CONTENTS

American Achievements and American Failures in Public Health Work: W. T. Sedgwick .................................................. 361
A Simple Method of indicating Geographical Distribution: J. Adams ................................................................. 366
The Committee of One Hundred of the American Association for the Advancement of Science ............................................. 378
The Naval Advisory Board of Inventions ............................................. 371
Scientific Notes and News .......................................................... 371
University and Educational News .............................................. 373
Discussion and Correspondence:—
Scientific Books:—
Haldane on Mechanism, Life and Personality: Professor L. J. Henderson. Richardson on the Electron Theory of Matter: Professor R. A. Millikan .................................................. 378
Special Articles:—
A System of Recording Types of Mating in Experimental Breeding Operations: Dr. Raymond Pearl. The Chemical Composition of Bornite: Professor Austin F. Rogers. Studies in the Measurement of the Electrical Conductivity of Solutions: W. A. Taylor .................................................. 383
The American Physical Society: Professor A. D. Cole .......................................................... 390
The American Genetic Association: Paul Popene .................................................. 391

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AMERICAN ACHIEVEMENTS AND AMERICAN FAILURES IN PUBLIC HEALTH WORK

Public health work in America began early in the eighteenth century with the introduction into New England of the Oriental inoculation for small-pox by Boylston, and has achieved world-wide renown early in the twentieth century with the scientific sanitation of the tropical Isthmus of Panama by Gorgas. The educating, organizing and equipping with sanitary machinery of a swiftly growing population, at first sparse but later sometimes intensely congested, and always fluid and unstable under the pressure of migrations and immigrations such as the world has never seen, is in itself a great achievement. And when that population is, like ours, compounded of all the races of mankind, lodged in a new environment and subjected to an unfamiliar and quickly changeable climate, public health work becomes exceptionally difficult. Nevertheless, under leaders like Boylston and Waterhouse, Shattuck, Walcott and Billings, and Reed, Lazear and Gorgas—to whom we may now proudly add the name of Strong—sanitary information has been gathered and spread abroad and applied; vital statistics have been collected and studied; sanitary libraries have been formed; boards of health have been organized and directed; public health laboratories have been established; and epidemiology and other branches of sanitary science enriched and extended.

1 Address of the President, American Public Health Association, Rochester, N. Y., September 7, 1915.