

## PUBLIC HEALTH AND POOR-LAW MEDICAL SERVICES.

### HEALTH OF ENGLISH TOWNS.

IN thirty-three of the largest English towns, including London, 6,320 births and 5,287 deaths were registered during the week ending Saturday last, September 10th. The annual rate of mortality in these towns, which had increased from 14.7 to 24.4 per 1,000 in the eight preceding weeks, further rose to 24.6 last week. The rates in the several towns ranged from 16.4 in Cardiff, 17.2 in Oldham, 17.3 in Portsmouth, and 17.4 in Swansea, to 30.5 in Preston, 31.3 in Blackburn, 33.9 in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and 35.5 in Salford and in Sunderland. In the thirty-two provincial towns the mean death-rate was 25.5 per 1,000, and exceeded by 2.3 the rate recorded in London, which was 23.2 per 1,000. The zymotic death-rate in the thirty-three towns averaged 7.3 per 1,000; in London the death-rate was equal to 6.3 per 1,000, while it averaged 8.0 in the thirty-two provincial towns, among which the highest zymotic death-rates were 12.2 in Hull, 12.4 in Wolverhampton, 13.9 in Preston, and 15.6 in Sunderland. These high rates were caused by the excessive fatality of summer diarrhoea. Measles caused a death-rate of 2.1 in Plymouth; scarlet fever of 1.8 in Wolverhampton; whooping-cough of 1.8 in Sunderland; and diarrhoea of 10.2 in Blackburn, 10.7 in Wolverhampton, 11.5 in Bolton, 11.8 in Hull, 12.5 in Preston, and 13.0 in Sunderland. The mortality from "fever" showed no marked excess in any of the large towns. The 62 deaths from diphtheria in the thirty-three towns included 30 in London, 5 in Manchester, 5 in Leeds, 4 in Swansea, and 3 in Birkenhead. No fatal case of small-pox was registered last week, either in London or in any of the thirty-two large provincial towns; and only 3 small-pox patients were under treatment in the Metropolitan Asylums Hospitals on Saturday last, September 10th. The number of scarlet fever patients in these hospitals and in the London Fever Hospital, which had been 2,241, 2,178, and 2,240 at the end of the three preceding weeks, had further risen to 2,300 on Saturday last, September 10th; 273 new cases were admitted during the week, against 187, 182, and 238 in the three preceding weeks.

### HEALTH OF SCOTCH TOWNS.

DURING the week ending Saturday last, September 10th, 958 births and 695 deaths were registered in eight of the principal Scotch towns. The annual rate of mortality in these towns, which had increased from 18.1 to 23.8 per 1,000 in the three preceding weeks, further rose to 23.0 last week, but was 1.6 per 1,000 below the mean rate during the same period in the thirty-three largest English towns. Among these Scotch towns the death-rates ranged from 18.7 in Perth and 20.7 in Paisley to 23.8 in Greenock and 29.3 in Leith. The zymotic death-rate in these towns averaged 4.7 per 1,000, the highest rates being recorded in Paisley and Leith. The 320 deaths registered in Glasgow included 4 from measles, 4 from scarlet fever, 2 from diphtheria, 10 from whooping-cough, 4 from "fever," and 45 from diarrhoea. Nineteen fatal cases of diarrhoea were recorded in Edinburgh, and 4 of "fever" in Paisley.

## MEDICAL NEWS.

THE Italian Congress of Public Health will meet in Turin from September 29th to October 1st under the presidency of Professor Pagliani.

DR. VOGES, Assistant in the Berlin Institute for Infectious Diseases, has been appointed Director of the Bacteriological Institute of Buenos Ayres.

THE Middlesex Hospital, which has been closed for repairs and alterations, will be re-opened on Monday, September 19th, on which day both the in-patient and the out-patient departments will be at work.

THE President of the United States is endeavouring to form a Commission to inquire into the charges made against the army organisation. Among those who have been requested to serve is Dr. W. W. Keen, Professor of Surgery Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia, who has, we believe, consented to serve if the Commission should be constituted.

PSYCHIATRY AT THE INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CONGRESS.—The arrangements for the Thirteenth International Medical Congress to be held in Paris, August 2nd to 9th, 1900, are already in active progress. In the Section of Psychiatric Medicine, the organising Committee of which is presided over by Professor Ballet, the following subjects are proposed for discussion:—Mental Pathology: Psychoses of Puberty. Morbid Anatomy: Morbid Anatomy of Idiocy. Therapeutics: On Rest in Bed in the Treatment of Acute Forms of Madness, and of the changes which this might bring about in the organisation of establishments intended for the reception of lunatics. Legal Medicine: Sexual Perversions from the Medico-Legal Point of View. It is proposed that the discussion on each of these questions shall be opened by three members, two foreign and one French.

A FEMALE MEDICAL OFFICER OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY.—According to the *Philadelphia Medical Journal* Dr. Anita Newcomb McGee, wife of Professor W. J. McGee, of Washington, and daughter of Professor Simon Newcomb, formerly of the Naval Observatory, was regularly sworn in as an acting assistant surgeon on August 29th. Dr. McGee has throughout the war been in charge of the selection of the women nurses, and of the 500 or more now in the field most have passed muster at her hands. Assistant Surgeon McGee sailed on the transport *Seneca* from New York for San Juan on August 31st with 22 women nurses and 12 men nurses.

WIGAN MEDICAL SOCIETY.—A meeting of this Society was held on September 8th, 1898, Mr. Wm. Berry, F.R.C.S.I. (President), in the chair. Dr. Blair read a paper on the Serum Treatment of Puerperal Septicæmia, which he illustrated with copious notes from a successful case in his own practice. In addition to the usual methods of treatment, antistreptococcus serum was used. The serum was best employed early in the disease, and then towards evening, and in all cases collapse must be watched for and obviated. The belief was expressed that recovery from puerperal septicæmia treated with serum would be more thorough than with other methods alone. Dr. Blair said it was desirable that the serum should be of standard strength and purity, so that definite results could be obtained. Messrs. Berry, Parker, Jones, Graham, Monks, France, and Drs. Rees and Benson took part in the discussion which followed, and Dr. Blair replied. A vote of thanks to Dr. Blair for his paper was moved by Dr. Benson, seconded by Mr. Monks, and unanimously carried.

SANITARY REFORM IN THE BARBER'S SHOP.—According to the *Chicago Record* of August 25th the barbers and some of their friends in the medical profession are preparing a Bill to present to the Legislature which, if it becomes a law, will require barbers to disinfect all tools, towels, sponges, brushes, and whatever articles may be required in the pursuit of their business. Under this law nothing but strictly antiseptic barber shops will be allowed in Illinois. The Bill will provide that all barber shops shall be under the control of the State Board of Health, and each pay a licence of \$10 a year. The licence shall only be granted after a thorough examination of the applicant's shop has been made and its sanitary conditions approved. Each individual barber shall also pass an examination as to his knowledge of the trade, and as to his knowledge of the use of disinfectants. The barber shall also have worked at his trade a certain number of years. The tools, brushes, towels, and other articles in use in the shop must be thoroughly sterilised after being used, according to regulations the Board of Health may make.

MERCER'S HOSPITAL, DUBLIN.—The Honorary Secretary of the Medical Board of Mercer's Hospital has sent us the following particulars as to the hospital, which by an oversight was not included among those enumerated in the Educational Number: Mercer's Hospital was founded in 1707. It is situated in the centre of Dublin, in the immediate vicinity of the Schools of Surgery, of the Royal College of Surgeons, the Catholic University School of Medicine, and within a few minutes' walk of Trinity College. It contains 120 beds for medical and surgical cases, and arrangements have been made with the medical officers of Cork Street Fever Hospital whereby all students of this hospital are entitled to attend the clinical instruction of that institution and become eligible for the posts of resident pupil, etc. There is a very large out-patient department, and a special department for diseases of women and children. Owing to the central position the accidents treated at this hospital are very numerous. During the last year the hospital has undergone extensive alterations in order to bring it up to modern requirements. Appointments: A house-surgeon is appointed annually. Four resident pupils each six months. Clinical clerks and dressers are also appointed from the most deserving of the class. Fees: Winter six months, £8 8s.; summer three months, £5 5s.; nine months, £12 12s. The certificates of attendance at this hospital are recognised by all the licensing bodies. For further particulars apply to the Honorary Secretary of the Medical Board, Dr. Maunsell, 47, Fitzwilliam Square, or to any member of the staff.