

infants, and a translation of Brück's book on diseases and treatment of the nose, mouth, throat and larynx. Besides these, his inventive genius showed itself in devising or improving various surgical instruments and appliances, including one for use in cases of abnormal delivery.

Public Health

AND

POOR LAW MEDICAL SERVICES.

BACTERIAL FOOD POISONING.

SUDDEN outbreaks of illness among comparatively healthy people are occasionally reported in which they have all partaken of made-up meat in the form of brawn, sausages, etc. They are usually referred to as cases of ptomaine poisoning; but, as Dr. Newsholme points out in the preface to a report¹ on the subject recently issued by the Local Government Board, it is more correct to describe them as cases of bacterial food poisoning, for it is now generally recognized that they result from the presence in the food materials consumed of certain pathogenic organisms, which are either living or capable of active multiplication, or which, although killed in the cooking, are nevertheless poisonous by means of the toxins contained in them. The report, which was entrusted to Dr. W. G. Savage, states very concisely the existing knowledge of the subject which has been obtained from outbreaks that have been investigated in this and other countries. After referring to the historical aspect of the question and to certain special forms of food poisoning, such as that from mussels, cressets, potatoes, or ice-cream, he deals with the clinical and general features of recorded outbreaks of bacterial poisoning, and then discusses the different bacteria concerned in the outbreaks. A special section is devoted to the Gaertner group of bacilli to which the majority of recorded outbreaks have been known to be due. In regard to those outbreaks in which these bacilli have gained access from sources outside the meat or food itself, Dr. Savage expresses the opinion that it is an extremely difficult matter accurately to trace their origin, and he discusses three distinct views which have been put forward. The first is that the Gaertner group bacilli, which are the cause of the food-poisoning outbreak, are of human origin, the meat being infected with pathogenic Gaertner bacilli from a human source—for example, a case of disease paratyphoid fever or a carrier case. While admitting the possibility of this view being correct, he points out that in this country, at any rate, there is no recorded case of food poisoning in which *B. paratyphosus* B has been proved to be the cause. He considers that the available data are strongly against the correctness of the second explanation, which is that the Gaertner group bacilli which set up the food-poisoning outbreaks are derived from ordinary faecal infection of the food. The view which he considers best explains all or most of the phenomena of food poisoning is that the outbreaks are due to infection of the food with virulent Gaertner group organisms (or other special bacilli derived from animals which are either at the time suffering from disease due to Gaertner group bacilli or acting as carriers of these bacilli. In an addendum to the report is a list of seventy-nine British outbreaks of food poisoning which have been recorded since 1878, together with many details of them. A similar list of forty-four Continental outbreaks is given, and a very complete bibliography of the subject is appended.

Medical News.

THE Harveian oration before the Royal College of Physicians of London will be delivered by Dr. J. Mitchell Bruce at the College at 4 p.m. on Saturday, October 18th.

AT the Royal Dental Hospital on Tuesday, October 7th, the prizes awarded during the year to the students of the London School of Dental Surgery will be distributed by Prince Alexander of Teck.

AN examination for not less than twelve commissions in the Royal Army Medical Corps will be held on January 28th, 1914, and the presence of candidates will be required in London from January 26th. Applications to compete should be made to the Secretary, War Office, not later than January 19th, 1914.

THE ninety-first session of the Birkbeck College, Chancery Lane, will be opened on September 29th, when Sir Francis Darwin, F.R.S., will give the opening address. The college is conducted in relation with the University of London, and provides courses of study for degrees in faculties of arts, sciences, laws, and economics. Last year 42 students took degrees in arts or science, 18 with honours, and two gained university scholarships.

¹ Reports to the Local Government Board on Public Health and Medical Subjects (New Series No. 77). Report to the Local Government Board on Bacterial Food Poisoning and Food Infections. By Dr. W. G. Savage. (Food Reports No. 18). London: Darling and Son. (6d.)

THE subject of the address to be delivered by Sir Charles Lukis, Director-General of the Indian Medical Service, at the opening of the winter session at the London (Royal Free Hospital) School of Medicine for Women, Hunter Street, Brunswick Square, on October 1st at 4 p.m., is the Medical Needs of India. Mrs. Garrett Anderson will be in the chair.

DR. B. L. BECKER, of New York, who we learn from the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* began life as a poor east-side boy and has risen to a position of distinction, has offered through the Board of Education of New York to provide 3,000 pairs of spectacles for school children with defective eyesight. The children are to be sent to his office with a proper order from principals, teachers, or visiting school nurses.

A COURSE of twelve lectures for teachers on biology and social problems has been arranged by the Eugenics Education Society, and will be given by Professor J. Arthur Thomson, of Aberdeen, and Mr. Major Greenwood, jun., Statistician to the Lister Institute of Preventive Medicine, on Friday evenings at 6.50, beginning on September 26th. Full particulars can be obtained on application to the secretary of the society, Kingsway House, Kings-way, W.C.

IN his address at the opening of the winter session at the medical school of Charing Cross Hospital on October 1st, Dr. William Hunter, in dealing with the subject of university medical education, will record certain conclusions derivable from the school's two years' experience of the plan of sending its junior students to pursue their preliminary studies at King's College. On the same occasion the prizes won by the students during the past year will be distributed by the Lady Wantage. At the school dinner at Gatti's Restaurant in the evening Mr. H. P. Waterhouse will take the chair.

A DINNER of past and present students of Guy's Hospital, at which evening dress will be optional, will take place in the Students' Club at 7.30 on October 1st. Various members of the staff are expected to attend, and the dean of the school, Dr. Cameron, will read his annual report. A further feature will be a distribution of certificates to students who won prizes during the past year. The prize distribution usually takes place during the summer session, but this year was deferred owing to the ceremony connected with the opening of the new school buildings by Mr. Arthur Balfour. Mr. Cosmo Bonsor, the treasurer of the hospital, will be in the chair.

RUMOURS appear to have gone the round of the Italian press to the effect that the Italian language was not recognized as an official language at the recent International Medical Congress, and, in fact, barely tolerated. As this is not the case Professor La Torre writes to the *Corriere della Sera* giving a correct statement of the facts. He shows that the fourth circular of the London congress reprinted in January, 1913, Art. II, declares that "the official languages are English, German, French, and Italian." This effectually disposes of the rumour that the Italian Government had asked some months before the Congress whether Italian was to be reckoned an official language and had received an ambiguous reply. There is nothing ambiguous about Art. II; moreover, this particular regulation had been printed and definitely approved as long ago as April, 1912, and again in August, 1912.

THE Brighton and Sussex Medico-Chirurgical Society commenced its work for the academic year 1913-14 at a meeting on September 4th, when Dr. Walter Broadbent, in a presidential address, discussed the remote effects of disorders of the stomach. Two conditions were specially prone to give rise to them. In one of these, though the stomach was in a state of spasm, it was nevertheless blown out owing to hyperacidity causing the pylorus to remain contracted. There was a tympanic percussion note, the resonance extending as high as the fifth rib and towards the axillary region. It was a dangerous condition in pneumonia and other fevers, and in ordinary cases might give rise to reflex and pressure disturbance either of the lungs or of the heart; asthma or stomach cough sometimes occurred, and at others palpitations, paroxysmal tachycardia, irregularity of the pulse, and even sudden death should the heart muscle be diseased. The second condition was one not of spasm, but of atonic dilatation, brought about by deficient acidity favouring fermentative processes. A splash could be obtained by succussion, and fluid heard to gurgle out of the stomach when the hips were raised on pillows above the level of the pylorus. This condition often led to mental depression or to insomnia, characterized by the patient waking between 2 and 3 a.m., and being unable to get to sleep again for a long time.