

# Foreword

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## Foreword

As one thought often evokes another, so the production of the new review "Acta Tropica" is more or less due to the foundation of the Swiss Tropical Institute in Basel. Still, notwithstanding the practically common history of their origin, the new review is intended to be not merely the organ of the Tropical Institute, but an independent *international scientific review treating of the whole sphere of tropical science*. As, however, the expression "tropical science" is a comprehensive term embracing every sort of scientific work tending to discover or make known anything concerning life in tropical regions, "Acta Tropica", unlike most scientific reviews, will not be confined to one single branch of scientific research. Its sphere of activity will have a far wider scope and embrace the following branches:—

*Anthropology and Ethnography*, i.e. study of the peoples of tropical and sub-tropical lands, the history of their civil and religious life, etc.; *Natural History of the Tropics*, i.e. geology, mineralogy, botany, zoology, etc., including animal and vegetable pests, breeders and carriers of disease; *Tropical Agriculture*, i.e. study of plantations in general, of utilitarian plants, their cultivation, utilization, etc., the pests infesting these and the means of combating them; *Tropical Medicine*—in general, and in all its special branches, such as ophthalmology, dermatology, pathological anatomy, etc., and in particular parasitology, bacteriology, pharmacology, and tropical hygiene; *Veterinary Surgery and Medicine*, i.e. diseases of animals in the tropics, the combating of epizootics, virus research work, the rearing of live stock in the tropics.

The many-sided problems set before us by Nature, as well as by man and beast, in tropical regions will be severally presented in this review in appropriate form, thereby affording scope for scientific research pure and simple, as well as for that undertaken with a view to practical application. The various articles will be fundamental in character, and the aim should be to give conclusive information about definite results of research or a brief sketch of some newly-attained phase of knowledge. All the contributions will be written by recognized Swiss or foreign specialists and strictly scientific in character. Owing to the choice of subjects for the different articles, but also because of the all-embracing character of the review itself, "Acta Tropica" will appeal not only

to specialists and members of scientific institutions but to all cultivated people interested in such a scientific picture of the tropical world. The several articles will appear in German, French, or English, and each will be accompanied by short summaries in the other two languages, thus making it easier for international readers to follow them all. To facilitate a general view of the whole, the matter will be arranged, as far as possible, in chapters published in single numbers, which will appear without fixed dates in the course of the year, every four consecutive numbers forming a volume. The first two numbers are devoted to Ethnography; the others, treating respectively of Natural History and of Tropical Medicine, are already in preparation.

An international bibliography, classified according to branches, forms a valuable complement to the work. Notwithstanding the manifold difficulties to be overcome to-day in the preparation of such a bibliography, it is hoped that, thanks to the help of competent foreign authorities, a fairly adequate general view of present day world production in scientific literature may be afforded. It cannot, of course, be complete, if only from lack of space, so a judicious choice has to be made. Most of the bibliographical works will be simply catalogued, a few, however, will be followed by brief critiques.

Since the beginning of last year, when the idea was first mooted, we have had many offers of collaboration from specialists living in Switzerland, some of whom have had personal experience of life in the tropics. They are ready to help us in every possible way with the production of our review, and we should like to take this opportunity of thanking them most heartily for their kind encouragement. But our whole undertaking is inspired by hope and longing for the day when there will once more be free and untrammelled communication between one continent and another, and the whole world will open wide again to every one of us. Then, too, it will be possible for scientific activity in the tropics to proceed to new and fuller development, and in the zones where now fierce battles are raging, or where normal life is paralysed by military blockades, the enthusiast of research will once more be able to dwell in peace and resume his constructive work. If he then wishes to record the fruit of his scientific labour, may he remember "*Acta Tropica*", the review that is being fostered in these troubled times as a delicate yet healthy germ, destined to-day merely to help to keep alive the wealth of scientific thought, but to-morrow to develop fully and justify its existence in a happier stage of the history of mankind.

*The Editor.*