

*The National Insurance Act.*

Taking the most favourable view of matters, it cannot be said that in Ireland the National Insurance Act is—since its practical working began—becoming any more popular. In the first place, the absence of medical benefit makes the insured often complain that they are not getting much for their contributions, while the want of provision to meet the tuberculosis benefit has led to great dissatisfaction. Again, the Approved Societies are finding the sick benefit a great drain upon their resources, although the slightest knowledge of Medical State Insurance as it exists in Germany might have prepared them for plenty of malingering; while, finally, the circumstance that outside Belfast hardly any practitioner will accept the scheme put forward by the Insurance Commissioners for the paying of certificates is significant. Further, it is a remarkable fact that in Belfast one effect of the operation of the Act has resulted in an increased number of applications at the several dispensaries for treatment and in the entry into the workhouse hospitals of a large number of insured persons also for treatment. Indeed, a special committee appointed by the Belfast board of guardians to look into the matter report that in their opinion the effects of the Act and its suggested amendment in extending medical benefits will still further result in throwing upon the guardians' resources a larger number of dispensary patients, so that the Poor-law administration will not be relieved, but rather burdened by the operations of the Act and its extensions.

*Action against an Approved Society for Sickness Benefit.*

In Lisburn, on May 30th, an action was brought against an Approved Society by a shoemaker because he had not been paid sickness benefit for five weeks, to which he alleged he was entitled. The society urged that the magistrates before whom the case was tried had no jurisdiction, as the proper way to bring a case was first to apply to a branch of the society and then appeal to the executive of the branch, and, finally, if the executive decided against the claim the case could be carried to the Insurance Commissioners. For the man, it was contended that he had never received any instructions or documents to fill with a view to making a proper claim. The secretary of the society replied that they had instructed their solicitors to accept service of the summons, and the man had no option, therefore, but to come into court. The chairman of the magistrates said, while they were all agreed that they had no jurisdiction in the case, they also all felt that the man had been very badly dealt with. The case was marked "No jurisdiction." In all industrial centres in Ireland the experience is that those looking for sick benefit are rapidly increasing, so that the Approved Societies may find it hard to meet an unwonted drain upon their resources.

*Presentation to a Medical Practitioner.*

On the evening of May 30th, in the Memorial Hall, Articlave, co. Derry, in the presence of a crowded audience representative of all parties in the district, Mr. James Steel, M.D. R. U. I., J.P., dispensary medical officer of the Articlave district, was, on the occasion of his recent marriage, presented with a purse of sovereigns and an illuminated address, while a chiming clock was given to Mrs. Steel. Many speeches were delivered most complimentary to Dr. Steel, who for the past 35 years has practised in the neighbourhood, and who has helped to advance every movement calculated to promote the interests of the people there.

June 3rd.

## PARIS.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

*Fat Grafting in Cicatricial Depressions of the Face.*

ON May 21st M. Morestin brought before the Société de Chirurgie two patients, from the first of whom he had removed four years ago a large epithelioma of the superior maxilla which had invaded the entire orbit, causing exophthalmos. He closed the eyelids to retain the eyeball in its socket, and repaired the buccal floor with a portion of the cheek. But there still remained a considerable depression of

the face on the side operated on, so that to restore symmetry to the countenance he grafted under the separated skin a fatty pad taken from the patient's thigh. This fat disappeared, which M. Morestin attributed to the existence of a perforation of the nasal fossa having caused infection of the graft. The second patient, while riding a bicycle rapidly, was thrown on to a vehicle loaded with iron rods, one of which penetrated the left cheek below the eye, causing a considerable loss of substance. M. Morestin had to deal with a small fistula which persisted for many months after the accident and was kept open by infected processes. He removed some teeth, which, however, seemed to be sound; but the fistula closed, and he was able to graft under the skin a mass of fat, taken as before from the patient's thigh. The graft took, and the æsthetic result was perfect.

*Medical Munificence.*

The Académie Française has made the first award of the Broquette-Gonin prize, of the value of 10,000 francs, to Professor Grasset, of Montpellier, for his collected works. This prize is for the purpose of recompensing the author of a philosophical or literary work adjudged of a character to inspire the love of truth, beauty, and well-being. Not one only, but many, of the works of Professor Grasset fulfil this end, quite apart from his labours in the field of medicine. Professor Grasset has decided to give the amount of the prize to the Faculty of Medicine, to establish a prize for the special works of students.

*Anæsthesia with Ethyl Chloridæ.*

On May 15th, before the Société de Thérapeutique, M. Bardet recounted the following case: Having to anæsthetise a patient for the extraction of many teeth, he used the following mixture: ethyl chloride, 60; methyl chloride, 35; ethyl bromide, 5. Anæsthesia was produced by the slow inspiration of the drug mixed with air in less than two minutes and without any restlessness. It lasted about a minute, during which seven or eight teeth were removed. The return to consciousness was extremely rapid, the patient experiencing only the slightest nausea, which lasted perhaps half a minute. To prepare the patient M. Bardet administered, half an hour before the anæsthesia, a dose of demorphinised opium. This sedative, deprived of any lasting narcotic effects, was sufficient to calm the nervous system. A certain amount of calcium chloride, moreover, may be advantageously administered to obviate later an attack of hyperchlorhydria.

*Gifts to the Academy of Medicine.*

By a presidential decree the Academy of Medicine is authorised to accept under the conditions imposed the legacy left to it by M. Marc Daniel Séé, which consists of the sum necessary to obtain an annual income of 500 francs in the French 3 per cents., for the purpose of founding a prize of 1000 francs, to be awarded every other year to the French author of the best work on the physiology and anatomy of man which has been published during the preceding four years and not previously awarded a prize by the Academy of Medicine or the Institute. Further, the widow of the late Dr. Hervieux, médecin des hôpitaux, who died recently, has bequeathed to the Academy of Medicine, of which her late husband was for long a member, the sum of 100,000 francs, the interest to be awarded yearly to two poor medical students to help them in their studies. These students are to be chosen irrespective of political or religious views by the *doyen* of the faculty and the two senior professors. Madame Hervieux has also bequeathed to the Academy a statuette of her husband.

*The Third French-speaking Congress of Legal Medicine.*

This Congress was held in Paris from May 24th to 27th, under the presidency of Dr. Vibert. M. Balthazard read a paper on Acute Carbon Monoxide Poisoning, which gave rise to an interesting discussion in which M. Martin, M. Corin, M. Vibert, M. Socquet, M. Thoinot, M. Parisot, M. Nicloux, and M. Kohn-Abrest took part. M. J. Roques de Fursac discussed the chronic form of carbon monoxide poisoning, a somewhat difficult subject in view of the fact that in this condition there is a paucity of elements on which to base a diagnosis. The examination of the blood furnishes no data, so that only clinical evidence remains on which to form an opinion. At a supplementary meeting on May 26th,

held in honour of this congress, the Society of Legal Medicine was attended by most of the members of the Congress. The programme included the means of checking the use of narcotic drugs (opium, morphine, cocaine, ether, haschisch) which now constitutes a social danger. Maître Rocher and M. Régis, M. Vallon, and M. Lacassagne spoke, after which M. Bertillon demonstrated the latest advances in judicial photogrammetry, and M. Ménard discussed errors of interpretation in radiography.

*The Prophylaxis of Gastro-enteritis in Sucklings.*

M. Gallois related at the Société de Thérapeutique on May 14th the results of a personal observation. During a very hot summer 12 out of 14 children died on the same day in the crèche of the Hôpital Hérold. Much moved by the waste of life, M. Gallois conceived the idea of having the rooms cooled with large blocks of ice, and this fearful mortality did not recur. Now that this idea has been taken up by other medical men M. Gallois recalled his former experiences.

*"Murderous Measles."*

If of old time—that is, before the discovery of anti-diphtheritic serum—diphtheria was the greatest enemy of children in France, a disease formerly considered benign—viz., measles—replaces it nowadays in fatality, causing at least as many deaths as, if not more than, diphtheria caused before the discovery of antitoxin. Municipal statistics show in Paris about 30 to 40 deaths a week from measles. In the past six weeks the figures have varied between 21 and 45 deaths, the annual rate oscillating about 900. In 1910 there were 860 deaths in children, in 1911 808 deaths from this cause. An inquiry in the Paris hospitals shows that the death toll of measles varies between 15 and 20 per cent. In two hospitals alone—Saint Joseph and the Hôpital Pasteur—the mortality has not risen above 4 or 5 per cent. This marked difference may be due to the fact that cubicular isolation is practised in these two hospitals. The cause of the increased fatality is to be found principally in the fact that the compulsory notification of measles is followed by no prophylactic measures. It is true that disinfection is of little use, for the microbe dies as soon as desiccation is established. But what would be useful is that hygienic precautions should be taken in the schools attended by children with measles. There is no coöperation between the prefecture of police and the sanitary services of the Ministry of the Interior and of the Ministry of Public Instruction. The lycées are even less defended against an epidemic of measles than are the communal schools, in which a medical service is in operation. If in the hospitals measles kills from 15 to 20 per cent. of sick children it is because they are not isolated. Measles is a benign disease, but the secondary complications, especially broncho-pneumonia and diphtheria, which so frequently follow thereon, cause the greater part of the deaths.

*Perforating Nasal Ulcers in Gunpowder Factory Workers.*

At the Congrès Français d'Otorhinolaryngologie M. Robert Leroux drew attention recently to the perforating nasal ulcer that occurs in powder workers. This ulcer is found on the cartilaginous portion of the septum in many workers in powder factories. The author noted two kinds of ulcers—one caused by black powder, composed of saltpetre, carbon, and sulphur; the other by the pyroxyline powder of type J, made of gun-cotton with 17 per cent. of the bichromates of ammonium and potassium. The first acts after the fashion of common powders with carbon and saltpetre—viz., by inflicting microscopic traumatism, but on a mucosa previously irritated by sulphurous compounds; the other, by the action of the chromates, produces an ulcer through nerve injury. The evolution of the perforating ulcer of powder workers occurs in three stages: the formation of xanthosis, a dirty, yellow state of the mucosa from internal hæmorrhages; formation of an ulcer; and perforation. The perforation due to black powder requires many months for completion, while that due to powder J may be complete in eight days. A few crusts and blood-clots are rarely taken notice of. The perforating ulcer is painless, and must be intentionally looked for. The preventive measures recommended are the wearing of a mask and the limitation of working hours. Treatment lies in neutralising the chromic salts.

June 3rd.

## ITALY.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

*Quinine in Scarlet Fever.*

At the meeting of the Royal Academy of Medical Sciences of Palermo on April 26th some interesting observations on this subject were brought forward. During the antimalarial campaign of the Croce Rossa in Sicily last autumn there was an epidemic of scarlet fever in the neighbourhood of Marsala. It was observed that the districts under the care of the officers of the Croce Rossa were exempt from this epidemic, though they only differed from the surrounding districts in the fact that their population was under the influence of quinine administered regularly for prophylaxis against malaria. In view of the theory of the protozoal origin of the infection of scarlet fever, during another epidemic in the spring of this year at Palermo, a certain number of cases were treated by injections of bichloride of quinine in large doses. The cases were few in number, but for the most part of a certain gravity, and in all of them the injections seemed to cut short the disease. The fever yielded to the second or third injection, desquamation appeared quickly, and the patients were very soon well.

*A New Tuberculosis Cure.*

Professor Alessandro Bruschetti, of Geneva, presented a communication to the University of Parma in the amphitheatre of the Clinica Medica on May 17th on the subject of a new cure for tuberculosis. This is a so-called "vaccine serum," of which he described the method of preparation. He claims to have obtained such wonderful results in the cure of hundreds of cases of the various forms of tuberculosis that it may be fairly considered a sure and specific cure. He proposes to make an announcement on the subject at the forthcoming International Congress of Medicine in London.

*A Professor of Pathology and the Waters of Lourdes.*

Professional circles in Genoa have recently been agitated by the publication in the "Journal of the Grotto" of Lourdes of a testimonial written by a member of their University. Dr. Luigi della Valle, professor of surgical pathology in the University of Genoa and surgeon to the hospital, accompanied his wife, whose illness professional skill had failed to cure, to Lourdes last autumn. The effects of the waters corresponded promptly to the lady's hopes and prayers, and in recognition of this her husband was persuaded to sign the following declaration: "I, the undersigned, certify that in the month of September, 1912, my wife, who was seriously ill in consequence of a typhoid infection, complicated by intestinal obstruction, refractory to ordinary therapeutic measures, was in danger of imminent death. She experienced the first symptom of improvement immediately after swallowing a few draughts of the miraculous water of Our Lady of Lourdes, this act of faith being accompanied by the prayers of the patient and of the members of her family. I make this attestation in token of gratitude towards Our Lady of Lourdes." The declaration appears in the *Journal de la Grotte* of May 4th, with the doctor's signature and academic titles, though the doctor had signed it merely as doctor of medicine, and had been under the impression that the declaration would remain private. In Italy, where the antagonism between science and superstition is more bitter possibly than anywhere else in Europe, it is natural that the publication of this document should have aroused much resentment in the scientific circles affected.

May 30th.

## VIENNA.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

*The Vienna Volunteer First-aid Association.*

THE First-aid Congress to be held in this city next September has been organised chiefly by the exertions of the well-known Vienna Volunteer First-aid Association, called here the *Freiwillige Rettungsgesellschaft*, the annual report of which for the year 1912 has just been published. During that year a very great amount of work was accomplished. The number of cases which received attention amounted to