

averaged 156 in the twenty-seven provincial towns, among which it ranged from 120 in Portsmouth, 123 in Nottingham, and 126 in Bolton, to 171 in Bradford and in Cardiff, 194 in Oldham, and 212 in Plymouth.

The causes of 1,300, or 2.6 per cent., of the 50,741 deaths registered in the twenty-eight towns during last quarter were not certified, either by registered medical practitioners or by coroners. The proportion of uncertified deaths in London did not exceed 1.3 per cent., while it averaged 3.5 in the twenty-seven provincial towns, and ranged from 0.7 in Portsmouth and 1.2 in Norwich, to 5.7 in Halifax, 5.9 in Sunderland, 6.4 in Sheffield, and 6.9 in Oldham.

The Limehouse Vestry has taken a step in the right direction by resolving to remove the coroners' inquests from public-houses to the Town Hall.

CHOLERA IN SOUTH AMERICA.

TELEGRAPHIC reports state that cholera has broken out afresh at Buenos Ayres, that twelve cases have occurred in Turcuman in the interior, and several in the city of Buenos Ayres itself.

SMALL-POX AND FEVER IN THE METROPOLIS.

The fortnightly return presented at the meeting of the Asylums Board held on April 23rd showed that during the past month 145 patients had been admitted to the hospitals (a number identical with that for the preceding month), and 7 had died, as against 14 during the previous four weeks. The number discharged during the last month was 189, as against 177 during the preceding four weeks, leaving 373 at present under treatment. This was a decrease of 51 in the number of patients. The small-pox patients had increased 6 during the present month, 10 having been admitted, as against 2 during the preceding month, and 1 having died. There was no death during the previous month, and while 3 had been discharged as recovered during the month under report, 4 had left the hospitals during the preceding four weeks. This leaves 7 at present under treatment.

CHILD MORTALITY AT STOURPORT.

ACCORDING to the report of Dr. Masterman, the medical officer of health for the district of Lower Milton, the infant mortality at Stourport is inordinately high, amounting to over 40 per cent. of the deaths at all ages. Notwithstanding that Stourport is a small town of about 4,000 inhabitants, the death-rate for children is only 7 per cent. lower than that of Preston, a town which is notorious for its terrible sacrifice of infant life. The rate is double that of the adjacent district of Martley, although the death-rate for adults is about the same in both places. Nearly 35 per cent. of the children die before they attain 5 years of age. As Dr. Masterman points out, the same influences which kill so many must maim and permanently weaken a very much greater number, and must seriously affect the health in after-life of children reared under such trying circumstances. The causes are the usual ones, namely, improvident early marriages, improper feeding, want of cleanliness, drunkenness, and above all the employment of young wives and mothers in other than domestic work. It is satisfactory to find that the Local Board has ordered this portion of the report to be printed and circulated in the town, though more energetic measures than these will be required if this terrible waste of human life is to be checked.

REPORTS OF MEDICAL OFFICERS OF HEALTH.

SURBITON.—Speaking generally, the year 1885 was an exceptionally healthy one in this district, both in respect of mortality and sickness. Dr. Coleman reports that there was no especial prevalence of sickness among children, except perhaps whooping-cough in the early part of the year. Scarletina was almost absent. There were two deaths from diphtheria, but these were sporadic cases, and not traceable to any special cause. The death-rate is given as 9.7 per 1,000, and the zymotic rate as 0.4.

ROTHERHAM.—In commenting on the satisfactory returns which were recorded for 1885, Dr. Junius Hardwicke draws attention to the great diminution in deaths from zymotic diseases compared with 1884. The report is mainly statistical, and gives no account of cases of infectious diseases. The general death-rate of the borough was 18.26 per 1,000, an improvement which Dr. Hardwicke considers is to a certain extent attributable to the mildness of the winter.

MEDICO-LEGAL AND MEDICO-ETHICAL.

LANGMORE DEFENCE FUND.

A SUM of nearly £90 is still required to settle the heavy bill of costs for legal expenses necessarily incurred by Dr. J. Wreford Langmore for his defence in the recent action, and which he now (through the bankruptcy of the plaintiff) has been called upon to pay. It may be remembered that a most unwarrantable action was brought against him in consequence of his having signed a lunacy certificate, in compliance with a magistrate's order. The committee in charge of the fund hope to close it soon, and will, therefore, thank all gentlemen wishing to subscribe to send their donations at once to Mr. George Eastes, M.B., 69, Connaught Street, Hyde Park Square, London, W., one of the Honorary Secretaries of the Metropolitan Counties Branch of the British Medical Association.

Amount previously acknowledged		£136 16 0		
	£ s. d.			£ s. d.
Dr. C. T. Aveling	1 1 0		Mr. H. C. Lawrence	1 1 0
Mr. A. H. W. Ayling	0 10 6		Dr. Isambard Owen	1 1 0
Mr. A. E. Cumberbatch	1 1 0		Mr. Rayley Owen	0 10 6
Mr. J. H. Drew	1 1 0		Dr. C. Ransford	1 1 0
A Friend	3 0 0		Dr. C. Royston	1 1 0
A Friend	1 0 0		Mr. T. C. White	1 1 0
A Friend	1 0 0			

DR. B.—'S JUBILEE OFFERING TO THE POOR AT C.—
A MORNING'S WORK IN THE SURGERY.

[By W. H. —.]
Such is the introduction to a long leading commentary, of the usual fulsome character in such cases, which we read with much regret in copies forwarded to us of the *Essex Telegraph* of March 26th, and repeated *verbatim* on the 29th, thereby but too clearly indicating its true intent. It is deeply to be regretted that Dr. B. should have set the example, and so far have forgotten his duty to himself and his moral obligation to the profession as to seek notoriety by such expedients. The writer remarks that, "by the courtesy of Dr. B., he had been permitted to take an arm-chair at his surgery fireside, and to observe for an hour or two the noble work of healing among the poor, which he has undertaken to carry on gratuitously every Thursday, all through this year, in commemoration of Her Majesty's Jubilee."

Such devices are incompatible with the honour and dignity of the profession. However unwittingly Dr. B. may have erred in the matter, we trust that, in dispensing his "Jubilee offering" to the poor, he will at the same time bear in mind his ethical obligations to the profession, and in future carefully eschew such a system of favouring the public proclamation of his "gifts of healing."

BROWN DEFENCE FUND.

Amount already acknowledged		£ 13 11 6
Dr. M. A. Ward, Dublin		1 1 0
R. H. A. Hunter, Esq.		1 1 0
Messrs. Roby and Roby		1 1 0

G. STANLEY MURRAY.

THE CHARGE OF MANSLAUGHTER AGAINST A MEDICAL ASSISTANT.

DR. C. R. ILLINGWORTH writes: You have so generously opened your columns to the various communications I have made in reference to this case, that I trust you will allow me still more conclusively to show how flagrant the miscarriage of justice has been. I will quote the report of a Manchester daily paper of March 23rd, 1886, the day following the adjourned inquest upon the body of the unfortunate woman Darling: "The woman, being ill, went to the surgery of Dr. W. Pittman, Ashton New Road, and saw his assistant, Mr. Irvine, who gave her some medicine, and, after taking several doses, she became unconscious and died. Mr. Irvine said he only put 2 drachms of opium in the medicine; but an analysis showed that it contained 1.729 grains of hydrochlorate of morphine to the fluid ounce, equivalent to about 4 drachms of laudanum to the fluid ounce. A medical man who gave evidence said a dose of 20 minims of laudanum taken every two hours would be dangerous, but in this case the woman must have taken doses containing 240 minims. The jury found that the woman died from poisoning by opium, administered owing to the gross negligence of Mr. Irvine." This also, in substance, was the evidence and finding of the jury at the magisterial investigation, on March 23rd, and at the trial on May 13th and 14th.

Now, shortly after becoming acquainted with the fact that there was less than 40 minims of laudanum in the medicine, according to the Edinburgh analysis published in the *JOURNAL* in March 19th last, I wrote to Mr. Thompson, the Manchester analyst, telling him of the result of that analysis, and I have received the following reply: "Dear Sir,—I have your letter of the 14th instant, but have not been able till now to reply to it. You assume that I will be surprised to hear that the medicine given to Mrs. Darling contained very little laudanum; but as that is precisely what I stated in court, and what I think I wrote to you, it is needless for me to say that I am not surprised at it." This letter is dated April 17th, 1887. Comment from me is unnecessary, when Mr. Thompson's statement, quoted from his first letter, has already appeared in the *JOURNAL* of March 19th, and refers to the *dark colour* of the medicine (the italics are mine).

I trust that this statement may elicit some expression of opinion in the *JOURNAL*.

A MEDICAL BROTHER.

COUNTRY MEMBER.—Annoying as such incidents undoubtedly are, we think they are best met by regarding them as among the unavoidable drawbacks of professional life. While it is only natural that Mrs. D. C. should, under the circumstances of her brother's visit, wish to avail herself of his professional advice, we consider that our correspondent, as the old family medical attendant, has cause to complain of their lack of courtesy in omitting to explain the facts of the case to him.

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