

THE DISCOVERER OF THE PHAGOCYTE.

The mention of the fact that the body in sickness is a battlefield where invaders and defenders "fight to a finish," recalls the man who discovered our powerful ally, the phagocyte, and the mechanism of its protective action. It may not be amiss to give some details of the life of Elie Metchnikoff, to whom just two and a half wholly unilluminating lines are devoted in *Who's Who*. The authenticity of the account is guaranteed by the fact that it comes from the great scientist himself. He was born in 1845 at Livanopka, in the Kharkoff Government, amid the steppes of Southern Russia. His father was an officer of the Imperial Guard, who bred horses for the Russian Cavalry at Livanovka. His mother was a Polish Jewess. Metchnikoff describes himself as a mongrel, having in him more Hebrew blood than Slav. The bent of his mind towards natural science was revealed to him at the age of eight, when a medical student with a taste for botany came to prepare his elder brother for a public school. At the age of eleven Metchnikoff entered the Kharkoff *lycée*, where he remained seven years. He then entered the University of the same town, and in due course obtained the degree of Licentiate, corresponding to our Bachelor of Arts. Afterwards he studied at Giessen under Leuckhart, celebrated as an authority on intestinal worms; at Göttingen, under the famous anatomist Henle, and at Munich under Siebold. It is worthy of note that Metchnikoff never took a degree in medicine; professional pedants might therefore justly taunt him, as they taunted Pasteur, with the fact that he is an "unqualified man." Almost from the first he gave himself up to zoology and anatomy. His researches on the lower animals led him to Italy, where he worked at the Naples Marine Station and elsewhere. For twelve years he was professor at Odessa; he resigned his chair in 1882 on account of the intolerable situation created by the murder of Alexander the Second, the perpetrator of which had been a student in that University. Metchnikoff, who has always held aloof from politics, returned to Italy, settling at Messina. There he studied comparative embryology and there too he discovered the phagocyte. In 1886 he returned to Russia and was appointed director of a bacteriological station at Odessa. As the country round about swarmed with mad dogs and wolves, he soon found that the number of patients requiring treatment left him no time to pursue his researches. He therefore gave up his post, and, turning his back finally on Russia, wandered about Europe for a time, finally settling in Paris. The Pasteur Institute was then in course of erection, and Metchnikoff offered his services to Pas-