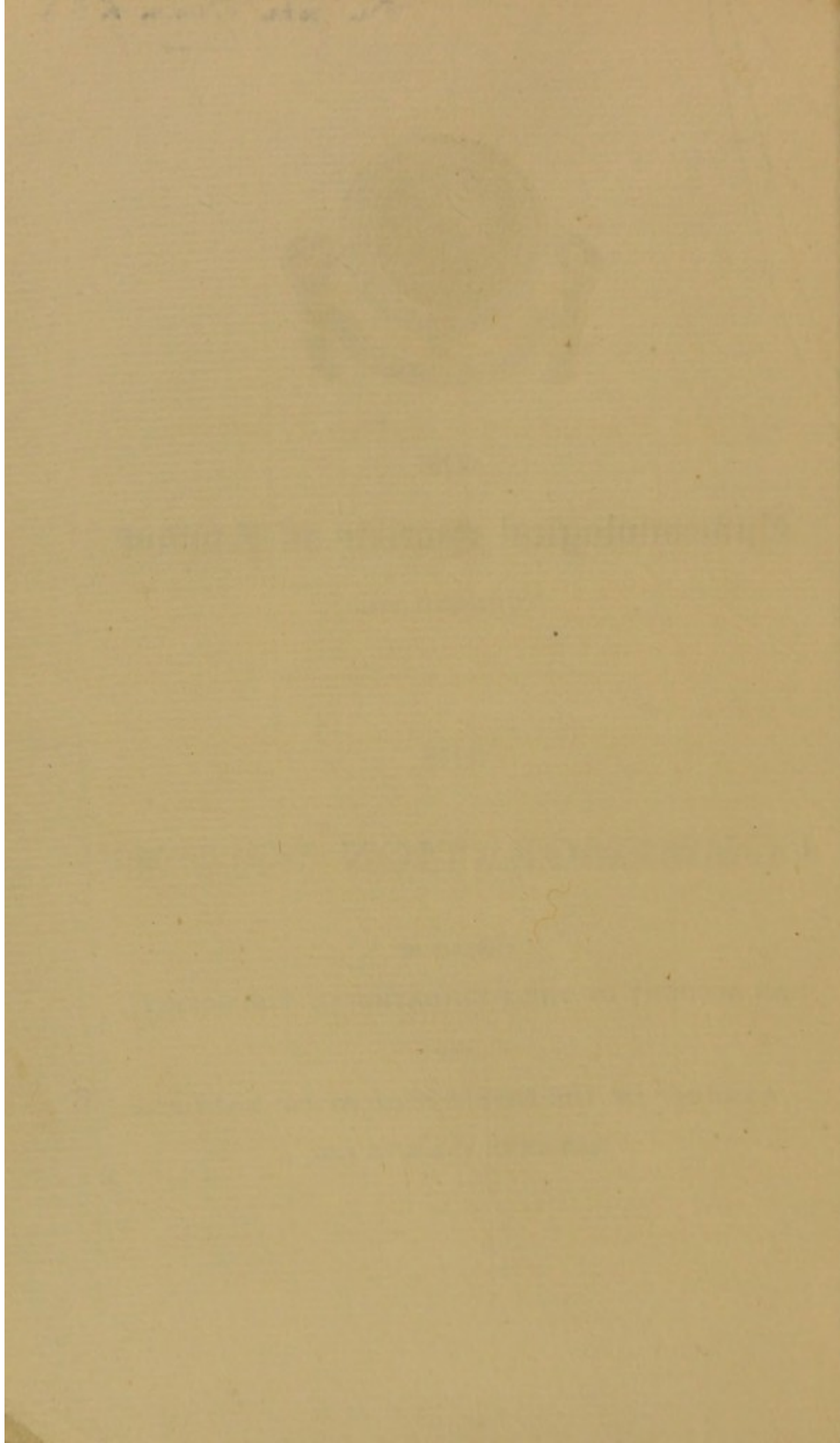


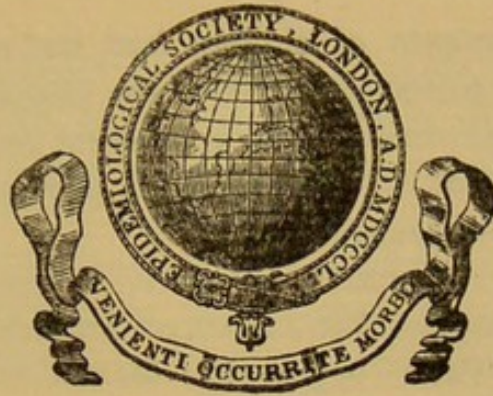
The
Epidemiological Society of London,

FOUNDED 1850.

THE
COMMEMORATION VOLUME,

CONTAINING
AN ACCOUNT OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE SOCIETY,
AND
AN INDEX OF THE PAPERS READ AT ITS MEETINGS
BETWEEN 1850 AND 1900.





The Epidemiological Society of London.

IN publishing this Index* of the Transactions of the Society it has been thought that an interesting, and perhaps useful, purpose might be served if, while the earliest minutes are yet legible, and there are still with us a few survivors of the first meeting, a short account of the circumstances under which the Society was founded were put on record.

To appreciate aright the forces which brought about the origin of the Society, it is necessary to revert for one moment to the conditions which obtained in England about the middle of the nineteenth century.

The energy of Sir Edwin Chadwick and Dr. Southwood Smith had practically culminated in the Report of the Health of Towns Commission; and the conditions which that report, together with figures published by the Registrar-General, had revealed, had awakened in the minds of many thoughtful men a desire for improvement. In so far as legal enactments alone were concerned, the Public Health Act of 1848 had, at least for the moment, filled the void; but there were those who felt that without a better knowledge than was then possessed of the laws which make for the endemicity and epidemicity of disease, progress would be not only all too slow, but based rather upon the dictates of empiricism than the teachings of

* Not here reproduced.

science. The ravages of cholera had but quite recently carried off some 50,000 to 60,000 of the population of these Islands, and there was abroad an earnest desire to render another visitation of this disease, if not preventable, at least less disastrous in its results.

It was under circumstances such as these that there appeared in the pages of the *Lancet*, on September 15th, 1849, a letter signed "Pater" urging the formation of a Society having for its object the study of the behaviour of epidemic disease in general, and for such a Society the somewhat unwieldy title of the "Asiatic Cholera Medical Society" was proposed. "Pater" subsequently revealed his *alter ego* as Mr. Tucker, of Berners Street; and this communication is to be regarded as having led to the foundation of the Society the fiftieth anniversary of which is now being celebrated. Mr. Tucker's efforts received the cordial cooperation of the medical journals, and it was evident from the support which was forthcoming that the desire for the formation of some such Society was of a widespread and sincere nature.

Without following step by step all the immediate developments, it may be mentioned that on *July 30th, 1850*, a public meeting under the presidency of Lord Ashley (the late Earl of Shaftesbury), whose name will for long be associated with public movements for the social amelioration of the people, took place in Hanover Square, at which some 200 gentlemen interested in the project were present, amongst them being some of the most distinguished members of the Medical Profession. The *Lancet* of August 3rd, 1850, tells us: "The speeches delivered on the occasion were eloquent and appropriate, and were listened to with mute and undivided attention by the audience. . . . The meeting was, in fact, an appeal from the profession to the public, for help and encouragement in effecting a mighty effort for the public weal. The necessity for further investigation into the nature of epidemic visitations, together with the imperfection of our present knowledge of the subject, was candidly admitted

by the professional speakers, and even forced upon the attention of the laity; who on their parts received the appeal with sympathy, and responded to it in a most grateful tone of encouragement and generosity."

It was at this meeting that the Epidemiological Society may be thought of as having come into being, and the following names may appropriately be placed on record as—

THE FOUNDERS OF THE SOCIETY.

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J. H. TUCKER, *Secretary*.

Of those whose names find a place upon this historic roll there are, it is believed, but two survivors: Sir John Simon, K.C.B., F.R.S., Late Principal Medical Officer of H.M. Privy Council and Local Government Board, and Sir Edward Sieveking, K.B., Physician in Ordinary to H.M. the Queen. Age precludes our welcoming either of these distinguished gentlemen to our Commemoration Dinner, but each has written congratulating the Society upon this occasion, and conveying to it his best wishes for its future progress.

Sir John Simon writes:—

“40, KENSINGTON SQUARE, W.,

“*Thursday, July 5th, 1900.*”

“MY DEAR SIR,

“Allow me to thank you for the very kind tone of your letter, which recalls my memory to the small share I was able to take in the early work of the Epidemiological Society. In August, 1850, when the Society began its very useful career, I was approaching the end of my third year of service as Officer of Health to the City of London; and I well remember that for several years after the commencement of the Society I was able to take a very interested, though very humble, share in its proceedings; and, though with progress of time, my increased occupation on public duties rendered me a rare visitant to the Society, and eventually quite forbade my attendance at the meetings, I have continued till very recently to be a regular reader of its proceedings, and a learner from the many valuable papers which it published.

“At the present time, mid-way in the 84th year of my age, I have the misfortune of being almost blind, and depend, as you see, on the hand of another for my power of answering your note.

“It is, of course, impossible for me to attend your Commemoration Dinner; but I am glad to be able to express to you my sense of the very valuable services which have been rendered by the Society to the progress of Epidemiological Science, and my earnest hope and belief that it will be able, fifty years hence, to celebrate with even more satisfactory retrospect the completion of its first centenary.

“Believe me, dear Sir,

“Faithfully and respectfully yours,

“JOHN SIMON.

“H. T. Bulstrode, Esq., M.D.”

The first ordinary meeting of the Society took place at the rooms of the Medico-Chirurgical Society, 53, Berners Street, on December 2nd, 1850, and at that meeting

Dr. Guy Babington, F.R.S., its first President, delivered an opening address, setting forth to the large number of members and visitors present the object of the Society, which were, in the President's own words :—

“To endeavour by the light of modern science to review all those causes which result in the manifestation and spread of epidemic diseases—to discover causes at present unknown, and investigate those which are ill understood ; to collect together facts upon which scientific researches may be securely based ; to remove errors which impede their progress ; and thus, as far as we are able, having made ourselves thoroughly acquainted with the strongholds of our enemies and their modes of attack, to suggest those means by which their invasion may either be prevented : or if, in spite of our existence, they may have broken in upon us, to seek how they may be most effectually combated and expelled” (*Lancet*, December 7th, 1850).

Dr. Babington occupied the Presidential Chair until April 4th, 1864, when he delivered a valedictory address, and was succeeded by Dr. Gavin Milroy, who two years later was in turn replaced by Sir William Jenner. The first Honorary Secretary was Mr. Tucker, the originator of the Society, and the first Treasurer Dr. Addison. The accompanying table records the names of all those distinguished epidemiologists who have in turn occupied the Presidential Chair ; and it also embraces the names of those who, since the foundation, have acted as Honorary Secretaries or Treasurers.

SECRETARIES.	PRESIDENTS.	TREASURERS.
Theophilus Thompson, M.D.; J. C. McWilliam, M.D., F.R.S., R.N., and J. H. Tucker.	1850-52. Benjamin Guy Babington, M.D., F.R.S. -	Thomas Addison, M.D.
J. O. McWilliam, M.D., F.R.S., R.N., and J. H. Tucker.	1852-54. Benjamin Guy Babington, M.D., F.R.S. -	Thomas Addison, M.D.
J. O. McWilliam, M.D., F.R.S., R.N., and J. H. Tucker.	1854-56. Benjamin Guy Babington, M.D., F.R.S. -	Thomas Addison, M.D.
J. O. McWilliam, M.D., F.R.S., R.N., and J. H. Tucker.	1856-58. Benjamin Guy Babington, M.D., F.R.S. -	Thomas Addison, M.D.
J. O. McWilliam, C.B., M.D., F.R.S., R.N.	1858-60. Benjamin Guy Babington, M.D., F.R.S. -	Thomas Addison, M.D.
Gavin Milroy, M.D., and J. Netten Radcliffe	1860-62. Benjamin Guy Babington, M.D., F.R.S. -	Thomas Addison, M.D., and Henry Mapleton, M.D.
J. Netten Radcliffe	1862-64. Benjamin Guy Babington, M.D., F.R.S. -	William Camps, M.D., F.L.S.
J. Netten Radcliffe	1864-66. Gavin Milroy, M.D. -	William Camps, M.D., F.L.S.
J. Netten Radcliffe	1866-68. Sir William Jenner, M.D., F.R.S. -	William Camps, M.D., F.L.S.
J. Netten Radcliffe	1868-70. Edward Cator Seaton, M.D. -	William Camps, M.D., F.L.S., and Waller Lewis, M.D.
J. Netten Radcliffe and W. H. Corfield, M.A., M.D.	1870-2. Inspector-General Robert Lawson, F.R.C.S. -	George Buchanan, M.D.
William Squire, M.D.	1872-74. Sir William Smart, K.C.B., M.D., R.N. -	George Buchanan, M.D.
William Squire, M.D., and G. H. Evans, M.A., M.D.	1874-76. John Netten Radcliffe -	George Buchanan, M.D.

Shirley F. Murphy, and G. H. Evans, M.A., M.D.	1876-78.	Surgeon-General John Murray, M.D.	-	George Buchanan, M.D.
Shirley F. Murphy and R. Thorne Thorne, M.B.	1878-80.	Sir Joseph Fayer, Bart., K.C.S.I., M.D., F.R.S.	-	George Buchanan, M.D.
Shirley F. Murphy and J. C. Henderson, M.D.	1880-82.	Sir George Buchanan, M.D., F.R.S.	-	R. Thorne Thorne, M.B.
Shirley F. Murphy and C. E. Paget	1882-84.	Norman Chevers, C.I.E., M.D.	.	R. Thorne Thorne, M.B.
Shirley F. Murphy and C. E. Paget	1884-86.	Walter Dickson, M.D., R.N.	-	R. Thorne Thorne, M.B.
Shirley F. Murphy and C. E. Paget	1886-88.	Sir Richard Thorne Thorne, K.C.B., F.R.S.	-	R. Deane Sweeting, M.B.
Louis Parkes, M.D., and E. O. Hopwood, M.D.	1888-90.	Sir Thomas Crawford, K.C.B., M.D.	-	R. Deane Sweeting, M.B.
E. O. Hopwood, M.D., and H. T. Bulstrode, M.D.	1890-92.	Sir Joseph Ewart, M.D.	-	R. Deane Sweeting, M.B.
E. O. Hopwood, M.D., and H. T. Bulstrode, M.D.	1892-94.	Frank Payne, M.D.	-	R. Deane Sweeting, M.B.
H. T. Bulstrode, M.D., and Sidney Coupland, M.D.	1894-96.	Shirley F. Murphy	-	R. Deane Sweeting, M.B.
H. T. Bulstrode, M.D., and Sidney Coupland, M.D.	1896-98.	Col. Lane Notter, R.A.M.C., M.A., M.D.	-	R. Deane Sweeting, M.B.
H. T. Bulstrode, M.D., and J. W. Washbourn, M.D.	1898-1900.	H. Franklin Parsons, M.D.	-	R. Deane Sweeting, M.B.
		<i>President-Elect.</i>		
		Patrick Manson, C.M.G., M.D., F.R.S.	-	

It would seem superfluous, in view of the full Index now for the first time published, to refer in anything approaching detail to the work of the Society. It must suffice in the main to point to the pages of the *Transactions*, which contain not only the Papers read before the Society, but also the Reports of the several Committees deputed by the Society to study special branches of Epidemiology.

Of the Committees thus appointed there may be mentioned :—

1. *The Committee on Small-pox and Vaccination.*
2. *The Cholera Committee.*
3. *The Epizootic Committee.*
4. *The Hospitals Committee.*
5. *The Continued Fever Committee.*
6. *The Committee appointed to inquire into the Diseases appertaining to the Vegetable Kingdom.*
7. *The Committee appointed to take into consideration the question of supplying the Labouring Classes with Nurses in Epidemic and other Diseases.*

Of these Committees, the one which has left behind the greatest record of its labours is the

Committee on Small-pox and Vaccination.

It may, indeed, be said of the efforts of this Committee that they were almost epoch-making. The attention of the Society was from its earliest days turned towards bringing about such legislation as would tend to reduce the heavy death-toll (some 5,000 deaths yearly) from Small-pox ; and the Committee appointed to deal with this matter had the advantage of possessing as their Secretary (Dr. E. C. Seaton, subsequently Medical Officer of the Local Government Board). In the first instance the Committee ascertained, by means of correspondence, the opinion of some 2000 medical men practising in the United Kingdom and the British Empire ; and after a most painstaking investigation they presented a Report to the Society embodying suggestions, many of which, through the efforts of the

Society, subsequently found a place in the Statute-Book of the Realm.

A copy of this Report, which was entitled "*On the State of Small-pox in England and Wales and other countries, and on Compulsory Vaccination, with Tables and Appendix, presented to the President and Council of the Epidemiological Society by the Small-pox and Vaccination Committee, March 26th, 1855,*" was presented to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, and to Lord Lyttleton: who, on becoming aware of the efforts of the Society in this direction, suspended the progress of a Bill which he had himself introduced into the House of Lords with a view to bringing about compulsory vaccination. The Society's Report was regarded by the Legislature of such importance that it was ordered to be printed by the House of Commons on May 3rd, 1853, and by the House of Lords on June 27th of the same year, and the general effect of the Report was to very materially modify the provision of Lord Lyttleton's measure.

Certain recommendations made by the Society were not, however, pressed upon the Legislature at this juncture, and in 1855 the Society presented a second report on "*The Prevention of Small-pox and the Extension of Vaccination,*" which was at once ordered to be printed by the House of Commons.

The Society continued its efforts, and on February 10th, 1868, we read that a deputation waited upon Lord Palmerston at his residence in Piccadilly, and on March 25th of the same year upon the Hon. W. Cowper, M.P., at the Office of the General Board of Health. The Earl of Derby also, on April in that year, received a deputation upon the same subject at the official residence of the First Lord of the Treasury in Downing Street, and in the *Lancet* of April 24th, 1858, will be found, "*The Humble Petition of the President and Council of the Epidemiological Society of London to the Honourable the House of Commons in Parliament assembled.*"

The efforts of the Society in one or another direction had, by this time, been appreciated in all parts of the civilised world ; and, as an instance of the esteem in which it was then held, it may be mentioned that the first edition of Hirsch's classical *Handbook of Geographical and Historical Pathology*, which was published in 1860, contains the following inscription :—

Der
London Epidemiological Society
widmet diese Schrift
im Anerkennung ihrer Bemühungen
und Verdienste um Förderung der
öffentlichen Hygiene
hochachtungsvoll
der Verfasser.

The later work of the Society is too well known to its members to call for further consideration here ; but, having regard to the interest which, at the present time, attaches to Bubonic Plague, we may recall the fact that in 1893, on the initiation and under the editorship of its then President, Dr. Payne, the Society at its own expense printed from the British Museum Sloane MS. 349, an "Account of the Great Plague of London in the year 1665, by William Boghurst, Apothecary." This is a contemporary account of the last epidemic of Oriental Plague in this country, and is regarded by those conversant with plague literature as being the best medical description of the great epidemic which has been preserved. The work is one which fully repays perusal, the originality and power of observation of the author being quite unique. We reproduce for the interest of our readers the title-page of the treatise in question.

Λ Ο Ι Μ Ο Γ Ρ Α Φ Ι Α

Or an Experimentall Relation of the
Plague, of what hath happened Remarkable in
the last Plague in the City of
London;

Demonstrating its Generation, Progresse, forerunning,
and subsequent Diseases and Accidents, Common Signes,
Good and Evill Signes, Meanes of Preservation, Method
of Cure, Generall and Particular, with a Collection of
Choice and Tried Medicines for preservation and
Cure by the practicall Experience and
Observation

OF

WILLIAM BOGHURST

APOTHECARY IN ST. GILES IN THE FIELDS

LONDON

1666

On the occasion of the Jenner Centenary Celebration in 1896, the Council felt that the Epidemiological Society, with whose name the subject of vaccination will be associated in history, should in some fitting manner commemorate an event of such great moment to preventive medicine.

It was thought that such commemoration might take the form of some encouragement to the study of epidemiology; and that this end would be best promoted by the foundation of a medal to be known as

THE JENNER MEMORIAL MEDAL,

to be awarded from time to time "for work of great merit."

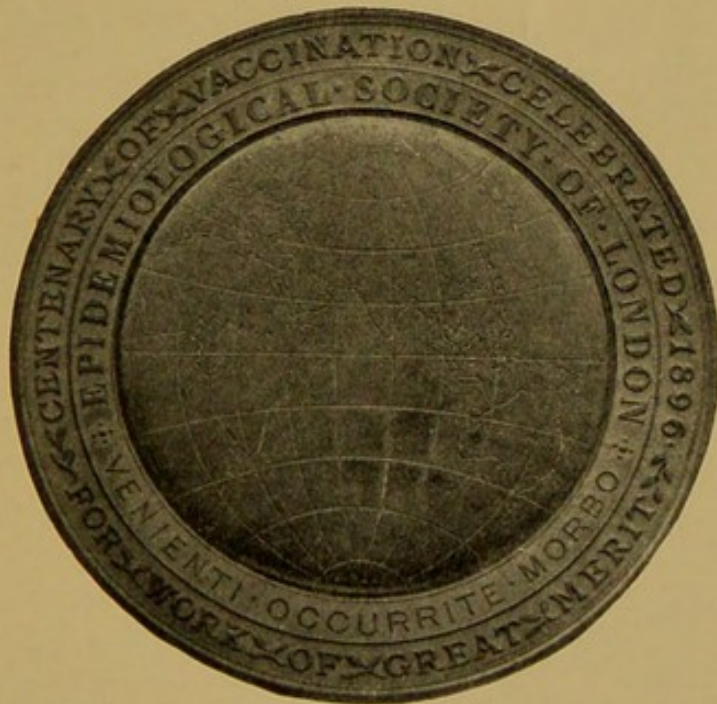
It was, however, represented to the Society that in founding a memorial of this nature the medical profession should be afforded an opportunity of contributing to the fund; and it is gratifying to be able to state that in response to an appeal made through the medical journals, such an amount was forthcoming as to enable the project to be carried out at a merely nominal cost to the Society itself.

A special Committee was appointed to carry the proposal into effect, and a design submitted by Mr. Allan Wyon, F.S.A., the well-known medallist, eventually accepted. The first medal, a fac-simile of which is here reproduced, was awarded to WILLIAM HENRY POWER, F.R.S.

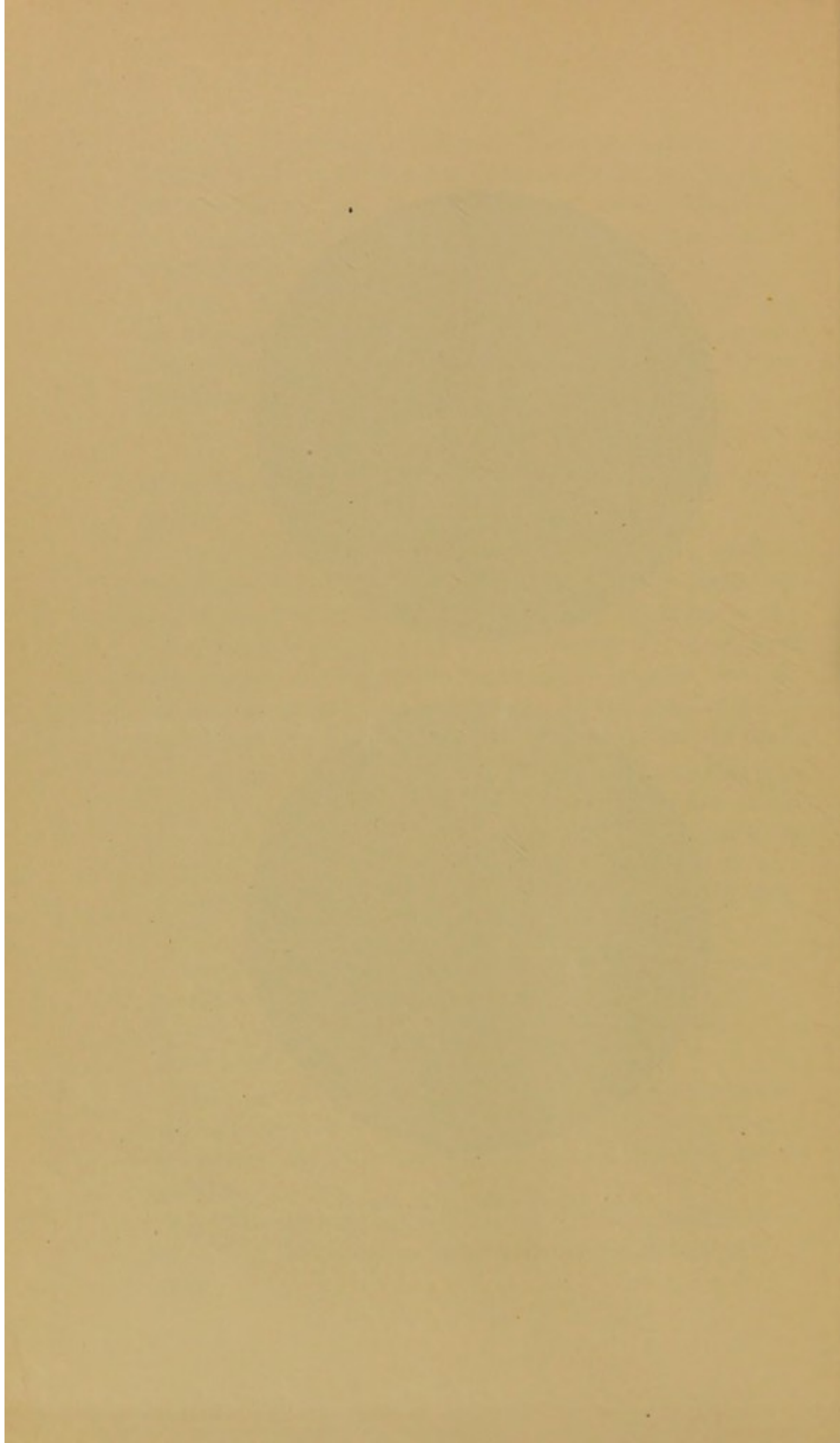
As regards the Fiftieth Celebration of the foundation of the Society, it has been determined that the occasion may be well and profitably marked by the publication of an Index to the Society's *Transactions*.

The want of such a reference has long been experienced, and representations have been made to the Society upon the matter by those anxious to consult the volumes in question.

On the opposite page will be found a list of the Office-bearers of the Society, for the Commemoration year of 1900.



THE JENNER MEMORIAL MEDAL.



Epidemiological Society of London.

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THE DATE OF THE COMMEMORATION.

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<i>West Indies</i>	-	-	G. C. HENDERSON, M.D.
<i>Indian Ocean and East Africa</i>	-	-	SURGEON W. E. HOME, M.D., R.N.
<i>North America</i>	-	-	SIR JOSEPH EWART, M.D., F.R.C.P.
<i>South America</i>	-	-	R. BRUCE LOW, M.D.
<i>Polynesia</i>	-	-	BOLTON G. CORNEY.
<i>Russia</i>	-	-	FRANK G. CLEMOW, M.D.
<i>Egypt and Red Sea</i>	-	-	ARMAND RUFFER, M.A., M.D.

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