

only practicable solution of the problem. Dr. Coats was led by a consideration of these difficulties to the suggestion that, while they were hardly in a position to recommend particular measures, or to face the question of isolation, it was the duty of the Society to bring the infective nature of the disease prominently before the authorities and the public. If proper precautions were taken to prevent infection from the discharges, a valuable limitation of the disease would result. In the end a motion, proposed by Dr. Gairdner, became the finding of the meeting, namely: "That a memorial be presented to the Town Council of Glasgow, calling their attention to the fact that tuberculosis is now fully recognised as an infectious disease, and asking them to take the matter into their serious consideration, with a view to the protection of the community from the infection." A committee, consisting of Professor Gairdner, Drs. Joseph Coats, Hugh Thomson, J. L. Steven, Charles Workman, and Walter Downie, was appointed to draw up and present the memorial.

## IRELAND.

SIR JOHN BANKS, K.C.B., we are glad to say, is so far recovered as to be able to leave his bed.

### COUNTY INFIRMARY SURGEONS.

LAST week Mr. Jackson, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, received a deputation of Irish county infirmary surgeons, who were accompanied by Dr. Finny, President of the College of Physicians, and Mr. Croly, President of the College of Surgeons. The proceedings were private, but the purpose of the deputation was mainly to press upon the Chief Secretary the importance of retaining the county infirmaries under the Local Government Bill, and of securing the pensions to which the medical officers are entitled. Mr. Jackson promised to give every attention to the representations of the deputation.

### THE SALARIES OF DISPENSARY DOCTORS.

AT a recent meeting of the Rathdrum Guardians, it was agreed to increase the salaries of the dispensary doctors by £30 a year. Mr. Croly, the President of the College of Surgeons, was present, and strongly advocated the medical officers' claims. The resolution has not yet received the sanction of the Local Government Board. This body, it is well to recollect, has the power to "regulate" the salaries of Irish dispensary doctors. In the evidence which is now being published in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL, it has become apparent how miserably these professional men are paid, and we feel bound to say that for this the supineness of the Local Government Board is in a great degree responsible.

## THE RATE-SUPPORTED HOSPITALS OF LONDON.

THE *Times* of December 26th gives its usual annual summary of the admirable arrangements in London for the maintenance of its heavy burden of 100,000 "legal poor" and of the sick poor, that is, rate-aid pauperism. This historical summary shows that in 1867, from which the present reformed system dates under the introduction of the Metropolitan Poor Act, there were 38 paupers per 1,000, as against the present proportion of 20. This is all the more remarkable and the more cheering because at that date they were ill-classified, ill-treated, and the arrangements for the treatment of the sick poor were deplorably bad. There were no metropolitan asylums—now one of the chief glories of charitable London—and the sick poor in workhouses were under a quasi-penal administration suited only for the able-bodied. The *Times* recognises, not for the first time, although it is beginning to be forgotten, that the origin of this great movement was that "from purely humanitarian movements, and in the interests only of the comfort and efficient treatment of the sick poor,

leading members of the medical profession began to move in the question in a practical and systematic manner."

The prime movers in this great social revolution are now for the most part passed from the scene. They were Mr. Ernest Hart, who originated and organised the movement from first to last, and Dr. Anstie, Dr. Joseph Rogers, whom he early associated with himself in conducting private inquiries on behalf of our contemporary, the *Lancet*, and subsequently in public poor inquiries which were maintained by a committee which met weekly for nearly twelve months at his house, and which included the Duke of Westminster, the Rev. F. D. Maurice, Mr. Thomas Hughes, the late Archbishop of York, Mr. Laurence Oliphant, Mr. J. Storr, and other well-known public men. The results were attained in an immense movement of public mind, a great meeting at St. James's Hall, at which the first resolution was moved by Mr. Ernest Hart and seconded by the Archbishop, and the second by Mr. W. H. Smith seconded by Lord Harrowby. Mr. Charles Dickens, in sending his subscription, wrote: "You have created a voice which not even the Seven Sleepers could fail to hear." Mr. Villiers declared that never had public opinion, which had once been entirely on the side of the guardians, so suddenly changed; and when a deputation of two hundred members of Parliament accompanied Mr. Ernest Hart to the Poor-Law Board to back his statement of grievances and his plan for creating a common metropolitan fund and a series of "State hospitals for the legal poor," the battle was already won.

The Poor-law Secretary, Mr. Fleming, had been bitterly opposed to the whole movement; but the Board yielded to irresistible public opinion, marshalled with irresistible force; and the next year gave the Metropolitan Poor Act, the Common Poor Fund, and the creation of the Metropolitan Asylums Board, with the nomination of Dr. W. O. Markham as medical inspector of the new infirmaries. Dr. Brewer, M.P., became the chairman of the new Board. Mr. Holmes, Surgeon-General Bostock, aided by Sir E. Currie, Sir T. Wyatt, Sir C. Galsworthy, Mr. Bell Sedgwick, and many other able administrators, helped Dr. Markham in his work of construction. And now the great hospitals at Deptford, Stockwell, Fulham, Homerton, and Winchmore Hill, the Hospital Ship, the asylums at Leavesden and Caterham, and Darenth, carry out a work of mercy, of physical solace, and of medical treatment which has no rival in any city in the world for extent, munificence, skillful organisation, tender care, and successful efficiency. No words are sufficiently express to declare the indebtedness of the citizens of London for this great reform and this immense solace to the most suffering sections of humanity; nor can any thanks and admiration too hearty and sincere be accorded to the managers of the Board for their untiring, disinterested, and altogether noble devotion to the great work which they administer. Among the names which are justly mentioned as prominent, and which it is our duty to record, are those of Surgeon-General Bostock, Sir John Tilley, Mr. Albert Pell, M.P., General Patten, Sir V. K. Barrington, Dr. Felce, Sir Douglas Galton, K.C.B., Dr. Latham, Dr. Massey, and others whose names we have not space here to inscribe. It is a great satisfaction to find these grand series of institutions working so well and developing so largely; and it is a source of gratification to know that they owe their origin directly and immediately to the work of two or three medical men who for two years devoted unceasing labour to create a public opinion, and to create a system which daily proves itself a blessing to thousands of suffering people, whom otherwise it would be hard to reach and to solace in their days of extreme hardship and their hours of pain.

THE M.D. DEGREE IN RUSSIA.—Among the many centenaries which are celebrated nowadays, there is one which must strike members of the medical profession in the more civilised parts of Europe as rather curious. The M.D. degree appears never to have been conferred in Russia till near the end of the last century. On September 29th (October 11th), 1791, the University of Moscow obtained for the first time the right of granting the degree, but, as a matter of fact, it was not actually granted till March 29th (April 10th) 1794, when Barssuk-Moisefew received the diploma of Doctor of Medicine on presentation of a thesis, *De Respiratione*. Dr. Barssuk was afterwards appointed a professor in his Alma Mater.