

into a farmyard where rabbits and poultry ran about. A few days after, one of the rabbits was killed, and slightly scratched the hand of the owner of the farm, who killed it. A few hours after his hand became very painful, the arm and hand became rapidly swollen, and death ensued three days after the scratch was inflicted.

The Lacaze prize of £400, given every ten years for the best essay on typhoid fever, has been awarded to Dr. Chantemesse and Dr. Vidal; the Jeunesse prize to MM. Wurtz and Bourges; the Barbier prize, £24, to M. Janat for surgical instruments, and Dr. Loewenberg, for an apparatus for measuring the tension of the tympanum.

## MELBOURNE.

*Sanitation of Melbourne.—Hospital Reform in Melbourne.—Actinomycosis, Tuberculosis and Cancer.—Bacilluria.*

DR. GRESSWELL, our newly imported sanitary medical officer, has set himself to the task of cleaning the Augean stables of insanitary Melbourne. He has shown the greatest deference and consideration to his own profession, a fact which has assisted in securing for him a good deal of popularity and hearty co-operation. His recently published report on the sanitary condition of Melbourne reflects the greatest credit upon his ability and perceptive powers. In each instance his recommendations have been based on personal observation. With regard to sanitary inspections and the supervision of dairies, he insists on urgent reforms which are extremely practical and sensible. His report deals also with buildings, inadequate drainage, defective ventilation, and the want of proper receptacles for house refuse. For dealing with the disposal of excreta he advises the erection of desiccators and the institution of the double pan system. Dwelling on the importance of pure potable water as a condition of health, he observes that pollution largely takes place through leakage into the pipes where they are laid down in polluted soils. Mr. Mansergh, who came from London at the request of our Government, has devised a system of sewerage which will interweave with the suggestions made by Dr. Gresswell, and which, in combination, should make malodorous and insanitary Melbourne a city of health and sweetness. The importance of these reforms is apparent when we remember the fact that we have every year a total of 2,000 preventable deaths. At present our death-rate is 21.25 per 1,000 of the population, but we hope to see this number reduced to 10.0 before another ten years have passed. The cost of Mr. Mansergh's metropolitan sewerage system is estimated at £5,500,000. He declares for the sewage farm. Dr. Gresswell is now urging on the public the advisability of establishing an infectious diseases hospital. He remarks that during the first five months of the year 263 fever cases, most of them typhoid, had to be refused admission to the Melbourne Hospital, and 58 at the "Alfred," besides a considerable number at the other institutions.

A Royal Commission on Charities is at present sitting, and taking voluminous evidence on the administration of medical relief. It is composed of representatives of the leading charities, and it is somewhat feared that this very composition will rob it of the independence of opinion which it is naturally expected such a Commission should possess. For each member representing an institution under observation naturally resents criticism as if it were directed against himself personally. The hospital accommodation still remains for the accommodation of a city of 421,000 what it had been with half that number. A new hospital is now asked for, and the public will be called upon to subscribe largely, as it is regarded as unfair to appeal to the Government to bear the brunt of the expenditure. It is calculated that there is in every 14.6 of the population seeking hospital relief. That is assuming, in round figures, the population to be about 500,000, there are 34,143 enjoying relief. The accommodation of beds is only 0.10 of the population.

Mr. Archibald Park, in speaking of human and cattle diseases in Australia, draws attention to the mistakes made in confounding tuberculosis in rabbits and cattle with actinomycosis. In Queensland, a peculiar form of cancer is found in the human subject, attacking the parotid region and ending fatally. It is more prevalent in the district where cattle are affected with actinomycosis, and medical opinion

tends to show that the disease is a similar affection to the so-called cancer in cattle. Actinomycosis is, next to pleuropneumonia, the most prevalent of chronic affections in Australia, and is constantly being mistaken for tuberculosis, an error which ought not to occur where careful microscopic examination is made.

In a paper read by Dr. Ross, of Warrnambool, he describes four cases of bacilluria, which had in common the discharge of bacilli by the urine, but in other respects showed great differences both as far as the bacilli themselves, and the clinical symptoms of the disease, were concerned. As he believes himself to be the first who has examined the matter bacteriologically, he claims the privilege of calling the bacilli in honour of the discoverer of the disease, "Bacillus Ureæ Roberts."

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### SENN'S DECALCIFIED BONE PLATES.

SIR,—At page 89 of the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of January 10th, Mr. Jessett criticises some expressions of mine in the Bradshaw Lecture, published on page 1468 of your last volume. He objects to the phrase "union of the two openings"—a phrase I did not employ. I said "approximation and union of the two openings," and I referred to Dr. Senn's pamphlet for details.

Secondly, Mr. Jessett says I am in error in stating that the plates are preserved in an antiseptic solution. Those I showed at the lecture were sent to me by Dr. Senn, and were so preserved. Mr. Jessett says they are "preserved in rectified spirit." Dr. Senn says he keeps the plates after decalcification "in a solution of equal parts of alcohol, glycerine, and water, which keeps them in a pliable, soft condition," and adds, "When the plates are to be used, they are washed in a 2 per cent. carbolic acid solution" (page 31 of his pamphlet).

Thirdly, Mr. Jessett says I was wrong in the statement that "the plates come away with the fæces about a week after the operation." I did not say, or infer, that they pass whole. He says they are "absorbed and digested." Dr. Senn says, "The plates will come away with the faecal discharges about a week after the operation" (page 44). Let me ask Mr. Jessett, when he next criticises my sayings, to quote me correctly, and to study Dr. Senn's pamphlet before he ventures to interpret his meaning.—I am, etc.,

Upper Grosvenor Street. T. SPENCER WELLS.

### MIDWIVES REGISTRATION BILL.

SIR,—I had hoped that any discussion on so important a subject as the above would have been conducted seriously, and I have read Dr. Aveling's letter with both regret and surprise.

He seems to consider it sufficient to meet my criticisms of the Bill by, in the first place, making two assumptions, both of which are absolutely erroneous; secondly, by a statement which is obviously equally incorrect, and concludes with a "hope," which he will find, by reason of the frailty of human nature, never can be realised.

Dr. Aveling says I have "not seen the Bill, and have contented myself with collecting the opinions of others." I beg to inform him I have the Bill before me, and that it was sent to me by a member of Parliament immediately on its introduction; that I have read very little of what has been written on the subject, and, therefore, if I reiterate the opinions of others, it only shows that if those who judge for themselves, as I have done, arrive at the same opinion as to the demerits of the Bill, there must be some good grounds for our objections. That I state mine in an "uninviting" form is a matter of regret to me; it is my misfortune that it should be so, but not my fault.

Next, Dr. Aveling says I would "enforce their examination (namely, of midwives), but say nothing about granting certificates, or registering them." Had he read my letter with any care, he would have observed that I state that "In Ireland each woman, on passing her examination at the end of her term of training, is given a certificate," and recommended that this system be introduced into England; and as to