

Lunacy and its Treatment in Victoria.

The Melbourne Age brings an indictment against the Lunacy Department in Victoria. It affirms that very few, if any, of the asylums have been kept up to a proper standard of efficiency. There is more insanity in Victoria in proportion to the population than in any other country in the world, the proportion being 3.5 per 1000. The percentage of cases in the Victorian asylums has for years past shown a steady decline (from 54 to 30 per cent.), while the death-rate has been increasing. In the adjacent colony of New South Wales the percentage of recoveries has increased and the death-rate remained steady. The difference in the two colonies is attributed to the policy of cheese-paring and retrenchment adopted in Victoria. The number of medical officers has been reduced. Vacancies in the staff have not been filled, overcrowding has been permitted, and the asylums are not equipped with modern appliances. At the Kew Asylum there are 1000 patients under the care of two medical officers. In the estimates for 1896-97 provision was made for a second medical officer at the Yarra Bend Asylum, but the position remained unfilled for nine months, the salary being so small that no one would take the position. The head of the Lunacy Department, Dr. M'Creery, has done all in his power, but is hampered by want of funds. He himself is greatly overworked. In addition to being Inspector of Asylums and head of the whole department he is superintendent of the Kew Asylum, the largest asylum in the colony. In his last annual report he admits that the Victorian asylums compare unfavourably with those of other countries and do not give patients the advantages it should be possible to secure for them. Private asylums are not permitted in Victoria and paying patients are received at the asylum. The accommodation provided for them is very poor and is a disgrace to the Government. The result is that the friends of well-to-do lunatics generally send them out of the colony for treatment. The whole subject was considered by a sub-committee appointed by the Victorian Branch of the British Medical Association, who recently formed a deputation to the Chief Secretary on the matter, and probably some alterations and improvements will be made.

Infectious Disease in Victoria.

The number of typhoid fever cases reported to the Board of Health of Victoria has increased all over the colony lately. For the fortnight ending Jan. 22nd, 1898, 254 cases were reported with 24 deaths. For the corresponding period 1897 the number was 188 cases and 5 deaths. Diphtheria also shows a slight increase. In connexion with the reporting of infectious cases medical practitioners are dissatisfied with the fee allowed for making a report—viz., 1s. It was originally 2s. 6d., but was reduced when the Government retrenched everything. The Medical Defence Association brought the matter before the Board of Health recently and probably the fee will be raised. The conveyance of patients with infectious disease to and from hospitals has recently been a cause of dispute between the Richmond City Council and the President of the Board of Health. The Richmond Council has promised an ambulance for the purpose and as under the Health Act it is an offence if persons suffering from infectious disease travel in trams or trains the council decided to prosecute in cases where patients were known to be travelling to and from the Children's Hospital while suffering from typhoid fever and diphtheria. Dr. Gresswell, the President of the Board of Health, when interviewed on the subject, characterised the action of the Richmond Council as harsh under the circumstances, seeing that there is no infectious diseases hospital yet established to which such cases can be sent and the people are too poor to pay for medical advice at their homes. To this the Richmond Council replied that in such cases the council provided medical attendance and that during 1896-97 1465 visits were paid to poor patients at their homes by a local medical man retained for the purpose by the council.

Feb. 1st.

THE Councillor and Guardian contains an appreciative little sketch of Mr. A. C. Farrington, M.R.C.S., M.R.C.P. Edin., who has done much to popularise parish council work in the Norfolk parish of Shelfanger, where he lives. As he has retired from practice he is able to devote much time to his favourite hobby—mechanical invention, his latest performance in this direction being the construction of a "secret voting machine."

Medical News.

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.—At the congregation on March 10th the graces suspending the Professorship of Surgery and establishing a temporary Readership in its place were passed. The General Board, with whom the appointment of the new Reader will rest, invite applications for the office to be sent to the Vice-Chancellor by May 2nd. At the same congregation the following were admitted to degrees in Medicine and Surgery:—

Doctor of Medicine.—F. C. Bottomley, B.A., M.B., B.C., Gonville and Caius.

Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery.—E. R. Delbruck, B.A., King's; H. W. B. Shewell, B.A., Trinity; J. R. Charles, B.A., Caius; A. J. Petyt, M.A., Christ's; A. V. Featling, B.A., Magdalene; A. R. Paterson, B.A., Emmanuel, and W. J. Lindsay, B.A., Sidney.

Bachelor of Surgery.—C. R. Skryme, Christ's.

FOREIGN UNIVERSITY INTELLIGENCE.—*Amsterdam*: Dr. J. de Bruin has qualified as *privat-docent* of Pediatrics.—*Basle*: Dr. Roth, Professor of Pathological Anatomy, has resigned his chair.—*Bonn*: Dr. Max Eichler has qualified as *privat-docent* of Otolaryngology.—*Budapest*: Dr. Julius Dollinger has been appointed Professor of Surgery, with charge of the First Surgical Clinic; Dr. Arthur Sarbó has qualified as *privat-docent* of the Diagnosis and Examination of Nervous Diseases.—*Cadix*: Dr. Antonio Gonzalez Pratz has been appointed Professor of Clinical Medicine.—*Jurrieff (Dorpat)*: Dr. Nikolai Savaleieff, of Moscow, has been appointed Extraordinary Professor of Special Pathology.—*Moscow*: Dr. Tikhomiroff has been appointed Professor of Pharmacology.—*Munich*: Dr. Josef Trumpp has qualified as *privat-docent* of Pediatrics.—*Naples*: Dr. P. Malerba has been appointed Professor of Physiological Chemistry.—*Padua*: Dr. Penzo, of Turin, has qualified as *privat-docent* of Surgical Pathology.—*Pisa*: Dr. E. Respighi, of Bologna, has qualified as *privat-docent* of Dermatology and Syphilography.—*Vienna*: Dr. Julius Weiss has qualified as *privat-docent* of Internal Medicine.

THE PASSION PLAY AT SELZACH.—It is announced that performances of the Passion Play will again be given at Selzach, in Switzerland, during the summer of 1898. The dates fixed are June 19th, 26th, and 29th, July 3rd, 10th, 13th, 17th, 24th, and 31st, Aug. 7th, 14th, 15th, 21st, 28th, and 31st, and Sept. 4th and 11th. The first tableau commences at 11 A.M. All information as to tickets, hotels, &c., can be obtained by applying to the following address: Graber, Selzach, Switzerland, the envelope being further marked "Bureau of Information."

THE LATE MR. H. W. FREEMAN.—Mr. Alderman Freeman, F.R.C.S. Irel., J.P., of Bath, who died last November, has left personalty amounting to £75,524. The deceased, who was a native of Bideford, bequeathed £1000 to the Bideford Infirmary and £15,000 to the Royal United Hospital, Bath, subject to certain trusts, to maintain a convalescent home for the patients and sick members of the staff of this hospital. His bequest of £1000 to the Middlesex Hospital, London, was mentioned in THE LANCET of March 12th.

HUNTERIAN SOCIETY.—An ordinary meeting of this society was held at the London Institution on March 9th, Mr. A. H. Tubby, vice-president, being in the chair. The following pathological specimens were exhibited and discussed:—Mr. Tubby: Large Cystic Kidney removed by operation.—Mr. Targett: Malignant Disease of the Uterus.—Dr. W. Rawes: Subserous Fibroid of the Uterus, showing necrosis of the centre and calcification of the periphery.—Dr. A. T. Davies and Dr. J. H. Drysdale: Double Thoracic Aneurysm simulating malignant growth of the left lung. The heart was displaced entirely to the right of the median line.—Dr. Drysdale: Sacculated Aneurysm of the Aorta.—Dr. Hingston Fox: Strangulation of the Ileum beneath an adherent Meckel's diverticulum.—Mr. John Adams: Bullet Wound of the Chest. The auricles, aorta, superior vena cava and right lung were perforated.—Dr. F. J. Smith: Tuberculous Kidney, Bladder, and Testes, with Angular Curvature of the Spine.—Dr. Sequeira: Tuberculous Peritonitis in a boy, with extensive Adhesions of the Intestines.

FORFARSHIRE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.—A meeting of this society was held in the University College, Dundee, on March 4th, Dr. G. O. C. Mackness, vice-president, being in the chair.—Dr. Stalker read notes of a case of Spinal Myelitis of Syphilitic Origin. The chief symptoms were girdle pains, paralysis of the lower limbs, hyperalgesia in parts, incontinence of urine, exaggeration of deep reflexes, with absence of rigidity. The case improved rapidly under treatment.—Dr. Buist read notes of a case of Cystocele on which he had operated. He made a vertical incision in the anterior vaginal wall, stitched the postero-inferior portion of the bladder wall in folds, and made the vertical incision into a transverse cicatrix. The result of the case was relief without recurrence six months after.—Dr. Halley read notes of a case of Acute General Erythema following a septic ulcer. The patient was a man, aged seventy years, who had suffered for several years from an ulcer of the leg. The ulcer having become septic and gangrenous he was admitted to the hospital. At the same time his whole body became covered with an erythematous rash. He had had no rigor or sore throat but his temperature was 101° F. It was considered advisable to amputate through the middle of the thigh. The case gave no trouble, the rash disappeared, and desquamation commenced immediately on its disappearance. Dr. Halley discussed the possibility of the rash being due to an idiosyncrasy on the part of the patient to the carbolic lotion which was used as a dressing, but he considered that it was more probably due to septic absorption.—Mr. Greig read notes of cases he had attended in which eczema and erythema had followed the application of antiseptic dressings.—Pathological specimens were shown by Dr. G. F. Whyte and Dr. Kynoch.

NATIONAL REGISTRATION OF PLUMBERS.—The annual public meeting of the Bradford district council, in connexion with the National Registration of Plumbers, was held on March 9th at the Technical College, Bradford. Mr. Charles France, architect, presided, and was supported by Alderman Richard Hind, Master of the Worshipful Company of Plumbers; Dr. W. A. Evans, medical officer of health; Mr. James Watson, city waterworks engineer; Mr. J. H. Cox, city surveyor; and Mr. F. W. Richardson, city analyst. Dr. Evans, in seconding the adoption of the report, said the work of registration was certainly progressing. It was hardly necessary to point out the value which all sanitarians attached to the efficiency of plumbers' work. It was very often the scamping of plumbers' work or the employment of unqualified people which was the cause of the preventable diseases which were the scourge of communities. He hoped the Bill for the Registration of Plumbers would have better fortune than it had previously had. Alderman Hind said he was very glad to see the names of two medical officers on the list of public representatives of the council, for much of the sanitary progress of any community depended upon the interest of these gentlemen. He acquiesced in Dr. Evans's expression of the hope that the Plumbers Registration Bill would meet with a better fate this year than it had hitherto experienced. It was admitted on all hands that much of the preventable disease of the country was caused by bad plumbing work inside the house, and it was therefore regarded as most important that some provision should be made whereby any person who wanted to employ a plumber should be able to know whether or not the person whom he had in view had had the necessary and proper training. Speaking of the Worshipful Company of Plumbers he said that though for a time it had passed out of the hands of the plumbers it was now interesting itself in the trade in a very practical way. Mr. James Watson proposed a resolution—"That this meeting reaffirms the desirability of the speedy passing into law of the Plumbers Registration Bill." He said he had had something to do with the initial stages of the registration of plumbers in Scotland, for he was convinced that the plumbers very largely had control of the public weal especially in congested communities. He contended that it was the bounden duty of Parliament, whose first object should be to see to the public health, to give the qualified plumber a status and standing by registration in order to encourage him to do his best for the community in which he lived.—Mr. F. W. Richardson, city analyst, then delivered a lecture on "Microbes and Sanitation," in which he described and illustrated the nature of microbes, the poisons formed by disease germs, the causes of the various preventable diseases, the conditions favourable to diseases and epidemics, the

influence of filth, bad water supplies, and defective plumbing, and the importance of sanitation generally in regard to disease. Votes of thanks to the chairman, to the lecturer, and to Alderman Hind closed the meeting.

DEATH OF A CENTENARIAN.—The Rev. Edward Allen, the oldest clergyman in the Church of England, died at Tiverton on March 4th in his 101st year.

DARTMOUTH COTTAGE HOSPITAL.—The eleventh annual meeting of this institution was held recently. The report showed that 68 patients had been admitted during 1897 and that the total number of admissions since the establishment of the hospital was 452. The expenses of maintenance for the past year amounted to £304 and a balance of £62 remained in hand.

EXHIBITION AT ROCHEFORT-SUR-MER.—Rapid progress is being made with the buildings of the International and Colonial Exhibition which is to be held at Rochefort-sur-Mer from June to October. The magnitude of the work will be understood from the fact that the central dome of the buildings is to be at least eighty feet in height. The exhibits will include commercial, industrial, and marine products, pictures, &c.

VICTORIA INFIRMARY OF GLASGOW.—The report of the Victoria Infirmary of Glasgow for the year ended Oct. 31st, 1897, shows that 123 patients were under treatment on Oct. 31st, 1896, and that 1590 were admitted during the year; there were 134 deaths, 49 of which occurred within forty-eight hours after admission, and 135 cases remained under treatment on Oct. 31st, 1897. The operations included 14 cases of ovarian tumour, 52 other abdominal sections, 12 excisions of the hip, 12 excisions of the knee, and 16 cases of trephining. The average daily number of patients was 188, the average residence was thirty-one days, and the average cost per head £4 9s.

THE FACTORY GIRLS' COUNTRY HOLIDAY FUND.—The society was started ten years ago, and 39 girls and women were sent for a holiday during the year 1888. Since then the number has steadily increased, and during the past year (1897) 1250 girls and women were sent to the country or seaside at a cost of £1230 3s. 6d., of which sum the amount of £246 17s. 7d. was paid by themselves. It is somewhat surprising that the committee find it necessary to include the following paragraph in their report: "All the railway companies, in spite of many appeals, still refuse to grant reductions of fares."

NATIONAL DENTAL HOSPITAL.—Mrs. Victor Horsley distributed the prizes to successful students of the last session at the Queen's Hall on the 14th inst. In acknowledging a vote of thanks Mr. Victor Horsley alluded to the brighter prospect which was now before the student in his professional career and to the necessity for broader education. Those who took advantage of the facilities now supplied would be the first to reap the reward. There were, however, still a few, even among his colleagues on the General Medical Council, who did not appreciate the necessity of surgical knowledge for a dentist, but this retrograde feeling was confined to a very limited number.

LITERARY INTELLIGENCE.—Messrs. Macmillan and Co. will publish early in April the fifth volume of the System of Medicine edited by Professor Clifford Allbutt. It will deal with the Diseases of the Respiratory Organs, Diseases of the Pleura, and partly with Diseases of the Circulatory System. The sixth volume, which is well advanced, will complete the section dealing with Diseases of the Circulatory System, and will also deal with Diseases of the Muscles and of the Nervous System, including Mental Diseases. A series of short articles on the Diseases of the Skin will complete this important work. It seems practically certain that a seventh volume will be required, but this will include a complete Index. It is expected that the remaining volumes will be issued before the end of the year.—We understand from Messrs. Sampson Low, Marston, and Co. that the whole of the fourth and a large part of the fifth new and popular editions of Dr. Theodor Billroth's "The Care of the Sick at Home and in the Hospital" were subscribed for prior to publication, a result upon which we congratulate the translator.

COUNTY LABORATORY FOR GLAMORGANSHIRE.—

At the meeting of the Sanitary Committee of the Glamorgan-shire County Council, held on March 4th, it was decided to establish a bacteriological and chemical laboratory in Cardiff and to advertise for a bacteriologist at a salary of £250 per annum. It is hoped that the laboratory will be in working order by June next. The initial expense is set down at about £500 and the annual cost of maintenance at £390. This valuable institution owes its formation to the energy of Mr. H. Lewis (the chairman of the County Sanitary Committee), Mr. Naunton Davies, F.R.C.S., Edin., Dr. T. H. Morris, and Dr. W. Williams (the medical officer of health of the county).

CITY OF LONDON LYING-IN HOSPITAL.—

The report of this institution for the year ending 1897 states that during the year 521 women have been delivered in the hospital, being 28 more than in 1896, and the highest number since 1863. 524 children were born—viz., 279 boys and 245 girls; three women had twins; 29 children were stillborn, 22 of these being either decomposed or premature; 15 children were apparently stillborn but were restored, and three women and 15 children have died. None of the maternal deaths were from septic causes. Of 1668 women delivered by the midwives at their own homes 1686 children were born; of these 872 were boys and 814 girls; 18 women had twins; 69 children were stillborn and 29 apparently so though subsequently they were restored; 6 women and 32 children have died. The financial condition of the hospital is satisfactory.

EPSOM COLLEGE.—

The College has recently sustained a great loss by the death of Mr. P. H. Maddock, one of the assistant masters. Educated at Marlborough and Lincoln College, Oxford, for several years he had been a most earnest and successful worker with the head-master and the staff in raising the tone and the scholarship of the school to its present position. He was a good form master, devoted to his boys, and they were very attached to him. His colleagues of common room were his friends. By his will he has bequeathed £500 to the college, which will doubtless be used to perpetuate his memory. His pictures and his library, consisting of several hundreds of valuable works, he has given to the school. Such interest and affection for an institution in which he lived and worked will show how close is the tie between the teachers and the taught and will go far to explain the growing reputation of the college. His friend and sole executor has generously given the valuable entomological collection made by Mr. Maddock to the college museum.

THE DENTAL HOSPITAL OF LONDON.—

The fortieth annual meeting of governors of this institution was held at the hospital, in Leicester-square, on March 17th. The committee, in their report, which was unanimously adopted, regretted the necessity of calling attention to a slight falling-off in the amount received from annual subscriptions, a diminution which they hoped might be due solely to the very unusual demands made on the public during the Diamond Jubilee year and they trusted that their next report would show an improvement in this direction. The total amount received for the general fund was £2677 13s. 7d., including £109 7s. 6d. from the Prince of Wales's Hospital Fund, £109 7s. 6d. from the Hospital Sunday Fund, and £141 18s. from the Hospital Saturday Fund. The contributions to the building fund amounted during the year to £2928 14s. 11d., including £577 5s. received from the trustees and members of the Managing Committee, in addition to their previous donations. The erection of the new hospital buildings has not progressed so far as the committee wish, owing partly to difficulties with various public authorities (in meeting these difficulties they have to acknowledge much assistance from the Charity Commissioners) and partly to the advance in price of building material and other unavoidable causes. The medical report showed that the number of operations performed in the hospital had increased from 19,255 in 1874 (when the present buildings were taken over) to 57,654 in 1896 and to 62,512 in 1897, and the committee thought that these figures alone should be sufficient to recommend the claims of the institution for increased help and support. Donations or subscriptions will be gladly received by the bankers, Messrs. Barclay and Co., Limited, 1, Pall-mall East, S.W.; the treasurer, Mr. Joseph Walker, M.D. St. And.; or the

secretary, Mr. J. F. Pink, at the hospital, Leicester-square, W.C., the latter of whom will be very pleased to supply any information concerning the hospital.

THE LATE MR. GEORGE MÜLLER.—Mr. George Müller, the founder of the well-known Orphan Homes at Bristol, where 2000 children are now supported by voluntary contributions, died suddenly on March 10th. Mr. Müller who was ninety-two years of age, succumbed to an attack of syncope.

HOSPITAL FOOTBALL.—The final tie for the Rugby Challenge Cup was played at Richmond on Tuesday, March 15th, when St. Thomas's Hospital, the holders, were beaten by Guy's Hospital by one goal and three ties to a dropped goal. This is the first time for ten years that St. Thomas's have been beaten in this competition.

EAST-END MOTHERS' HOME.—The annual meeting of this institution will be held on March 22nd, at 9, Grosvenor-gardens, S.W., at 3.30 P.M. The report of the Committee of Management for 1897 states that the number of in-patients admitted was 237 and of the out-patients who attended 241. Financially the year compares favourably with the previous twelve months. The general health of the patients in the Home has been very satisfactory. It is pointed out in the medical report that "privacy in many model dwellings is often very difficult to procure and the Home meets this to a certain degree by providing accommodation for confinements. It is hoped that the proposal to add to the existing accommodation may be carried into effect."

PRESENTATIONS TO MEDICAL MEN.—

On the 3rd inst. at a social meeting of the Glasgow and South-Western Railway Ambulance Class Mr. R. C. Robertson, M.B., C.M. Glasg., the class lecturer, was the recipient of a pair of opera-glasses and a gold pendant, and Mr. J. Laurie, M.D. Glasg., who gave several lectures during Dr. Robertson's illness, was presented with a pair of silver candlesticks.—On the 3rd inst., at a social meeting of the station corps of the St. John Ambulance Association, Perth, Mr. W. Robertson, M.D. Glasg., the instructor of the class, was presented with a study chair.—Mr. Geo. M. Johnstone, M.D., F.R.C.P. Edin., of Leith, was entertained at dinner on the 3rd inst., at the Peacock Hotel, Newhaven, Edinburgh, by the parish council officials, on the occasion of his approaching marriage, and presented with a complete set of silver fruit knives and forks, and also a case containing accessories in the shape of silver nut-crackers and grape scissors. At the same time Dr. Johnstone was the recipient from friends and patients resident in Leith of an address and a silver salver.—On the 5th inst. the railway employes on the Great Central Railway at Stairfoot, Barnsley, assembled in one of the waiting-rooms for the purpose of receiving efficiency certificates of the St. John Ambulance Association, presented Mr. C. B. B. Savory, M.D. Edin., of Stairfoot, the lecturer to the branch, with a silk umbrella.—Dr. John T. Arlidge, J.P., of Newcastle-under-Lyme, has been presented by the medical faculty and the Committee of the North Staffordshire Infirmary with a full-sized portrait in oils, which is now hung on the walls of the board-room of the institution, as a testimonial in recognition of the personal services he had rendered to the infirmary and to medical science. It may be stated that the subscribers were exclusively limited to past and present members of the general and medical committee of the infirmary. Another fund was started at the instigation of Dr. Moore, of Dublin, with which a handsome illuminated address and a massive silver salver were provided and have also been presented to Dr. Arlidge, the salver bearing the following inscription: "Presented to J. T. Arlidge by several of his friends in grateful remembrance of his unvarying kindness and professional skill, and likewise in recognition of the value of his published works and long continued exertions to advance the interest of the working classes."—On March 8th, at the annual meeting of the Tunbridge Wells Eye and Ear Hospital, Mr. Geo. Abbott, L.R.C.P. Lond., M.R.C.S., of Tunbridge Wells, the founder of, and an active worker during the lengthened period of eighteen years in, the institution, was the recipient on the occasion of his official retirement of a beautifully illuminated address, suitably recognising his valuable services to that hospital and to the town of Tunbridge Wells. A sum of £85

has been voluntarily subscribed which, in accordance with his suggestion, has been applied to form a nucleus of a fund for aiding convalescent patients from the hospital.—At a meeting of the subscribers of the Hambrook Village Hospital, held on Feb. 28th under the presidency of Captain Belfield, Dr. E. Crossman was presented with a silver salver bearing the following inscription: "Presented to Edward Crossman, Esquire, M.D., by subscribers of the Village Hospital, Hambrook, in recognition of his valuable and devoted services to that institution as medical director during thirty years—1867—1898."—At a meeting of the parishioners of Bere Ferrers, Devonshire, held on March 5th, the Rector (the Rev. F. W. Wintle) presented Mr. A. Keppel Reede, L.R.C.P. and S. Edin., with an illuminated address, a silver teapot, sugar basin, tongs, and cream dish, as a mark of their respect and esteem upon the occasion of his leaving the neighbourhood.

Parliamentary Intelligence.

NOTES ON CURRENT TOPICS.

Amendment of the Lunacy Laws.

THE Government have in preparation and will very shortly introduce in the House of Lords a Bill for the amendment of the Lunacy Laws.

London University Commission Bill.

During the Committee Stage of this Bill in the House of Lords the Duke of Devonshire announced the names of the Commissioners as follows:—Lord Davey, chairman, the Bishop of London, Sir William Roberts, Sir Owen Roberts, Professor Jebb, M.P., Professor Michael Foster, and Mr. E. H. Busk, Chairman of Convocation. These names are the same as were proposed in the Bill of last year, with the exception that Professor Michael Foster takes the place of Lord Lister.

Petroleum Lamp Accidents.

The House of Commons has re-appointed its Select Committee on the keeping, selling, using, and conveying of petroleum and other inflammable liquids and the precautions to be adopted for the prevention of accidents with petroleum lamps. It is not expected that the Committee will occupy much more time in the collection of evidence.

The Vaccination Bill.

The names put on the back of the Vaccination Bill are those of Mr. Chaplin, Mr. A. J. Balfour, Sir Matthew White Ridley, and the Attorney-General. The second reading of the Bill is down for Monday, but it is not likely to be taken then.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THURSDAY, MARCH 10TH.

Mortality on the Gold Coast.

Mr. Chamberlain, replying to a question addressed to him by Mr. Loder, said that the number of British civil officials in Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast was about 30 and 125 respectively, and the number of deaths among them was 5 and 14 in 1896 and 2 and 5 in 1897. A comparison based upon a longer period appeared, however, to show that the Gold Coast was more unhealthy than Sierra Leone.

Accidents in Aerated Water Factories.

Mr. Tennant asked the Home Secretary with reference to the special rules issued to aerated water factories exempting labellers from wearing face-guards, masks, or veils of wire gauze or goggles while labelling bottles standing in cases, whether that exemption was in accordance with the recommendations of the departmental committee appointed to inquire into the subject, and whether his attention had been called to the case of the boy Chafer, employed by Mr. G. H. Gibson, at Brigg, who in November last lost an eye from a bottle bursting whilst labelling bottles standing in cases, and whether he would revoke the exemption which prevented the boy from being adequately protected.—Sir M. White Ridley replied that the Home Office Committee, with which [the hon. Member was connected, made a general recommendation that labellers in these factories should wear face-guards, but did not discuss the question of the labelling of bottles in cases. The accident was reported on at the time and the facts were as stated, but the hon. Member must surely be aware that the Home Secretary had not the power at pleasure to make or alter special rules. They must be settled either by arrangement with the employers or by arbitration and in the present case he could not regard the occurrence of a single accident, much as he regretted it, as a sufficient reason for reopening a question which had just been settled after long and difficult negotiations.

Death Certification.

Sir Walter Foster asked the President of the Local Government Board whether he was aware that a case of supposed sham burial was brought before the Chancellor of the Diocese of London at a Consistory Court on Wednesday last; and whether, seeing that the Select Committee on death certification published evidence in their Report in 1893 showing that the law was very inadequate to prevent the occurrence of such

cases, he would bring in a Bill to amend the law as regards death certification in accordance with the recommendations of the Select Committee. Mr. Chaplin replied: I am aware that the Chancellor of the Diocese of London has decreed a faculty authorising the opening of a vault with a view to ascertaining whether a coffin contains a certain body. I cannot hold out any expectation that the Government will propose in the present session any legislation on the subject of death certification.

Deaths in the Regent's Canal.

Sir M. White Ridley, replying to Sir M. Bhowndagree, said that between August, 1896, and August, 1897, inquests were held on thirty-one bodies found in the Regent's Canal. In eight cases a verdict of accidental death was returned and probably in some of the other cases also death was accidental. A special report had been made to him on the subject setting out the safeguards which seemed desirable, but he had no power, he feared, to enforce any adoption of them by the company.

MONDAY, MARCH 14TH.

The Lunacy Question.

Mr. William Corbet asked the Home Secretary if his attention had been drawn to a special report of the Commissioners in Lunacy to the Lord Chancellor, presented last Session, in which they stated that whereas in 1859 the number of lunatics, idiots, and persons of unsound mind in England and Wales was 36,762 the number had increased in 1896 to 96,446, showing a ratio to every 10,000 of the population of 31.18 as compared with 18.67 at the previous period, and also to the last (the fifty-first) report issued by the Lunacy Commissioners, in which they regretted the very large increase of 2919 in the number of lunatics in England and Wales on Jan. 1st, 1897; and whether he would consider what could be done, by promoting an International Commission or by some other means, to arrest the increase of insanity.—Sir Matthew White Ridley replied that his attention had been called to these reports. It was, in fact, at his request that the Lord Chancellor called for the special report from the Commissioners. The Commissioners after a very careful investigation considered that there was no important increase of fresh insanity, and he was not satisfied that an International Commission would throw any additional light on the matter. The question would of course continue to receive very careful consideration.

Health of the Troops in India.

Major Rasch asked the Under Secretary of State for War whether the battalion of the Somerset Regiment now in India was found unfit for active service at the front owing to disease and sent back; what was the nature of the disease and the number of men found unfit for service from that cause; and what was the proportion remaining fit for duty.—Mr. Brodrick replied that the First Battalion Somersetshire Light Infantry was employed throughout the operations of the Mohmand Field Force and returned to Peshawar when that force was broken up. It suffered somewhat during the operations from fever and ague. But on Oct. 1st last it had 895 men fit for duty. There was nothing to show that the battalion was unfit for active service.

TUESDAY, MARCH 15TH.

The Registration of Stillbirths.

Sir Walter Foster asked the Home Secretary whether his attention had been called to Mr. Justice Grantham's remarks at the Central Criminal Court on March 10th, at the trial of Amelia Hollis, with reference to the present system of putting away stillborn children, and whether, seeing that the report of the Select Committee on Death Certification in 1893 expressed the opinion that the absence of legal requirements that such births should be registered prior to the disposal of the bodies was fraught with very serious danger to child life, he would bring in a Bill to amend the law in the direction recommended by the Select Committee.—Sir M. White Ridley replied: "My attention has been called to the remarks of the learned judge, and I may say that one of the recommendations made by the Select Committee—namely, the equalising of the burial fees for stillborn children with those for children not a month old—has long been the rule of the Home Office in its administration of the Burial Acts. The general subject of death certification is engaging my attention, and I am at the present moment in communication with the Local Government Board about it."

The Effect of the Dum-Dum Bullet.

Mr. Powell Williams, Financial Secretary to the War Office, said in reply to Mr. John Dillon that the Dum-Dum bullets were made in India by the Indian Government and were issued by it to the army in India. They were found to inflict when they strike soft tissues a wound sufficiently severe to stop an enemy. They did not in any way infringe the Convention of St. Petersburg. Some of these bullets had been specially manufactured at Woolwich for one of the West African colonies at the request of the Crown Agent.

Introduction of the Vaccination Bill.

At this sitting of the House Mr. Chaplin asked and obtained leave to introduce "a Bill to amend the law with respect to vaccination." He made the request at the commencement of public business, when by the rules of the House he could only speak for a limited time and only one other member could follow him.

Mr. Chaplin's speech was as follows:—I hope that within the time permitted by the standing order I shall be able sufficiently to explain the changes which are made in the laws relating to vaccination by the Bill which I ask leave to introduce. There are various reasons which make these changes, in my judgment, eminently desirable. Prominent among them is the fact that the Royal Commission appointed so long ago as 1889, after many years has presented a report, which was published towards the end of 1896. Another and not less cogent reason is to be found in the lamentable outbreaks of small-pox which have recently occurred in Gloucester and Cheshire and which must be fresh in the recollection of the House. Now, I do not dwell upon the views, emphatically pronounced, upon the necessity for vaccination and its efficacy in either preventing or