

earning capacity had been reduced by the accident, and Mr. Henry O'Neill, one of his counsel, stated that in France the law estimates that the loss of an eye reduces the wage-earning capacity by one-third. His honour, without deciding this point, allowed the applicant half wages to the present time, stopping payment to enable him to get employment without prejudice to an application for a further order; and he added that any subsequent order would depend on the wages he might be able to earn.

#### PROPOSED BACTERIA BEDS IN THE VICTORIA PARK, BELFAST.

At a special meeting of the Belfast City Council, held on December 21st, a proposal was made and carried to amend Section xx of the Belfast Dock Act 1884, by repealing provisions prohibiting the use of any portion of the Victoria Park for any other purpose than a park, and to permit the use of a small piece of the ground for sewage purification works in connexion with the proposed Sydenham District drainage. The works would occupy only about 10 acres, and could be arranged not to absorb the whole sea front. At a meeting of the General Committees of the two wards most interested in the Victoria Park, held on December 23rd, considerable opposition was expressed to the scheme as interfering with the Victoria Park; doubt existed as to whether the bacteria beds would be offensive or not. Dr. King Kerr, the Alderman for Victoria Ward and Chairman of the Health Committee, said the matter had been rushed, as those in charge of the Sydenham drainage scheme had, owing to want of foresight, found themselves at the last moment without a proper outlet for the drainage. Finally a resolution was carried appointing a deputation to wait on the council and urge that the proposal be abandoned.

#### AN INSANITARY TOWN.

Mr. P. C. Cowan, M.Inst.C.E., Chief Engineering Inspector, Local Government Board, held an inquiry on December 19th regarding a petition praying for a provisional order constituting the town of Ballyclare an urban sanitary district. There was no opposition. The evidence went to show that the town was in a wretched sanitary condition and improvements urgently required. Dr. A. K. Stevenson, Medical Officer of the dispensary district and Medical Officer of Health, said that the principal defect was want of drainage, and that there was only one sewer. Dr. H. A. Logan, Chairman of the Town Commissioners, deposed that the sanitary condition was bad and required improvement. Other evidence was given and the inquiry terminated.

#### IRISH LOCAL GOVERNMENT REPORT, 1903-4.

The report for the year ending March 31st, 1904, has just been issued. The first thing that strikes the reader is the absence of that laudation of the local councils which in our comments upon the previous report we stated was not intended for home consumption, and was certainly not concurred in by the members of the profession unlucky enough to serve under these bodies.

#### Finance.

We observe that the expenses under the Medical Charities Acts have increased during the year under review by £8,000, of which sum just £150 represents increased salaries of Poor-law medical officers, while £3,500 has been saved in the cost of drugs, by so worrying the medical officer that he may order as few as possible. The sum of £3,345 additional was expended in the year upon remuneration of temporary medical officers, representing the extension of the annual holiday system. Vaccination fees, owing to the small-pox epidemic, increased by £3,700. It would appear that some 2,000 fewer tickets were issued for medical relief; but this is a most unreliable statistic, because dispensary medical officers have such multifarious clerical duties that they neglect to enter tickets in the relief registers; this is most unwise on their part, as the Local Government Board use it as a reason for refusing to augment their salaries by showing they have less to do.

#### Midwives.

Nearly £1,000 more has been expended upon district midwives, appointments which the Local Government Board is wisely pressing upon Boards of Guardians.

#### Lunatics.

We observe with regret that the number of dangerous lunatics certified—2,322—is practically the same as the previous year.

#### Boarded-out Children.

We must refer with appreciation to the reports of the inspectors of boarded-out children. These two ladies, Mrs. Dickie and Miss Kenny, have evidently entered into their disagreeable and disheartening duties with a whole-hearted desire to do their work faithfully and honestly, and how well they have done it is evidenced by the abuse that has been poured upon them with no niggard hand by the "guardians of the poor." These ladies have shown since their appointment how capable women are of discharging such duties; their vigilance in the cause of these poor waifs has been untiring. They had 2,184 children under their care, and the inspection, even once a year, of such a number scattered over the country far and near, must entail much physical exertion. Making allowance for Sundays and holidays it means an average of four visits daily for each inspector; but we believe these ladies visit the children at least twice a year, so that the charge of laziness cannot be brought against them. Such ladies as inspectors of workhouses would be an incalculable blessing. The report shows that more than one-third of the pauper children are boarded out, which is very satisfactory as far as it goes.

#### Roads.

Though not strictly a professional matter, we are pleased to see that the Local Government Board has plucked up courage to admit that Irish roads are not the best in the world, because to the Irish rural practitioner the condition of the highways is only of secondary importance to his emoluments. In plain language, the Irish highways have been allowed to go to ruin by the rural and urban councils, and will cost many thousands of pounds of the ratepayers' money to restore, if they ever are restored.

In recent years the Local Government Board has required the hard-worked medical officer to take samples of drugs every quarter and send them for analysis, needless to say without any remuneration for this troublesome duty; 3,091 samples were so analyzed in 1903-4, of which number 2,234 were selected from a dozen drugs, a fact which dishonest contractors will note. Medical officers would be wise to make a wider selection if they wish to check roguery, which is unquestionably still largely prevalent.

#### Alcoholism and Pauperism.

These, we think, are the only matters in the report of special interest to the profession, but it is worth noting that the total poor-relief expenditure is just one-twelfth of the drink bill, and the figures have more than a casual relation to each other.

#### LITERARY NOTES.

DR. G. T. BEATSON, C.B., who is Chairman of the Council of the St. Andrews Ambulance Association, and a member of the British Central Red Cross Committee, has written a history of the Knights Hospitallers in Scotland and their Priory at Torphichen, which is published by Mr. James Hedderwick and Sons, of Glasgow. After sketching the origin of the Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem and the work of the Order in the Holy Land, he traces its history in Malta till its end in the surrender of that island to Napoleon in 1798. About 1100 a Province of the Order was established in London, and in 1124 a Settlement was made in Scotland. The Knights chose the west of Linlithgowshire for the place of their settlement, and they built a priory near "the picturesque village of Torphichen, which lies nestling on gently-undulating ground at the foot of a range of hills dividing it on the east from Bathgate and Linlithgow." In 1153 King David confirmed by charter the foundation of the Priory, and as long as the Order existed in Scotland it continued to have its head quarters at Torphichen. The Knights were ever mindful of the charitable origin of their Order, and Dr. Beatson has no doubt that at the gate of the Priory many were fed who would otherwise have starved, and that not only were the sick admitted and nursed back to health, but in times of war the wounded also. It is on record that Edward I., who was hurt by a kick from his horse on the night before the battle of Falkirk, was afterwards carefully tended in the Priory of Torphichen. Dr. Beatson's very interesting booklet is well written and contains a number of good illustrations.

To the *Revista de Medicina y Cirugia Practicas* of November 14th Dr. Felix Antiguada Diez contributes a list of authors who have written on the medical topography of Spain. The

list is a long one, and shows that Spanish writers have shown a special predilection for the climatology, vital statistics, and epidemiology of their country.

The famous house, No. 3, The Grove, Highgate, where Samuel Taylor Coleridge lived in the household of Mr. James Gilman, surgeon, from 1816 to 1834, and where he died in July of the latter year, is, according to the *St. James's Gazette*, about to be pulled down. Coleridge put himself under Gilman's care in order that he might be cured of the opium habit. Gilman's treatment was only a partial success. Not many years ago a curious piece of evidence came to light which showed the pitiable depths to which the poet-philosopher descended when the drug craving was upon him. A Highgate curate, visiting an old labourer, discovered that he was using laudanum for rheumatism, and warned him of the risks he ran. "I know better, parson," retorted the old man, "my brother was doctor's boy to Mr. Gilman fifty years or more ago, and there was an old chap there called Colingrigs, or some such name, as Mr. Gilman thought he was acuring of drinking of laudanum, and my brother he used to fill a bottle with that stuff from Mr. Gilman's own bottles, and hand it to me, and I used to put it under my jacket and give it to old Colingrigs, and we did that for years and it never hurted him."

Dr. W. Moss Bristow (Liscard, Cheshire) writes:—

In your Literary Notes of October 29th you mention an article by M. F. Crozat, in which he contends that Molière advocated cold baths in fever. I have no means of seeing the article in question, but may I point out that in my edition of Molière (Bohn's) edited by C. H. Wall, there is a footnote to the verses you quote, saying that they are not Molière's, but are to be found in *Les Œuvres Galantes* de M. Cotin, Paris, 1663, that is nine years before *Les Femmes Savantes* was written. May I say briefly that I think the idea of the cold-water treatment far-fetched, as most of the baths taken at that period were warm spring baths, as, for instance, those tried by Montaigne during his tour through Germany and Italy? A warm spring bath is, to my mind, indicated in the verses.

We are obliged to our correspondent for his very interesting note, but we think he takes the claim put forward on behalf of Molière a trifle too seriously.

In the *Johns Hopkins Hospital Bulletin* for October, Dr. Francis R. Packard relates the history of some famous quacks. One of them is Valentine Greatrakes, an Irishman of the seventeenth century, who after a variegated career settled down in 1656 on his estate at Affane where he was a Justice of the Peace, and doubtless, like his brother magistrate Shallow, wrote himself "in any bill, warrant, quittance or obligation, *armigero*." In 1662 he awoke to the consciousness that he possessed a gift of healing and he began, like Dowie, to lay hands on persons who had the misfortune to suffer from scrofula or other diseases. Before long his proceedings attracted the attention of the authorities—it must be remembered that it was before the days of free trade in medicine—and the Bishop's Court at Lismore forbade him to practise. He disobeyed the injunction, however, and soon found favour with persons of rank who seem to be in every age predestined victims of quackery. In 1666 Lord Orrery brought him to England to treat Lady Conway, who suffered from chronic headaches. He did her no good, but that did not prevent his curing a number of her neighbours. Such notoriety did he acquire by these cures that one Stuble wrote an account of them in the form of a letter to no less a person than Robert Boyle, in which he said that "Mr. Greatrakes was possessed of some peculiar temperament, as his body was composed of some particular ferments, the effluvia whereof being introduced, sometimes by a light, sometimes by a violent friction, restore the temperament of the debilitated parts, regenerate the blood, and dissipate the heterogeneous ferments out of the bodies of the diseases, by the eyes, nose, mouth, hands, and feet." Boyle, who was at first disposed to scoff, was converted by seeing the cure wrought as he fancied before his eyes in several cases. Queen Anne knighted a tailor named Reade for treating her for an affection of the eyes, and made a shoemaker named Grant her oculist-in-ordinary. The most resplendent figure in the history of quack oculists, however, is the Chevalier John Taylor, "Ophthalmiator, Pontifical, Imperial and Royal," who treated Pope Benedict XIV, Augustus III, King of Poland, Frederick V, King of Denmark and Norway, and Frederick Adolphus, King of Sweden. Joshua Ward, called "Spot Ward" from a blemish on his face, was another eighteenth-century quack, who cured all diseases with oil of vitriol. George II provided him with a dispensary in Whitehall where he treated the poor at the expense of the King.

In a letter written in 1748, Lady Mary Wortley Montague says:

I find that tar water has succeeded to Ward's drops; and it is possible that some other form of quackery has by this time taken place of that. The English are more than any other nation infatuated by the prospect of universal medicine.

John Bull, for all his boasted common sense and hatred of humbug, is still more quack-ridden than any member of the human family except his 'eute cousin Jonathan. Among other quacks mentioned by Dr. Packard are St. John Long and Elisha Perkins, the American inventor of the metallic "tractors" by which he professed to be able to draw out of the system "rheumatism, gouty affections, pleurisies, inflammations in the eyes, erysipelas, and tetter; violent spasmodic convulsions, as epileptic fits; the locked jaw; the pain and swelling attending contusions; inflammatory tumours; the violent pains occasioned by a recent sprain; the painful effects of a burn or scald; pains in the head, teeth, ears, breast, side, back, and limbs;" and, indeed, most kinds of painful topical affections.

Dr. Lluria, a well-known physician of Madrid, has in the press a work entitled *Superorganic Evolution and the Social Question*. Professor Ramon y Cajal contributes an introduction.

The *Statistical Report of the Health of the Navy*, recently issued, contains in addition to the returns comprised under that title an Appendix occupying about half the Blue Book. Fleet Surgeon Bassett-Smith contributes a paper entitled *Lessons that can be Learnt from the Examination of the Blood as a Means of Diagnosis*, and a note on the Distribution and Etiology of Mediterranean Fever. Surgeon R. T. Gilmour reports a case in which the micrococcus *melitensis* was isolated from the synovial fluid of a knee-joint in a patient suffering from Mediterranean fever. Fleet Surgeon W. W. Pryn relates his experience of infectious diseases during the three years he has been in medical charge of Greenwich Hospital School and the Royal Naval College, Greenwich; Fleet Surgeon H. F. D. Stephens describes a case of hydatid cyst of the liver; Staff Surgeon G. T. Bishop, "having lately helped or performed about 100 operations for the radical cure of inguinal hernia," discusses the operation most appropriate for patients in the naval service. Staff Surgeon A. Gaskell contributes a case under the heading, *A New and Important Fact in Ligature of the Internal Jugular Vein in Septic Thrombosis of the Lateral Sinus*; the case is published for the purpose of placing on record the fact that it is possible for a patient to recover even when a foul "suppurating" thrombus exists in the lateral sinus continuous with a thrombus in the internal jugular vein, that vein being ligatured at a thrombosed spot—that is to say, with thrombus still present on the proximal side of the ligature. Staff Surgeon E. J. Finch reports a case in which syphilis was conveyed by tattooing. Staff Surgeon C. H. J. Robinson writes on various points relating to yellow fever; and Surgeon C. R. Nicholson contributes notes on an epidemic of abortive enteric fever.

From a report presented to the French Senate some months ago it appears that the position of medical officers in the French navy at the beginning of the eighteenth century was not a very exalted one. The widow of a surgeon of the port of Rochefort, who sought to have her son admitted to the naval guards, was informed by the Minister—M. de Pontchartrain, who held that office from 1699 to 1715—that he could not grant such a favour to the son of a surgeon. About the same time a surgeon named Viaud, practising in the same seaport, having been moved to address to the Minister some verses in praise of the King, incurred the wrath of the authorities for his presumption. The unfortunate poet had to promise not to offend further in the same way, either in French or in Latin. The Marquis de Conflans, an ensign in the navy, who married the widow of a surgeon, had an intimation of the royal displeasure conveyed to him, while the port authorities were severely reprimanded. The Minister of Marine further ordered that the priest who performed the marriage ceremony should be denounced to his ecclesiastical superiors. But perhaps the most striking proof of the contempt with which the surgeons were regarded by the naval authorities is the fact that at Brest when a soldier had been condemned to the galleys the executive officers held that it was the duty of the port surgeons to cut the convict's hair. It is pleasant to read that the surgeons refused to render this ignominious service, but the mere fact that it was attempted to impose such a duty upon them shows the official view of their position.