

In 1696, Sloane published his first book, the "Catalogus Plantarum quae in Insula Jamaica sponte proveniunt." This was in fact nothing more than a catalogue for his great work, "a voyage to the Islands of Madera, Barbados, Nieves, St. Christopher's, and Jamaica, with natural history of the last," published in 1707, and dedicated to Queen Anne. "To Her Most Excellent Majesty, The Queen
This
Natural History of Jamaica
one of the
largest and most considerable
of
Her Majesty's Plantations
in
America
is with all humility dedicated
by
Her Majesty's most dutiful
and obedient servant,
HANS SLOANE."

So runs the title-page; the two volumes themselves are a mine of information, interesting and accurate enough to be of value to-day; in those days, rare and almost incredible. There were two hundred and seventy-four drawings of strange and exotic plants and animals, executed either by Sloane himself or by the Rev. Mr. Moore, who assisted him while he was in Jamaica: the first volume dealt with plants, classified according to the rough and ready methods of the time; the second, mainly with animal life. Many questions are dealt with incidentally—the use of herbs in medicine; the numerous forms peculiar to Jamaica; why sea-shells are found on mountains far from the sea; why plants grown in the shade are paler in colour than those exposed to sunlight; the possibility of European plants changing colour if brought to the tropics; and so on.

UNLIKE many great men, Sloane received recognition in his own lifetime. In 1693 he became secretary of the Royal Society, and in 1727, he became President of the Society, succeeding Sir Isaac Newton, the discoverer of the law of gra-

vity. He received an honorary degree from the University of Oxford, and was made a member of the French Academy of Sciences of the Imperial Academy of Saint Petersburg, and of the Royal Academy of Madrid. In 1719 he was made president of the Royal College of Physicians. He was called in for consultation during the last illness of Queen Anne in 1715, and by her successor, George I., he was created a baronet and made First Surgeon to the King, as well as physician-general to the army, being the first man to hold this post. He was also in charge of Christ's Hospital.

His charities were as widespread as his responsibilities; he gave many donations to Christ's Hospital and other charitable institutions; and the lack of a fee never prevented his seeing a needy patient; once a week he gave an open dinner to the College of Physicians and the Royal Society.

In 1741, Sloane retired from practice and purchased the manor of Chelsea. He had married, in 1695, a lady whom he had met while in Jamaica, one Elizabeth Rose, widow of Fulk Rose, member of the Assembly for St. Thomas in the Vale, from 1675 to 1693. One of their two surviving daughters married Lord Cadogan, and brought the Chelsea property to the family; to this day, names such as Sloane Square, Sloane Street, and Hans Place, commemorate the connection of Chelsea with the erstwhile Governor's physician, Hans Sloane.

Sloane died in 1753, at the age of ninety-three, after an illness of only three days. His splendid collection of natural curiosities, valued at £50,000, was, according to the terms of his will, bought by Parliament for the nation, for the sum of £20,000, and was the nucleus from which grew the British Museum. Thus the labours of an unknown young doctor, in a back-lane in Spanish Town, ultimately gave rise to the world's greatest museum; for it was the natural history of Jamaica that laid the foundations of Sloane's fame and fortune.

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EARLY Governors of Jamaica died off with remarkable speed and frequency; few survived to return home, and many did not live to see a second year of office. So when in 1687, Christopher, Duke of Albemarle was appointed a Governor of Jamaica, he requested his friend Dr. Barwick to seek out a suitable physician to accompany him to the West Indies and to advise his family on matters of health.

Barwick made inquiries in turn of his friend, Dr. Hans Sloane; and Sloane, who had always been keenly interested in natural history and science, eagerly seized upon the opportunity to go himself and see forms of plant and animal life, known to him hitherto only by hearsay. Sloane says of himself, in the Preface to his great work on the natural history of the West Indies, "I had from my youth been very much pleased with the study of plants, and other parts of Nature, and had seen most of those curiosities, which were to be found, either in the Fields, or in the Gardens and Cabinets of the Curios, in these parts." He relates how at this point, love of science and learning impelled him to explore territory hitherto ignored almost entirely by scientists, and to depart for the West Indies in the train of the Duke of Albemarle, not merely to act as family physician, but "to cast in my mite towards the advancement of Natural Knowledge, and the faculty of Physick, and by that means endeavour to deserve a place among so many great and worthy persons."

At the time of his arrival in Jamaica, Hans Sloane was twenty-eight years of age; he was of Irish extraction, being the seventh son of a revenue official in County Down. In spite of the size of the family and the even then traditional poverty of the Irish, he was sent as a lad of sixteen to study medicine in Paris and later at Montpetin; about this time he made the acquaintance of the great physicist, Robert Boyle. In 1684 he graduated as M.D., and in the next year, set up in practice in London. In 1685, he became a Fellow of the Royal Society, that organization whose foundation a few years earlier gave evidence of increasing interest in science and discovery; and in 1687, he was admitted a Fellow of the College of Physicians.

But in spite of the rising tide of interest in natural phenomena, and of royal and noble patronage for scientists, travel for the sake of scientific research was still a novel idea; Sloane was the first Englishman whom we know to have taken an interest in the natural features of England's new sphere of influence in the West Indies.

FROM the moment of leaving England on the long and unpleasant voyage out, Sloane determined to miss no opportunity of furthering his studies. He says that he intended to make experiments and observations during the voyage, but was prevented "by a very long and tedious seasickness." Even doctors are not proof against mal-de-mer!

On the way to Jamaica, the Governor's ship visited Barbados, Nevis, and St. Kitts, as Albemarle was charged with the defence of all His Majesty's West Indian possessions. On December 20, 1687, the vessel reached Kingston and the Governor, his wife and attendants proceeded at once to Spanish Town as Port Royal, through its connection with the buccaneers and especially with Morgan, was deemed an unsuitable residence. Sloane took up his abode in a "Spanish-fronted house" in the lane behind Old King's House, or rather behind the place where it later stood; this house was still standing in 1823, when Bridges wrote his history of the island; about 1828 the house was sold to a tradesman, who pulled it down and erected on the site a blacksmith's shop, which is still standing on Nugent Street. When the old house was pulled down, a number of old etchings, reputed to be Sloane's, were found in an outhouse.

During the fifteen months of his stay in Jamaica, Sloane not only went on expedition to various parts of the island, including Bath, where he attempted an analysis of the mineral waters, and St. Ann's where he visited and described in detail the ruins of Sevilla Nueva, the first capital of the island; but also, in addition to attending the Governor's family, practised as a doctor in Spanish Town, Sir Henry Morgan, the buccaneer, being among his patients. Sloane's body was sent home to England for burial, Sloane remaining behind to settle the late governor's affairs: in March 1689, Sloane himself returned to England, taking with him eight thousand species of plant; he settled down to practice in Bloomsbury Square, and soon achieved a reputation both as a doctor and as a man of science.

The diarist, John Evelyn, wrote in 1691, "I went to see Dr. Sloane's curiosities, being a universal collection of the natural productions of Jamaica, consisting of plants, fruits, corals, minerals, stones, earth, shells, animals and insects, collected with great judgment; several folios of dried plants, and one which had about eighty, several sorts of ferns and another of grasses; the Jamaica pepper in branch, leaves, flower, fruit, etc."