

extreme to another, and we could not be wrong in trying to save the people of India from the hopeless state in which they had neither the strength to engage in a struggle for better conditions of life nor even the aspiration for a higher standard of existence. The remedy lay in education in the planning of life; the material foundations of the better life he visualized consisted in employment of scientific methods of production, adoption of an equitable system of distribution of the fruits of labour, and the regulation of reproduction. India was an invalid whose condition demanded a diagnosis by skilled scientists, followed by rational treatment; he had himself often pleaded for an investigation of the problem of health and nutrition in India by a Commission, which should include the best brains to be found in India and Britain.

Dr. D. CURIEL WILSON spoke of the work of the Indian National Nutritional Advisory Committee, which had been recently established. The subjects considered at Delhi last winter had covered a wide range; they had included methods for extension of wheat cultivation, investigations on rice, use of red palm oil as source of vitamin A, methods for collecting food production data, and constructive action for improving the supply of milk in cities. Indian women were, in her opinion, beginning to interest themselves strongly in problems of nutrition, and a discussion of the subject was included in the last annual meeting of the All-Indian Women's Conference.

Mr. N. GANGULEE, Ph.D., formerly professor of agriculture at the University of Calcutta, criticized Sir John Megaw's theory of the relationship between population trends and prevailing malnutrition in India. Though not himself a medical man, he was aware that medical men should have a knowledge of the effects of soil conditions on the nutritive values of foodstuffs. The wheel of health was one; and for its regulation all branches of science must be co-ordinated. The speaker's own investigations had led him to the conclusion that in large areas of India there were only two rice bowls to every three mouths. But was the rice in the two bowls that existed nutritious enough? The highly polished rice in common use was the main cause of beriberi, and in his opinion the State should control the rice-milling industry. As early as 1921 the Far Eastern Association of Tropical Medicine had proposed the prohibition of milled rice; but few steps in this direction had as yet been taken.

Local News

SCOTLAND

Health of Scotland

The annual report of the Department of Health for Scotland for the year 1938 shows a steady improvement in the general health standards of the Scottish people. There was a record low general death rate of 12.6 per 1,000, and record low rates for infant mortality (70 per 1,000) and for deaths from tuberculosis (69 per 100,000). The maternal mortality rate was 4.9 per 1,000, which is the second lowest on record, the lowest having been 4.8 in 1937. During the year the Department undertook a considerable amount of new work connected with civil defence, including the organization of medical and nursing personnel, emergency hospital services, and arrangements for the evacuation of school children.

HOUSING AND NUTRITION

Three Acts of Parliament affecting housing in Scotland were passed in 1938, and new subsidies for slum clearance and relief of overcrowding were introduced to aid local authorities. More attention was given to the improvement of housing conditions for the agricultural population, with the object of helping to stem the drift of the rural population from the countryside.

The report states that field work undertaken in certain representative areas for a dietary survey has been completed and that analysis of the figures is in progress. Schemes made by the Milk Marketing Boards for the provision of milk at a reduced charge to school children were being continued to September 30, 1939. The number of certified herds had increased from fifty-two in 1928 to 134 in 1938, and of tuberculin-tested herds from fifty-six in the earlier year to 1,251 in 1938.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Persons notified as suffering from infectious diseases numbered 10,000 more than in 1937. The increase was mainly attributable to measles, of which there were 19,500 more cases in 1938 than in the previous year. Of enteric fever there were 412 notifications with twenty-seven deaths, a fatality rate of 6.6 per cent. This included 107 cases occurring in the Hawick outbreak, of which a full account is given in an appendix to the report.

NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE

About 100,000 juveniles were brought into the scheme of national health insurance when the National Health Insurance (Juvenile Contributors and Young Persons) Act, 1937, came into operation. There were about 2,250,000 contributors under the national health insurance scheme in 1938, and £3,500,000 was expended in benefits. Cases of incapacity recorded during the year numbered 417,000, and days of incapacity 25,875,000; 31,000 insured persons were incapable of work throughout the entire year. A greater demand for dental benefit was recorded during 1938, and the expenditure on this amounted to £284,000. Twelve postgraduate courses for insurance practitioners, each of a fortnight's duration, were provided at the four Scottish medical schools. Over 400 applications were received from practitioners to attend these courses, and the selection, made mainly on a geographical basis from those who had qualified not later than 1932, included 251 Scottish insurance practitioners. In addition, eight Scottish doctors attended courses in London and thirty-five English doctors attended courses in Scotland.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE

With regard to the Maternity Services (Scotland) Act, 1937, an understanding was reached with the British Medical Association that after not more than two years' working of the schemes the terms would be subject to review in the light of the experience gained. Schemes submitted covered the areas of forty-seven local authorities, and of these sixteen had been adopted by the end of the year and twenty-nine schemes were in an advanced stage and were expected to receive the approval of the Department early in 1939. The birth rate of 17.7 per 1,000 of the population in 1938 was slightly above that for the previous year. The arrangements of local authorities for supervising the health of mothers and of children under 5 years were based primarily on the work of 1,163 health visitors (507 whole-time and 656 part-time), and on 272 maternity and child welfare centres provided under the scheme. There were approximately 1,430 beds allocated to maternity patients in local authority institutions, and during 1938 several new maternity homes were opened or were under construction. The report states that more could be done for children in the age group 1 to 5, for out of the estimated number of 318,000 children in this group only 20,000 (or 6 per cent.) were brought to the centres, and 134,000 (or 42 per cent.) were visited by health visitors. The inadequacy of this supervision is reflected in the high incidence of defects found at the medical inspection of children entering school for the first time. Medical examination of children attending schools in Scotland is made on three occasions during school life: on enrolment, at about age 9, and at 12 or 13 years. The report deals with the average height and weight of children at routine medical inspections in Glasgow, and states that there has been a general and

substantial improvement in the physical condition of the school population. Dental defect remained one of the most intractable of the conditions met in the school child, for of 207,616 children inspected 56.47 per cent. were found to have one to four teeth decayed, and only 29 per cent. had sound teeth.

The report is obtainable at H.M. Stationery Office, 120, George Street, Edinburgh, price 4s. net.

Lord High Commissioner and Edinburgh Hospitals

The Lord High Commissioner (Sir John Gilmour) and Lady Gilmour paid a visit to the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh and its new maternity pavilion on May 24. In a short address Sir John Gilmour said that hospitals and nurses were rendering a great service to the country to-day, and an extra call was coming to those who were taking an active part in A.R.P. and similar services, which would provide opportunity for the nursing profession. Evacuation of the population would mean that trained nurses would be required in large numbers outside great cities. After a tour of the maternity pavilion and a surgical and medical ward, Sir John presented to the nurses the prizes won in a recent competition. At the Deaconess Hospital of the Church of Scotland on the following day Sir John and Lady Gilmour were received by Lord Wark, chairman of the hospital, who pointed out that last year was the first complete year of activity of the hospital as recently extended. The expenditure had amounted to over £9,000, but the income, owing to the generosity of supporters in the Church of Scotland, had practically reached that figure. All the necessary plans and preparations had been made for the work of the hospital in the event of war by the training of staff, the provision of safety rooms, and other measures.

ENGLAND AND WALES

Home Service Ambulances

The annual report for 1938 of the Home Service Ambulance Committee of the Joint Council of the Order of St. John and the British Red Cross Society opens with a synopsis of the development of its ambulance service during the past twenty years. Mention is made of ambulances in the Irish troubles of 1921; in the industrial troubles in England during the same year; and in the general strike of 1926. In 1924 the first car equipped with x-ray apparatus was brought into the service, to be used later in the serious illness of King George V. The provision of first-aid huts, first-aid boxes, and personnel on the roads, which has been of considerable benefit in minimizing the consequences of road accidents, dates from 1926. Grateful acknowledgment is made of the ever-ready co-operation of the two leading motoring organizations, the Royal Automobile Club and the Automobile Association. The number of ambulance stations in the country equipped by the committee is now 132, and there are in addition 275 ambulances affiliated to the service. During the year 1938 the ambulances carried 170,878 patients, and the total number of patients carried by the service since its inception is 2,056,797.

Cancer Campaign in Yorkshire

At the annual meeting of the Yorkshire Council of the British Empire Cancer Campaign the chairman, Sir Harold Mackintosh, was able to state that for the first time for many years the accounts showed an excess, though none too large, of income over expenditure. This was especially gratifying, as much of the income was derived from small givers through flag days and other efforts of similar nature. Although no spectacular advances in research could be recorded, either in the Yorkshire laboratories or elsewhere, a spirit of optimism

was evident among research workers. The threads of earlier investigations were being gradually pieced together and the cancer problem no longer appeared insoluble, as was the case for many years. Lord Harewood, president of the council, stressed the importance of directing research towards medical and preventive rather than surgical treatment, since many people still so dreaded the knife that they postponed the disclosure of their condition until too late. Professor R. D. Passey, director of cancer research at Leeds University, and Professor H. N. Green, professor of pathology at Sheffield University, outlined developments in their respective departments. Among researches at Leeds were the study of viruses as a cause of cancer, and of heredity, both in man and in experimental animals. With regard to the latter problem the indications emerging from the first two years of a long-term investigation concerning cancer of the breast appeared to suggest that the hereditary tendency is not so marked in this country as the researches of Wassink found it to be in Holland. Researches at Sheffield included a study of the effect of certain poisonous bacterial products upon animal tumours. It was found that the cells of the extreme growing edge of the tumour showed strong resistance to the action of these substances. This, however, could be diminished by the injection of colchicine, which has the power of temporarily preventing the multiplication of body cells.

Correspondence

The Significance of Goitre

SIR,—Simple goitre is very widespread, but to-day only a small proportion of the cases seek medical advice. Since there may be every stage of thyroid enlargement from marked visibility to what may be a normal size, it follows that a considerable proportion of the community is in effect "goitrous" even from birth or before, and the special incidence of the affection in females shows that even temporary physiological calls are often sufficient to demonstrate the deficiency of functional reserve.

Goitre occurring without producing apparent constitutional disturbance is termed "simple," which expression tends to obscure its real significance as a sign of inefficient functioning not only of the thyroid itself but of the interrelated endocrine system in general, the proper and well-balanced activity of which is essential to the maintenance of good health and also constitutes our natural protection against diseases in general. There has been much discussion as to the genesis of goitre, but the fact stands out clearly that the condition can be eliminated by the continued administration of exceedingly minute quantities of iodine in any form. Whatever may be the predisposing factors involved in certain cases the condition is essentially due to a deficiency of available iodine in the endocrine field, and we must bear in mind that ductless glands other than the thyroid may require iodine in some form for their optimal functional activities.

It seems clear that under present conditions our people are not obtaining from their ordinary foodstuffs a constantly sufficient supply of iodine necessary to enable the glandular mechanism to function at its optimum capacity. It is now a well-established fact that a certain minute quantity of iodine is absolutely essential to all vertebrate animals. I am informed by the highest authorities that this particular element is not essential to land plants, and the significance of this fact is obvious when we bear in mind that most of our foodstuffs are obtained either directly or indirectly from these sources. Man has inherited a certain degree of natural resistance to infections and intoxications and also to the various metabolic disturbances which may lead to ill-health or actual disease, and our object should be to assist Nature, as far as possible,

attributed to shock. June, period missed; attributed to anaemia. July, pregnancy clearly present. February 28, 1938 (315 days), she was delivered of a normal healthy full-term male child.

The arrival of the child raised a medico-legal problem. Mr. A.'s death at work made his widow entitled to compensation, and the employers did, in fact, pay the proper sum. But when they were confronted with the posthumous and post-mature child of the dead workman they felt that before paying a sum amounting to £208 in respect of this infant they should have legal protection. They made no allegations against Mrs. A.'s chastity; they simply said that they needed legal confirmation of their liabilities in an altogether unprecedented case. Accordingly the infant child of Mrs. A. sued the employers in the county court, and the case came before a learned and very experienced county court judge. Only two pieces of evidence were presented to his honour.

1. Medical evidence was given that a pregnancy of 315 days was unusual, but not impossible.

2. Mrs. A. entered the witness box, gravely bowed to the judge and counsel, swore that she was chaste, and gravely left the box. No one even began to doubt her. Indeed, the learned judge, ordinarily a man of few words, later went out of his way to compliment her as follows: "As far as is humanly possible to speak, the infant is the son of the deceased and is entitled to compensation. Mrs. A. impressed me as a witness of truth. She is a typically decent and respectable miner's wife. It is almost inconceivable that she could have associated with another man so shortly after the death of her husband."

Judgment was accordingly entered for the infant, thus giving legal recognition to a pregnancy of 315 days.

I am much obliged to Mrs. A. for kindly allowing me to place the case on record.—I am, etc.,

G. F. WALKER, M.D., M.R.C.P.Lond.

Sunderland and Darlington,
May 14.

Congenital Absence of Pectoral Muscle

SIR,—I have read with interest Mr. Malcolm B. Parhad's description in the *Journal* of April 15 (p. 775) of a case showing the above condition. Recently I have seen this congenital anomaly in two young men, both of whom are outstanding athletes. The one is a champion in putting the shot, while the other is highly successful as a pole vaulter.

The condition is said to be exceedingly rare and the number of cases described in the literature is small. In one of my cases there is, in addition to the total absence of the major pectoral muscle, an ipsilateral absence of hair as well as of sweat glands. By means of Minot's iodine starch test for sweating I was able to demonstrate that the deficiency of sweat glands was confined to an area of skin approximately corresponding with the site of absent muscle. The area of alopecia had a similar distribution.

The fact that both cases concerned athletes who excel in performances demanding full use of the chest muscles indicates that perfect compensation or even over-compensation can occur for isolated muscular defects.—I am, etc.,

E. JOKL, M.D.,

Head of Department of Physical Education,
Witwatersrand Technical College,
Johannesburg, South Africa,
May 16.

The issue for May 6 of the *Nederlandsch Tijdschrift voor Geneeskunde*, the organ of the Dutch Medical Association, is a Petrus Camper (1732-89) number, containing among others articles on Camper as anatomist, ophthalmologist, surgeon, obstetrician, artist, and veterinarian.

Medico-Legal

MENTAL PATIENTS' RECORDS IN DIVORCE

Under the Matrimonial Causes ("Herbert's") Act, 1937, divorce can be decreed for incurable insanity lasting five years or more. To prove the insanity the petitioner must obviously have access in some way to the records of the case, and this provision of the Act could not be administered unless he or she had that access. The Board of Control and the local authorities, after some discussion, adopted the practice of placing the file at the disposal of the court, and the petitioner's solicitors can see it before trial and advise themselves on the way in which the case should be presented. Recently the President of the Divorce Division, Sir F. Boyd Merriman, complained of obstruction by the authorities responsible for the Warlingham Mental Hospital—the Croydon County Borough Council. He said¹ that all other mental hospitals assisted the courts as much as they could in supplying information on the condition of patients. So far as he knew, this hospital was the only one where difficulty had been experienced in obtaining this information. He hoped that it would be conveyed to the Croydon authorities that such obstruction would not be tolerated and that the court was not at all pleased. Counsel for the Official Solicitor said that, although the Official Solicitor had had no trouble, he had heard that other parties had. Soon after the President's statement the Croydon Corporation communicated an apology and an undertaking to follow the practice of other authorities.

¹ *Times*, May 18. *Daily Telegraph*, May 18.

Universities and Colleges

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

At an Encaenia to be held on June 21 the honorary degree of D.Sc. will be conferred on Sir Edward Mellanby, M.D., F.R.S., Secretary of the Medical Research Council.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Dr. G. W. Pickering, F.R.C.P., has been appointed to the University Chair of Medicine tenable at St. Mary's Hospital Medical School, and will take up his duties on October 1.

LONDON HOSPITAL MEDICAL COLLEGE

Two open entrance scholarships, each of the value of £100, have been awarded to R. G. White of Queen's College, Oxford; and to R. G. Ladkin of Exeter College, Oxford, and J. Waterlow of Trinity College, Cambridge (equal, scholarship divided).

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

The University Council has decided to confer the honorary degree of D.Sc. on Dr. Leonard Alfred Rowden, Honorary Director of the Electrotherapeutic and X-ray Departments of the General Infirmary at Leeds.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND

A summer course of lectures at the College has been arranged as follows: June 2, Professor Dorothy J. Collier, Facial Paralysis and its Operative Treatment; June 5, 7, and 9, Professor John Beattie, Experimental Surgery—(1) Hyperthermia, (2) Arterial Hypertension, and (3) Blood Conservation Methods; June 12, Professor D. W. Gordon Murray, Heparin in Thrombosis; June 14, Professor George Armitage, Gastroscopic Observations on the Healing of Chronic Gastric Ulcer. All the lectures begin at 5 p.m.

SOCIETY OF APOTHECARIES OF LONDON

The following candidates have passed in the subjects indicated: SURGERY.—R. M. Coplans, S. K. Krishnan, J. Lieber, S. A. Schuyler. MEDICINE.—S. K. Das, W. D. Jenkins, E. L. Moll, J. R. Rose, E. Smith, W. E. Swanston. FORENSIC MEDICINE.—S. K. Das, W. D. Jenkins, E. L. Moll, J. R. Rose, E. Smith, W. E. Swanston. MIDWIFERY.—E. F. Gleadow, A. N. Kalra, E. C. G. Miller. The diploma of the Society has been granted to S. K. Das, E. L. Moll, J. R. Rose, and W. E. Swanston.

The Services

I.M.S. DINNER

The annual dinner of the Indian Medical Service will be held at the Trocadero Restaurant, London, on Wednesday, June 14, at 7.15 for 7.30 p.m., when Major-General C. W. F. Melville, C.B., will preside. Tickets may be obtained from Mr. A. W. Brown, c/o Grindlay and Co., 54, Parliament Street, S.W.1, or from the hon. secretary, Major Sir Thomas Carey Evans, Hammersmith Hospital, Ducane Road, W.12.

Medical News

Dr. F. T. H. Wood, O.B.E., medical officer of health for the County Borough of Bootle, has been elected President of the Society of Medical Officers of Health for the session 1939-40. Dr. Wood has been a prominent member of the Society's council for many years past, and for the last four years has been one of the Public Health Service Representatives on the Council of the British Medical Association.

The bicentenary festival dinner of Queen Charlotte's Maternity Hospital will be held at the Savoy Hotel on Wednesday, June 7, at 8.15 for 8.30 p.m., when the Duke of Kent will preside.

On the occasion of the annual prize distribution by Lady Stamp at Charing Cross Hospital Medical School on Thursday, June 8, at 4 p.m., Lord Stamp will give an address.

The first annual general meeting of the Faculty of Radiologists will take place in Liverpool on June 9 and 10 under the presidency of Dr. R. E. Roberts. The scientific sessions will be held at the Liverpool Medical Institution, Mount Pleasant.

A cardiological meeting will be held at Royat (Puy-de-Dôme) on June 18, when the subject for discussion will be angina pectoris, introduced by Drs. M. Mouquin and Pierre Laubry.

Professor R. Ruggles Gates, F.R.S., will deliver a Chadwick Public Lecture on "Plant Genetics and Human Welfare" at the Chelsea Physic Garden, Swan Walk, S.W., on Thursday, June 15, at 5.30 p.m., with Sir William J. Collins, chairman of the Chadwick Trustees, in the chair. Admission is free.

An international congress for school swimming will be held at the Water Exhibition at Liège, under the presidency of Dr. Ledent, on Sunday, June 11, when discussions will be held on: (1) The relation between apnoea tests and spirometry. (2) Practical remarks on apnoea exercises in swimming. (3) The hygiene of swimming baths. Further information may be had from M. L. Wellens, 15, Rue de la Justice, Liège. A salon for medical artists at Liège will remain open during the exhibition under the presidency of Dr. Philippart, 97, Rue des Champs, Liège, from whom further information can be obtained.

In our advertisement columns this week the University of Sydney invites applications for the University Postgraduate Lectureship in Pathology and Directorship of the Pathological Unit at Prince Henry Hospital, Sydney. The salary attached to the post is £1,500 per annum (Australian currency).

With the April issue the *Monatsschrift für Geburtshilfe und Gynäkologie* appears with the alternative title of *International Monthly Review of Obstetrics and Gynaecology* and the equivalent titles in French and Italian, indicating that it will henceforward accept papers written in English, French, and Italian as well as in German.

The April issue of the *British Journal of Surgery* is dedicated to Harvey Cushing on the occasion of his seventieth birthday.

The Mexican National Academy of Medicine, founded on April 30, 1864, has recently celebrated its seventy-fifth anniversary.

By Royal decree the Medical Faculty of Athens University has been reorganized and will henceforth comprise twenty-five chairs of the various medical faculties.

The following members of the staff of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research will retire this year, having reached the age of 65: Dr. Alexis Carrel, Dr. Karl Landsteiner, Dr. Florence Rena Sabin, Dr. Phoebus A. Levine, and Dr. Winthrop J. V. Osterhout.

M. Léon Binet, professor of physiology in the Paris Faculty of Medicine, has been elected a member of the Académie de Médecine in the section of biological sciences, in succession to the late Dr. Antoine Béchère.

Dr. Bezançon, professor of tuberculosis, and Dr. Marion, professor of urology, have retired from their chairs in the Paris Faculty of Medicine on reaching the age limit of 70.

EPIDEMIOLOGICAL NOTES

Infectious Diseases for the Week

With the single exception of pneumonia (influenzal and primary) principal notifiable infectious diseases have declined during the week. The rise in the incidence of pneumonia, in which London has shared, is small and remains below the figure for the corresponding week last year and the median value for the last nine years. In Scotland, where the notifications of primary and influenzal pneumonia are separate, there has been an increase in the influenzal form and a small decrease in the primary form. Notifications of scarlet fever were well below those recorded for the previous week, both for England and Wales and for London. In Lancaster notifications fell from 496 to 316; of these 69 (84) were in Liverpool, 25 (30) in Manchester, 29 (19) in St. Helens, and 29 (172) in Crosby. The more recent cases in Crosby—in all 231 cases in the last three weeks—appeared to have resulted from contact with the "primary" cases, which were ascribed to infected foodstuffs.

Plague and Cholera in British India and Burma

In recent years the bulk of the cases of plague occurred in the first quarter of the year, chiefly in the Central Provinces and United Provinces of India. For the four years 1936 to 1939 the figures for the first quarter, including Burma, were in succession 9,604, 16,465, 12,237, and 16,443. In the present year the disease was prevalent, compared with the corresponding period of 1938, in Hyderabad State, but less prevalent in the Presidencies of Bombay and in Madras and Mysore.

In the first quarter of 1939 cholera was much less prevalent than in the corresponding period of the previous four years. During the first quarter 23,689 cases were reported in the whole of India, compared with 19,650 in 1934, 53,000 in 1935, 46,000 in 1936, and 43,000 in 1937. The position showed most improvement in Bengal, where the disease is usually most prevalent, there being 17,077 cases in the first quarter of the present year, compared with 22,180 in the corresponding period of last year.

Sylvatic Plague in the U.S.A.

Since 1924 there have been no outbreaks of human plague (urban or of murine origin) in the United States, and sporadic cases reported since then have been connected with an epizootic among wild rodents. In 1938 the disease occurred in squirrels in Adams County, Washington State, in Wyoming, Arizona, and in Catron County, New Mexico. In March and April, 1939, plague was observed among squirrels in the counties of Adams and Lincoln, in Washington State. The great increase in the number of recorded rodent infections is probably due to the increased and systematic search, especially in California and Washington, and is in marked contrast to the small number of human infections reported.