Museum collections and related subjects, which teachers are encouraged to attend, has given the Horniman Museum a unique place among the educational facilities of London.

The Royal College of Physicians and Preventive Medicine

IN his Harveian oration delivered before the Royal College of Physicians of London on October 18, Sir George Newman, chief medical officer of the Ministry of Health, discussed the debt of preventive medicine to Harvey and the College. He showed first of all that Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood led directly to the conception of physiological balance elaborated by Claude Bernard, who formulated the synthetic principle that all the vital functions of the body establish jointly a constant and stabie internal environment for the organism living in a variable external environment. Subsequent discoveries proved that physical health and mental capacity depend upon a mutual contribution of nutrition, hormones, nervous regulation and oxygenation of the circulating blood, and that these factors act in the prevention of disease. The application of the Harveian method and spirit to the study of the cause and control of infective disease and artificial immunity was then considered. Sir George maintained that throughout its history the Royal College of Physicians, with which Harvey was so closely connected, has been the foster-mother of sound medical practice and has cultivated the Renaissance spirit of true learning and inquiry. The preventive work of the College is illustrated by its participation in the pharmacopoeias published between 1618 and 1851, after which year this duty was transferred to the General Medical Council by the Medical Act of 1858; its recommendations drawn up in 1720 for the prevention of plague; its petition to Parliament in 1725 which led to the suppression of gin shops and the restriction of private retail sales; its constant advocacy of vaccination; the introduction of registration of the causes of death and the nomenclature of disease in 1837; and the creation in conjunction with the Royal College of Surgeons of a diploma of public health and afterwards of a similar diploma in tropical medicine and hygiene. In conclusion, Sir George dealt with the development of a communal medical service and emphasised the necessity of mutual co-ordination between all channels and means of medical activity.

Chaucer and Contemporary Medicine

AT a meeting of the Osler Club on October 21, Dr. J. D. Rolleston read a paper on "Chaucer and Medieval Medicine", which he commenced by a quotation from the modern version of some of the "Canterbury Tales" published in 1700 by Dryden, who after describing Chaucer as the father of English poetry continues: "He is a perpetual fountain of good sense, learned in all sciences and therefore speaks properly on all subjects. . . . Chaucer followed Nature everywhere, but was never so bold as to go beyond her." Although a few references to Chaucer are to be found in the works of some British medical historians, no essay dealing with the allusions to contemporary medicine in his works has hitherto been published, if one may judge from the absence of any entry in the Surgeon-General's Catalogue relating to Chaucer, in striking contrast with medical articles on Shakespeare or Goethe or even Dante and Byron. Dr. Rolleston, however, maintained that not only in the "Canterbury Tales", including the lengthy prose discourses of Melibeus and the Parson, as well as in Troilus and Criseyde, but also in many of the minor poems, there is much to interest the medical reader as well as delight the literary student. After a brief sketch of Chaucer's life, during which the poet became acquainted with all ranks of society, including men of science and learning, Dr. Rolleston dealt with the passages of medical interest in his works under the four headings, the medical profession in Chaucer's time, prevalent medical doctrines, diseases and their treatment, and miscellaneous topics.

Monument to Ernest Solvay

ON October 16 in the presence of the King of the Belgians and the Duke of Brabant, a monument was unveiled in Brussels to Ernest Solvay, the eminent chemist, philanthropist and publicist. Solvay was born at Rebecq in Brabant on April 16, 1838, and died in Brussels on May 26, 1922. The foundation of all his success in chemical industry and his immense wealth was his discovery of the ammonia-soda process. To the unfortunate Nicholas Leblanc (1753–1806), whose statue stands in front of the Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers in Paris, the world owed the first successful process for manufacturing artificial soda, and by 1863, the year in which Solvay took out his patent, the world production of soda was about 300,000 tons a year. The Solvay process, after the many initial difficulties had been overcome, proved far more economical than the Leblanc process, and by 1914 there were some twenty-three works in various parts of the world engaged in the Solvay ammonia-soda process, capable of producing about 2,000,000 tons of soda ash a year. Mr. Runciman, President of the Board of Trade, in a speech delivered on October 20, when dealing with the question of trade recovery, said that "one first-class invention is worth fifty Acts of Parliament". To that class of invention Solvay's belongs.

Trevithick Centenary

THE centenary of the death of Richard Trevithick occurs next April and steps have been taken by the Newcomen Society to commemorate Trevithick's life and work. In response to an invitation sent out by the Society, there was a large gathering of representatives of engineering institutions from many parts of Great Britain at a meeting to discuss the matter held at the Institution of Civil Engineers on October 20, and a committee was formed to deal with the commemoration as an international affair. The president-elect of the Institution of Civil Engineers is to be asked to be chairman of the committee and Mr. H. W. Dickinson, honorary secretary of the