

all could not be admitted. Fifty cases, the bulk of them suffering from malnutrition due to dental disease and generally bad hygiene, were selected. Dental treatment was undertaken after the children had been admitted, and we note that Dr. Williams advises that in future this should be completed before the school is opened. The curriculum was, from the standpoint of ordinary book education, very meagre, only three and three-quarter hours being devoted to so-called intellectual work, the rest of the day being devoted to nature study, singing, breathing exercises, gardening, housewifery, two hours' sleep, and, most important of all, personal hygiene. Washing and tooth-brush drill were taught in such a thorough manner that the children became models of cleanliness, and we are told that it was a great treat and reward for meritorious conduct to be given an extra bath. A cheap but liberal diet was provided at a cost of only half-a-crown a week. The results were so encouraging that the school is to be continued on a larger scale during the coming summer. The average gain in weight was 5.9 lb. during the seven months (June to October), against the average gain in weight of the child at the ordinary school of 2.4 lb. There was also a great improvement in carriage and in chest measurement. The school mistress reports that there was a most striking alteration in the character of the children. They evinced less selfishness during games, and what is, perhaps, even more remarkable, at meal times. In fact, they showed evidence that, as a result of the school life, they would make better citizens in the future. Although in half the cases the teachers at the city schools reported that on return to ordinary schools the children had lost ground from the point of view of educational attainments, yet most of them displayed increased mental alertness. The medical and educational position of these open air schools seems to be placed beyond all reasonable doubt, but it will be more satisfactory when a further report on the permanent results is published as promised.

It is somewhat early to hazard any opinion as to the bearing of these results on the educational question. The cost is likely to prevent a very extensive use of these schools. The total cost of this school was over £366, including £88 for equipment, some of which will be available for future years. Though the cost be heavy, yet it will be noted that it is not spending money on keeping alive the unfit. Most of the children would not die if left alone, but would grow up ineffectives and would probably swell the pauper population. Although there should be an increase in the number of these schools, yet it is not along these lines alone that the influence of the movement will be felt. It will probably assist in the movement against the system of "cram," as what is desired from education is increased mental alertness and not the present "educational" attainments. The rational consequence would appear to be to make all schools as much like the open air schools as possible, and this will involve some radical alterations in school architecture. In the provincial towns with municipal trams it might even be found cheaper to take the children out of the city in the morning by the stream of empty cars which have taken the working population to the city than to build schools on expensive city sites. The open air school movement is one that will be keenly observed by all students of national degeneration, or, let us hope we may now say, national regeneration.

THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION.

The meeting of the British Association in Sheffield will begin on Wednesday, August 31st, when the President, the Rev. T. G. Bonney, F.R.S., Emeritus Professor of Geology in University College, London, will give his opening address. The first evening discourse will be delivered on Friday, September 2nd, by Professor William Stirling, of Manchester, on types of animal movement. The conference of delegates of corresponding societies will meet under the chairmanship of Dr. Tempest Anderson, of York. The meeting will terminate on September 7th.

Ireland.

[FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS.]

ABUSE OF THE RED TICKET SYSTEM.

At the last meeting of the Board of Guardians of the Castlebar Union, the dispensary medical officer, Dr. J. Hopkins, in submitting his dispensary books and tickets for inspection, called attention to the unprecedented number of 1,333 cases attended in the last year. He said that many cases of abuse of visiting tickets occurred, and that many persons attended at the Castlebar Dispensary from other districts and obtained tickets by giving bogus names and addresses. After some discussion, Dr. Hopkins added that the blame for this state of affairs really lay with the guardians, who gave tickets to their customers, and that in some shops, if a person bought sixpence worth, a ticket for the doctor was also issued.

This abuse of the red ticket system is by no means confined to Castlebar, and it may be of interest to medical officers to know that fees are recoverable from the issuer of a ticket if it can be clearly proved that the ticket has been negligently issued without due inquiry, or given to a person whom the issuer knew to be an unsuitable recipient in the sense of not being a poor person.

SALARIES OF DISPENSARY DOCTORS.

The movement on the part of the Irish dispensary medical officers to induce boards of guardians to adopt a graded scale of salaries continues, and has, on the whole, been successful. In some unions, however, the guardians still refuse to make any change, and wherever this occurs the plan adopted by Dr. O'Gorman in the Kilkenny district might perhaps be tried with advantage. After failing to induce the Kilkenny guardians to vote an increase of salary to their dispensary officers, Dr. O'Gorman convened a meeting of the ratepayers of the Paulstown division of the Gouran district to consider whether the salary of their doctor should be put on the same level as those of the majority of the dispensary doctors in Ireland, or should be left £50 behind them. At the meeting he pointed out that the suggested increase would be more than covered by a levy of nine-tenths of a penny. The meeting unanimously passed a resolution to the effect that the salaries of the medical officers of the Kilkenny Union should be increased from £100 to £130 at once, and further by sums of £5 for every three years' completed service to a maximum of £200, such increase to be retrospective.

FEEES OF DISPENSARY MEDICAL OFFICERS' SUBSTITUTES.

Some weeks ago we reported a decision of Judge Moore given at the Quarter Sessions, Tipperary, in a case in which the plaintiff, Dr. O'Ryan, who had been appointed substitute for a dispensary medical officer for a period of four weeks, but who had been ill during a portion of his time as substitute, sued the board of guardians for the full sum of £16 16s. as four weeks' salary. Judge Moore held that a substitute for a dispensary medical officer is entitled to the same privileges as the permanent officer, and in consequence gave a decree in favour of the plaintiff. This decision has now been reversed at the Tipperary Assizes. Judge Gibson, who heard the case, decided that a temporary substitute was not in the same position as a permanent medical officer, and that if he did not perform the duties he was not entitled to be paid, and a doctor who was ill in bed could not be said to be discharging his duty. He did not, however, uphold the guardians in their determination to deduct from Dr. O'Ryan's salary the fees paid to a substitute during his illness, but gave a decree that Dr. O'Ryan should be paid at the rate of £4 4s. a week for the actual number of days that he had performed the duties of his appointment.

MEDICAL OFFICER FOR SKIBBEREEN UNION.

The Local Government Board for Ireland has written to the Skibbereen guardians with reference to the

board's resolution purporting to appoint Dr. Burke as the sole medical officer of the workhouse at an initial salary of £80 a year. The Board states that as it has already, at the request of the guardians, sanctioned the appointment of Dr. O'Meara, as senior medical officer in charge of the female department of the workhouse, it cannot give its approval to Dr. Burke's proposed appointment as sole medical officer at the salary proposed to be allowed to him. As the result of the misunderstanding between the guardians and the Local Government Board legal proceedings were resorted to, the Skibbereen guardians seeking an injunction to restrain Dr. O'Meara from performing the duties of medical officer of the union and from interfering with the deputy appointed by the guardians in the performance of his duty. It appears that on the death of Dr. Jennings, Dr. Walsh was acting as temporary medical officer. Subsequently the guardians, having advertised the election of a medical officer, appointed two doctors conjointly—Dr. O'Meara and Dr. Burke. This arrangement the Local Government Board refused to sanction, but sanctioned the appointment of Dr. O'Meara alone. Then the guardians were advised that their first election was illegal, and they held another. Dr. Burke was then the only applicant, and he was elected. Meanwhile, Dr. Walsh's term as temporary medical officer had, it was contended, not terminated; and the three doctors were thus, by different determinations of the guardians, in the same position. Mr. Justice Barton held that the professional gentlemen concerned had all acted with perfect propriety. Having regard to the serious and unusual questions involved, he did not consider it a case for an interlocutory injunction. He would allow the position to revert to that which existed before the question arose, and leave Dr. Walsh still in the position of temporary medical officer pending the decision of the case.

TYPHUS FEVER IN COUNTY CORK.

The inhabitants of Newmarket, one of the country towns in the county of Cork, are alarmed at the appearance in their midst of typhus fever. The victims were occupiers of some small labourers' cottages in the town, which were insanitary and had been repeatedly condemned by Dr. Verling, the local medical officer of health, as being unfit for human habitation, and even the modest recommendation made by him some years ago—that each of these houses in the present stricken area should be provided with a dry earth closet at the rear of the houses—was not enforced upon the landlord by the board of guardians, lest perchance the tenants should be compelled to leave their homesteads. Six cases in all have been notified in these houses, and they were at once removed to the District Hospital, where four—most old people—succumbed, while two are now on the fair road to recovery. An attendant from the Kanturk Hospital, who went out with the van to accompany the patients from Newmarket, has also contracted the disease, and at present lies in a very precarious condition.

With a view to suppressing the possibility of further outbreaks, it has been decided to raze the houses to the ground and to enlist the services of the Local Government Board in the steps necessary to prevent recurrence.

Scotland.

[FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS.]

EDINBURGH CHILDREN'S SHELTER.

DURING the past year the Edinburgh District Branch of the Scottish National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children has dealt with 1,539 cases, involving the welfare of 4,247 children. In 61 cases it was found necessary to prosecute the parents or guardians of the children, a conviction being obtained in each case; 521 of the 4,247 children involved in the cases dealt with were admitted to the shelter for temporary refuge, being brought there by the inspectors

of the society, the police, or the general public. These children were disposed of in various ways: 94 were sent to industrial schools, 73 to the parish council, and 72 to homes and institutions; the rest were returned to their guardians and kept under the supervision of the inspectors. The total receipts for the year amounted to £1,073 14s. 6d., while the expenditure was £1,495 6s., thus leaving a deficit of £421 11s. 6d. This, however, was met by a donation from the League of Pity out of money raised by a pageant. Since the formation of the society 21,009 cases have been dealt with in Edinburgh and Leith affecting the welfare of 55,615 children. These cases are classified under the headings of neglect and starvation, ill-treatment and assault, abandonment, exposure, begging, singing and selling, indecent and criminal assault, immoral surroundings, and other wrongs. During this period 10,567 children have been sheltered, clothed, and cared for in the shelter, and arrangements made for their future, whilst their parents or guardians were being dealt with. Under the new Children Act the shelter will be used as a "place of detention," young children being admitted whilst their case is being dealt with by the authorities. The aim of the society is not punishment by prosecution, but prevention of serious injury to children by timely intervention. A staff of six inspectors, specially picked and trained men, constantly supervise families in Edinburgh and Leith when it is feared the children may suffer from their parents' neglect. Some 300 or 400 visits are paid weekly by the Edinburgh inspectors, and from 40 to 50 by the Leith inspector. Complaints come to the society through the general public, the police, and the inspectors. Sometimes as many as 30 new complaints are received in one week, each of which has to be carefully and tactfully investigated. No child is removed from its home until it has been conclusively proved that to allow it to remain would endanger its physical or moral welfare. The inspectors seek to gain an influence on the people with whom they deal by giving them advice as to the training and upbringing of their children, and they also warn them of their responsibilities towards them.

The shelter is open night and day, ill-used or neglected children being admitted at any time. The nursing staff consists of a matron, who is a fully-trained nurse, and four nursemaids. The shelter has accommodation for over 30 children, and any children suffering from malformation of any description, sores, or physical weaknesses are examined by the shelter doctor, who advises as to their treatment or arranges for them to be treated at a dispensary, hospital, or institution specially suited to their requirements. A difficulty was previously found in dealing with epileptic, consumptive, and imbecile children, but in some cases it has been possible to obtain admission for them to suitable homes, and in every case the committee sees that the child receives proper medical attention. Much good work is accomplished also by the "league visitor," a trained hospital nurse, who supplements the work of the inspectors by visiting mothers, babies, sick children, and young girls in their own homes. This nurse advises the mothers as to the care of themselves and their infants, and, when the children are sick, sees that they receive suitable medical attention.

MEDICAL INSPECTION IN EDINBURGH.

In his report for 1908-9 to the school management committee of the Edinburgh School Board the medical officer, Dr. Meikle, states that medical inspection of pupils has been confined to the newly enrolled infants. The number examined is given as 2,354, and the results are reported to be much the same as last year, especially as regards conditions due to dirt and neglect. During the session 7,832 pupils, about one-fifth of the school population, were absent owing to infectious diseases. In the previous year the number absent on account of infectious disease was 6,159, and the increase in the session under report is attributed chiefly to an epidemic of mumps. Dr. Meikle, in alluding to the school which is to be established in