

army. That was a thing Britain ought to imitate. The proposal to form a branch was unanimously adopted, and a committee appointed, with the Lord Provost as President. Among the Vice-Presidents was Professor Ogston; among the members of the committee were Dr. Angus Fraser, Dr. David Littlejohn, Professor R. W. Reid, Dr. J. Scott Riddell, M.V.O., and Dr. Albert Westland. Dr. F. Kelly was elected Honorary Secretary.

Ireland.

[FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS.]

THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION IN DUBLIN.

THE seventy-seventh annual meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science will be held in Dublin, the third time that the Association has met in that city, and the seventh occasion of its meeting in Ireland. The President-elect is Mr. Francis Darwin, M.A., M.B., F.R.S., Foreign Secretary of the Royal Society. Mr. Darwin received his medical training at St. George's Hospital, but never practised, becoming first the assistant of his distinguished father, and after the latter's death settling at Cambridge, where he now holds the position of Reader in Botany. His address, it is stated, will deal first with the movements of plants, as illustrating the meaning of stimulus and reaction, and then with the view that morphological changes are regulated in a similar way, something equivalent to unconscious memory or habit ruling both types of reaction. Hering's thesis, that memory is a universal function of organized matter, will be supported by illustrations drawn from the development of the adult from the germ cell, and the address will conclude with the discussion of the problem of the inheritance of acquired characters. The Section of Physiology will receive reports from a number of committees, including those on the effect of climate upon health and diseases and on body metabolism in cancer. Two discussions on general subjects have been arranged, the one on the instruction of school teachers in physiology and hygiene, to be opened by Professor C. S. Sherrington, who will be followed by Professors Gotch and W. H. Thompson, and the other on mental and muscular fatigue. Among the papers to be read are one on tsetse flies, by Mr. R. Newstead; another, on atoxyl and allied compounds, by Dr. M. Nierenstein; on the action of acids and alkalies on the growth and division of animal and vegetable cells, by Professor B. Moore and Dr. H. E. Roaf; on the biological method of differentiating blood stains, by Professor E. J. McWeeney; and on localization in the brain in lemurs, by Professors W. H. Wilson and G. Elliot Smith. In the Section of Anthropology the address of the President, Professor William Ridgeway, will deal with the application of biological laws to man; he will contend that teleological doctrines still influence anthropologists, and that the chief errors which impede the scientific study of the history of man, lead to our maladministration of alien races, and give origin to blunders having the gravest effect on our social and educational legislation, are due to the obstinate refusal to look upon man as regulated by the same laws as the rest of the animal kingdom. He will point out that although "natural selection" and "the survival of the fittest" have been accepted phrases for nearly half a century, yet in educational and social matters statesmen of both parties act on the opposite principle, and at the present moment are encouraging the wastrels of the community to increase and multiply, by feeding their children and in other ways, and are deterring by all sorts of burdens the middle classes from increasing as they ought. Trinity College, the Royal University, the Royal College of Science, University College, the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, the Royal Irish Academy, and the Royal Dublin Society have placed their rooms at the disposal of the British Association for the sectional and other meetings.

THE SANATORIUM FOR COUNTY CORK.

A special meeting of the Building Committee of the Joint Hospital Board was held on July 18th to consider the question asked in the House of Lords by Lord Castletown with reference to the site for the sanatorium.

Lord Castletown alleged that "the legal document conveying the Doneraile site contained a very remarkable clause, which set out that if any consumptive patient went outside the enclosure put up round the land, the gift of the site would be null and void, and the buildings were to become the property of the donor." The legal adviser to the board was present, and stated there was no such clause in the lease, and that Lord Castletown's remarks were based on an entire misapprehension of the facts. There was a clause making it mandatory on the board to safeguard as far as possible the public health of the neighbourhood, and covenanting not to permit the patients to wander over the neighbouring lands or to approach the intake of the Buttevant Waterworks. This clause was put in by Mr. Creagh entirely for the purpose of protecting Mr. Barry, Lord Castletown, and other adjoining owners, and as a result of their objections. There was no clause of any kind authorizing Mr. Creagh to seize the buildings.

THE NENAGH AMBULANCE AFFAIR.

In our issue of June 13th, in narrating the story of how the dispensary doctor of Toomvara applied for the Nenagh ambulance to remove a man who had been shot to the workhouse infirmary, and how the master of the Nenagh Union refused to send the ambulance when he discovered the man did not reside in that union, we said: "We shall be surprised if the master of Nenagh Union is not found guilty, and called upon to resign after the manner of the Irish Local Government Board when an official carries out its rules strictly." And our prognosis was correct; as the result of the inquiry he was suspended, and in addition the medical officer of Toomvara was censured.

Dr. Kennedy, the gentleman in question, now writes to the Nenagh Board of Guardians objecting to this censure, on the grounds that the injured man was not a dispensary patient at all, and that he only wired for the Nenagh ambulance at the express desire of the patient, who refused to go to the Roscrea infirmary, that being the union in which he resided.

Now, the Local Government Board inspector examined Dr. Kennedy at the inquiry in Nenagh, and it only shows how carelessly these inquiries are conducted, that the important facts above stated were not elicited at the inquiry. If the patient was not a pauper, and did not reside in the union, he had obviously no claim to admission without the express permission of the guardians, and even then they could only admit him with the prospect of being surcharged by the auditor.

In addition to the inquiry at Nenagh, there was another at Roscrea as to whether the ambulance driver was drunk or sober, and why the workhouse medical officer was not called out in the middle of the night to see the man on his admission.

We think there must be something radically wrong with a system calling for these constant sworn inquiries, which have vastly increased in numbers since the passing of the Act of 1898, conferring upon Ireland democratic control of local matters. It is a system that could hardly exist out of Ireland, and it is small wonder the Irish people are tired of it, and are insistent in their demands for a new Poor Law with less red tape about it.

HEALTH OF BELFAST.

The medical superintendent officer of health has drawn up a series of practical rules for the proper feeding and care of infants during the hot summer and autumn months, and has obtained the permission of the Health Committee for their publication and distribution. The death-rate in Belfast from consumption and typhoid for the last six months has shown considerable diminution. This last month the total mortality has been 16.9, or, on the English system, 15.4.

LIMERICK DISTRICT ASYLUM.

Dr. O'Neill, medical superintendent of Limerick District Asylum, stated in his annual report, read at the last meeting of the governors, that the percentage of deaths was the lowest in Ireland, being only 4.9 last year. The number of patients in the asylum on the last day of the year was 671, the accommodation being for 550; he had repeatedly directed the attention of the board to the matter. Insane prisoners are sent in from the Limerick Prison, although not belonging to the asylum district. The

Act 38 and 39 Vict., cap. 67, sec. 10, provided that persons from and after the expiration of sentence must be regarded and treated in all respects as if admitted to the asylum as ordinary cases, and the local gaol being the prison for the counties of Clare and North Tipperary, lunatics from these counties committed in Limerick became chargeable to the city of Limerick. Lunatics incapable of pleading at assizes were also committed, the Government, however, paying the cost of maintenance. Dr. O'Neill alluded to the steps taken to redress these grievances, and suggested further action. The year's expenditure amounted to £18,368, the gross average cost being £27 3s. 5d. It was agreed by resolution to bring the facts regarding the transmission of patients under the notice of the Chief Secretary.

England and Wales.

[FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS.]

BIRMINGHAM.

THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL.

MR. GEORGE HEATON has resigned the post of Honorary Surgeon to the hospital, and in recognition of his valuable services has been appointed Honorary Consulting Surgeon. Mr. A. W. Nuthall, late Surgeon for Out-patients, has been promoted to Honorary Surgeon, and Mr. Seymour G. Barling has been elected Surgeon for Out-patients.

HOSPITAL SATURDAY FUND.

At the annual meeting of the Birmingham Hospital Saturday Fund, held on July 13th, the Chairman stated that the sum received already this year was £20,042, as compared with £19,567 received at the corresponding period last year. The number of contributing firms was 2,062, as against 2,045 last year. In addition to the sum of £10,000 which is given to the hospitals annually, the Fund provides for many convalescent homes. The number of patients treated in the homes for the half-year was 1,435, as compared with 1,284 for the corresponding six months last year. Many consumptive patients are treated at the sanatorium at St. Leonards-on-Sea, but it is hoped that before long the Fund will have a sanatorium of its own, and it is thought that the present would be a favourable time to provide one as a memorial to the late Sir William Cook. Already £2,000 has been privately subscribed, and it is hoped that at least another £2,000 will be contributed.

WEST YORKSHIRE.

BRADFORD AND THE PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS AMENDMENT ACT, 1907.

It was determined, at a meeting of the Bradford City Council held some time ago, to put into operation various clauses of this Act. Some of these are of great interest to the medical profession, and one of them—namely, Clause 7 in Part IV—is of vital importance to its interests. This clause was recently considered by the Executive Committee of the Bradford Division, and it was determined to point out to the city council the inadvisability of adopting it. The clause in question states:

That no person, who has the care of a child, who is, or has been, suffering from infectious disease, or has been exposed to infection, shall, after a notice from the medical officer that the child is not to be sent to school, permit such child to attend school, without having procured from the M.O.H. a certificate that in his opinion such child may attend without undue risk of communicating such disease to others.

It is the custom in Bradford for the medical officer of health to give a certificate that the child may return to school when the house in which it resides has been thoroughly disinfected, and his certificate, which is granted without visitation, is really one as regards the premises, and not the individual. It is obvious that the medical man in attendance is the only one who can speak from personal knowledge and inspection of the child. The adoption of this clause would entirely prevent the issue of a certificate by the only person with an intimate know-

ledge of the case, and is really a retrograde step and not one of public utility. These points were suggested to the Bradford City Council at its meeting held on July 14th, and, although they were read before that body, evoked no remark, and it was determined to make application in due time and form for an order to put the clause in force. Such action is an example of the way in which ill-considered and unworkable legislation is adopted by local authorities. It will be quite impossible for the medical officer of health of a large city like Bradford to give certificates with any knowledge of the classes of cases mentioned.

ANTHRAX IN BRADFORD.

A coroner's inquest was held in Bradford on July 9th on a man 51 years of age, who only manipulated wool in the shape of tops and noils, which are supposed to be free from dust. In one side of the cellar, however, in which he worked, unwashed wool was stored in sheets. Occasionally he had to go into the blending-room, but he had no occasion to touch the wool. Dr. William Mitchell, in giving evidence, stated that he had no difficulty in finding an abundance of anthrax bacilli in the man's body. He considered that death was due to anthrax, contracted by inoculation in the first instance, and afterwards becoming general. The firm that employed the man stated that wools scheduled by the Board of Trade as dangerous were not dealt with at their works, and, further, that the whole of the wool the deceased handled would previously have been washed in water, heated to a temperature of between 120° F. and 130° F., and would have been passed through rollers heated to 220° F.

HALIFAX HEALTH REPORT.

The report of Dr. Neech, Medical Officer of Health for Halifax, for the year ending December 31st, 1907, was issued recently. The birth-rate and death-rate were the lowest on record, the former being 17.7 per 1,000 and the latter 14.3 per 1,000. Of the great Yorkshire towns, Halifax had the lowest death-rate. The infantile mortality during the year was 102 deaths per 1,000 births registered, also another of the lowest recorded.

MANCHESTER AND DISTRICT.

SEWAGE TREATMENT AT OLDHAM.

THE Oldham Corporation is just now engaged in an interesting experiment in the treatment of its sewage. The disposal of the solid matter left after settling or filtration of sewage has long been a difficult question for inland towns. Manchester and Salford alone ship something like 1,500 tons every day by the Ship Canal to be deposited outside the estuary of the Mersey. Such a method is obviously impossible for Oldham, and the Corporation is giving a trial to a method devised by Dr. J. Grossmann of Manchester. The sewage is first passed along settling tanks, where the solids in time sink to the bottom. After a week or two the liquid is drained off and the sediment is passed through presses and still further freed from water. The sludge that remains is then treated chemically and distilled in a special retort with superheated steam. In this way all grease is carried over with the steam and collected on the surface of cooled water. The residuum in the retort is a fine black powder, quite odourless and rich in nitrogen. From a flow of 3,000,000 gallons of sewage about 20 tons of compressed sludge are obtained, and this yields about a ton of grease, worth about £8 or £10 a ton. The presence of so much grease is easily accounted for by the fact that practically all the soap used in the district passes into the sewage. The dry residue forms an excellent manure, which it is expected will realize over 6s. a ton from artificial manure manufacturers. The cost of the process is estimated at about 5s. a ton of compressed sludge, and it is estimated that the products of each ton will realize about 9s. If these expectations are correct, there would seem to be a great future for the process, as, apart from the commercial gain, the residue is quite free from all offensive qualities, and it only needs the addition of some phosphates to make it a good manure for farmers.