

EMILE MARCHOUX: 1862-1943

Dr. Emile Marchoux, President-elect of the International Congress of Leprosy, died in France on August 19, 1943, following an illness of two years. His passing breaks one of the last remaining links with the glorious epoch of Pasteur. He was a member of the French Academy of Medicine, a Grand Officer of the Legion of Honor, and an honorary citizen of the city of Rio de Janeiro.

As a young man, Marchoux recognized the necessity of thorough preparation for a scientific career. He was educated at Angoulême and Paris, and after a brief period in the Naval Medical Corps during the Franco-Grecian War, entered the Colonial Medical Service in 1888. He developed with great success a vaccine laboratory in Indo-China. Returning to Paris in 1893, he spent three years at the Pasteur Institute working under Roux and Metchnikoff, chiefly the latter. He then rejoined the Colonial Service and served in Africa prior to joining the French Yellow Fever Mission to Brazil in 1901. On his return to Paris, he was appointed to a permanent post at the Pasteur Institute as Head of the Service of Microbiology and Tropical Pathology.

Marchoux made notable contributions to bacteriology and public health. As a young man, he demonstrated the relative frequency of paratyphoid in the tropics and its confusion with malaria. One of his earliest publications was a masterly study of anti-anthrax serum. His name is well known to all students of yellow fever, leprosy, malaria, and spirochetosis. It is not so well known that his interests were broader, embracing health education of school children, organization of home nursing services, and other public health activities.

Much of Marchoux's scientific work was devoted to leprosy. He made a detailed study of rat leprosy, hoping to throw some light on the pathogenesis of the human disease. He reported "inapparent" leprosy in the rat, infec-

tion being proven by presence of acid-fast bacilli in the lymphatic glands. He thought the most probable portal of entry to be through the skin, scratched or otherwise injured. He described a case of human leprosy in which he gave convincing evidence that it was attributable to accidental subcutaneous inoculation of material containing the bacillus of Stéfansky.

Those who attended the Cairo Conference in 1938 will remember Marchoux, then seventy-six but vigorous and alert, obviously pleased by his election to the Presidency. Already he was planning for an even greater Congress in Paris in 1943. This, alas, was not to be!

The following extract from a tribute by his friend and colleague, Professor Ramon, appears singularly appropriate:

“Enfin, Marchoux a cherché, pendant de longues années, un traitement efficace de la lèpre. S’il meurt sans que ce problème soit complètement résolu, du moins avons-nous l’espoir que ses collaborateurs poursuivront avec succès, dans cette voie, l’oeuvre du Maître. C’est là la vraie manière d’honorer sa mémoire.”

—JAMES A. DOULL