

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS.

The managing committee, of which Sir Frederick Treves is chairman, has in contemplation important extensions of the work of the institute in several directions. Additional ground has been purchased, and upon it a large extension of the present building will shortly be erected. The new buildings will include special laboratories for research, which will be under the direction of a medical officer who will prosecute clinical researches in relation to the action of radium. It is also proposed to establish clinical courses of instruction for medical men who wish to study the methods of using radium and its therapeutic effects. The success which has attended the work of the institute and the appreciation shown of it by the medical profession have encouraged the managing committee to extend its operations in the manner above indicated, but it is not proposed to make any alterations in the general principles upon which the institute is conducted.

LITERARY NOTES.

WE are informed by Messrs. Baillière, Tindall and Cox that Dr. E. G. Younger's book on *Insanity in Every-day Practice* has been translated into Chinese by Drs. Maison J. Chu and Philip B. Cousland, and has been published at Shanghai by the China Medical Missionary Society. The same firm notify that Dr. Langdon Brown's book on *Physiological Principles of Treatment* had been rendered into Italian by Dr. Corletto Francesco, and published at Padua by Fratelli Drucker.

Amongst a number of other strange revivals of bygone beliefs and customs a curious superstition relating to snake-bites is mentioned in the July number of the *Old-Lore Miscellany of Orkney, Shetland, Caithness, and Sutherland*, Part III, vol. vi, as still existing in certain parts of the Scottish Highlands. In a brief summary of a recent meeting of the Philaethetic Union in Edinburgh we are told that one of the speakers who took part in a discussion on Highland superstitions said that "he had sometimes seen in Sutherland a serpent lying on the road cut in three. He was told if any one was stung he ran to the water, the head also ran, and if the head got there first the person stung would die." Another ancient belief is recorded in the Thurso Kirk-Session Records, of which an extract is quoted in the same number of the *Old-Lore Miscellany*. From this we learn that it was once considered almost as unlucky for a bridal party to meet a woman as for a member of the St. Clair family to cross the Ord on a Monday. The record states that on August 30th, 1710, "William Robson charged, called, compeared, as also Mary Coghill, who delated him and declared that as she was coming to town one day she met a marriage and that the sd. William Robson left the company and came to her to force her out of the way that she might (not) meet the married pair, it being a superstitious persuasion among the vulgar that women's feet are unlikely." The Thurso authorities of that day were evidently more enlightened men than many of their contemporaries, for further on we read that the credulous Robson "was reprov'd for his practice and admonish'd to shun the like in time coming wh. certification of a severer censure." The table of contents for the July number of the *Old-Lore Miscellany* includes several interesting articles, amongst which may be mentioned Mr. George W. Stout's account of bird life in Fair Isle, and the second instalment of a series of articles by the Rev. A. Beaton on the early Christian monuments of Caithness; whilst Mr. A. Francis Steuart has given some interesting extracts from the postbag of an Orkney family in the middle of the eighteenth century. Some sketches have also been contributed to this number, which fully maintains the high standard of antiquarian interest reached by its predecessors.

The *France médicale* quotes the following passage from a rare work by Dulaure, entitled *Etrait des singularités historiques*. The book, which was published in London and Paris in 1788, has only the initials "T. A. D." on the title-page. Whilst Henry IV was busy subduing the League, the Duke of Angoulême, natural son of Charles IX, who was with the army, fell ill, and was obliged to remain at Meulon. His physician expressed his anxiety to a pro-

fessional brother in the words, *Non vacat periculo*, and as the patient knew Latin he at once asked for a confessor. After the Duke had settled his spiritual affairs the doctor said to his servants that there was only one method of saving their master—that was to make him laugh. To work this cure the Duke's secretary and his agent, each aged 60, with the captain of his guards—an old soldier of very solemn aspect—agreed to present themselves before their sick master clothed wholly in white. The captain, who was in the middle, alternately slapped the cheeks of his neighbours, who each had on his head a red cap with cock's feathers, while they on their side tried one after the other to knock off the captain's hat, which was of a ridiculous shape. At the sight of this pantomime the Duke burst out laughing; this gave rise to abundant bleeding at the nose, which was soon followed by great relief. The fever, which had lasted twenty-two days, sensibly diminished, and six days later the patient was in a fit state to be transported in a litter to the country, where he completed his cure. This incident recalls the case of a cardinal who, being at the point of death, caught sight of his monkey putting on his red hat. The laughter caused by this sight produced such an effect that he was cured. A cure almost as remarkable was wrought at Chateaudun on Father Victor Bernard, ex-Guardian of the Convent of the Recollects. In 1786 he was looked upon as dead by every one but his physician, who, thinking there was still a spark of life, rubbed his temples with scented waters, and made him swallow a little Spanish wine. To the great astonishment of the beholders, the friar moved and made some sign, though still remaining in a condition approaching to coma. In the afternoon of the same day the physician introduced into the infirmary where the patient was two persons who played various airs on the violin. An inhabitant of the town and one of the friars, each aged 72 years, danced to the music before the patient's bed. The doctor's dog took part in the dance. The sight of this remarkable ballet aroused the dying man and made him laugh. From that moment he began to improve, and soon afterwards he was able himself to announce to the public his complete recovery. One rather envies the facility with which these patients were amused, but every one knows that the physical act of laughter may have a beneficial effect. We have ourselves heard of a case in which a patient in imminent danger of suffocation by a suppurating tonsil was saved by a fit of laughter which burst the abscess. In the *Golden Bough*, J. G. Frazer mentions the case of a King of Corea who suffered terribly from an abscess in the lip till his physician called in a jester whose antics made the monarch laugh heartily, with the result that the abscess burst.

MOTOR CARS FOR MEDICAL MEN.

L. asks for experience of the Lagonda 11-h.p. light car, its suitability for medical men, reliability and cost of upkeep, and also for advice as to second-hand two-seated cars at about the same price.

MOTOR CYCLIST writes: The experience of owners of Ford cars would be interesting to prospective medical motorists just now because they are cheap cars and apparently not expensive to keep up. As their initial cost is no greater than that of the more reliable cycle cars, as they are more powerful, and give greater accommodation and comfort, unless their running cost is greater than that of the more powerful of the cycle cars, it would seem better policy for a doctor to buy a Ford than a cycle car. The belt-driven air-cooled cars referred to by one of your correspondents in the JOURNAL of September 20th do not seem satisfactory.

ZIEGEL of New York has recorded (*Journal of Cutaneous Diseases*, August, 1913) a case in which rapid regression of a gumma of the tongue followed the intravenous administration of salvarsan. The patient was a general practitioner infected on the hand four years earlier in the course of his obstetric work. He had undergone a systematic course of mercurial treatment, begun as soon as the nature of the primary lesion was diagnosed. In another case reported by Ziegel a scaly syphilide of the palms, which had appeared three years after the primary infection and had not been permanently cured by mercury by intramuscular injection, disappeared after injection of salvarsan, though the Wassermann reaction had not certainly disappeared.