a new finding utterance in the British Parliament and the Economic Reform Club and Institute of London beginning in a small way is now greatly increasing its scope and usefulness. All these large questions of land management dealt with in the booklet under review would be far more easily and promptly handled if the bogey of financial stringency was not always raised. The enormous expenditure on war material now going forward is opening the public's eye to the fact that money is only a token which under proper public management, as apart from profit-making banking companies, can be made to correspond with the labour and other services required for these measures of improvement. The instance given in the booklet of valuable results from co-operative labour shows how when there is a will and understanding great things are possible.

It may be hoped that Dr. Gorrie's booklet will be of value not only in India but in other parts of the world where erosion problems have to be faced. In the Federated Malay States for example it was pointed out to the reviewer many years ago that owing to the accumulation of flood-borne silt the beds of several of the rivers had risen to the arches of the bridges. Apart from suitable training of such rivers the value in many cases of the silt as manure should not be forgotten. This point is made by Dr. Voelcker but possibly because the conditions are not comparable in the areas referred to in the booklet, this aspect of the question is not emphasised by Dr. Gorrie.

A word may finally be said with regard to fodder reserve. It is rather curious that while at one time the value of spineless cactus was recognised and much advertisement was given to Luther Burbank's efforts in developing such a plant, work which has been done in India in comparatively recent years seems to have been forgotten. Reference may be made to a valuable article by Dr. Burns in *Indian Farming* for October 1940 in which he mentions several efforts made in former years to develop spineless cactus in India, amongst others an attempt by the present reviewer and his colleagues at the Indian Institute of Science. This was so far successful that an excellent growth of the plant was still spineless after nearly fifteen years.

Altogether it will be seen that the booklet is full of practical and at the same time thought-provoking proposals and it may be hoped that it will have a wide circulation not only amongst specialists, but, as the author hopes, among the educated public generally.

GILBERT J. FOWLER.

CENTENARIES

Potter, Nathaniel (1770–1843)

NATHANIEL POTTER, an American epidemiologist, was born at Easten in 1770. He graduated in medicine in 1796 from the University of Pennsylvania. He became the first professor of medicine in the Medical College of Maryland on its establishment in 1807 and kept that position till his death. He wrote profusely and was Editor of *Baltimore medical and philosophical lycaeum* (1811) and joint-editor of *Maryland medical and surgical journal* (1840-43). The fame of Potter rests largely on his service to the epidemiology of yellow-fever. He established its non-contagiousness by lending himself to experimentation. In 1797 he tied up around his head a piece of muslin dipped in the perspiration of a patient dying with yellow-fever and keeping it all the night. In 1798, he inoculated himself with the perspiration of a yellow-fever patient in the last stages of the disease. Potter died at Baltimore, January 2, 1843.

Fitch, John (1743–1798)

JOHN FITCH, an American inventor, was born at Windsor, Hartford county, January 21, 1743. After spending five years in an elementary school, he was put on his father's farm even when he was but ten. As he was a weak child, farm work made his life unhappy and so after five years, he changed over to the service of a shop-keeper. Finding this too unsuitable, he shifted from one calling to another, until at last he turned his attention to the invention of steam-boat in 1785. By 1787, his first steam-boat was launched on the Delaware river at Philadelphia in the presence of the members of the Congress. In 1788 he launched a bigger boat, 60 feet long, and carried as many as 30 passengers, covering 20 miles in about 3 hours. In 1790, he built a still larger boat and this was put to regular service and Fitch got a patent from the U.S.A. and from France. In 1791, he started work on his fourth boat, named *Perseverance*; but it was destroyed before completion by a violent storm. This disaster virtually ended his career. After sojourning for four years in France and other places in search of a more favourable opportunity to realise his ambition, Fitch died in disappointment at Bandstown, July 2, 1792.

S. R. RANGANATHAN.

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