the putrefactive changes which take place in the stomach and bowels in food not digested, which changes are often begun outside the body; 4. These products may act as systemic poisons, or the particles may cause local irritation and inflammation of the intestine. In the treatment of the affection, Dr. Holt believes that antiseptics are of great value, especially naphthalin and the salts of salicylic acid.

THERE SEEMS TO BE a disposition, on the part of congress, to transfer the signal service bureau to the new department of agriculture and labor. General Sheridan approves this plan, and says, that, as a school of instruction, the bureau is not needed in the army, and would prove rather an encumbrance than an advantage: while, so far as its meteorological observations are concerned, these relate wholly to the interests of agriculture and commerce, and should be under the direction of some civil branch officer of the government.

PROF. WILLIAM JAMES of Harvard has a very clear description of the laws of habit, in the current issue of the *Popular science monthly*, that is at once scientific and philosophical. The old-fashioned literary treatment of habits is as far removed as possible from the point of view and method of Professor James. He shows us that 'habit' is a term of very wide application, and that the phenomena of habit in living beings are due to the plasticity — which means the possession of a structure weak enough to yield to an influence, but strong enough not to yield all at once — of the organic materials of which their bodies are composed. Thus a full account of habits implies some reference to physics as well as to physiology and psychology. Tracing briefly, then, the physiological and psychological side of habits, Professor James passes to the ethical and pedagogical considerations which concern them. He calls habit the 'fly-wheel of society, its most precious conservative agent,' and claims that "it is well for the world that in most of us, by the age of thirty, the character has set like plaster, and will never soften again."

The decade between twenty and thirty is found to be the critical one in the formation of intellectual and professional habits, while the period of life before twenty is the most important for the fixing of personal habits. From this it follows easily that by education we must seek "to make automatic and habitual, as early as possible, as many useful actions as we can," and, conversely, to prevent the dropping into injurious habits. Professor James shows how unconsciously habits of mind are formed through the process of our daily routine, until some day we awake to the fact that we have acquired peculiar power or skill in some direction. The constant preaching of this truth would infuse new hope and ambition into many desponding workers.

THE EXCITEMENT AND ALARM which prevailed in this country last year and the previous one, in anticipation of cholera, have entirely subsided, and yet perhaps the danger of its appearance is as great to-day as it has been at any time in the past three years. Although frequent reference to its presence in Europe has been made in the daily press, its ravages have not been described as fully as the facts warrant. At Budapest there have been 1,329 cases with 586 deaths; at Fiume, 260 cases and 161 deaths; at Trieste, 896 cases and 557 deaths. In Japan during 1886 there were 153,930 cases, of which 100,492 were fatal. In Yokohama alone the cases numbered 3,021, and the deaths 2,273. In South America, cholera still exists at Montevideo and Mendoza; the U.S. consul, under date of Jan. 19, reporting that it has been officially declared at the former place. The disease still exists at Buenos Ayres, though it is said to be diminishing and of a less virulent form than heretofore. The presence of cholera on the west coast of South America, which has been announced by the press, still lacks official confirmation.

YOUTHFULNESS IN SCIENCE.

EVERY college instructor knows only too well how the more active-minded students are eager to grapple with the mightiest subjects, all in the untested pride of developing intelligence. Their themes are, 'The progress of democracy,' 'The comparison of French and English literature,' 'Solar energy,' 'The Darwinian theory,' 'The origin of mind;' in short, all the vastest problems, such as a lifetime is inadequate for. Most of us can gather from our personal recollections some examples of the foible. Youth does not know its measure. Only maturity, and not always even maturity, realizes how tiny and feeble is the force of the individual when it turns to attack the world problems, which stand more mysteriously

and longer than the sphinx to perplex and baffle humanity. The adolescent mind is confident; for it has never been beaten, since it has never been engaged in any real fighting. It proudly believes in its own success, and is but too apt to look disdainfully on great thinkers, because they left more to be thought. It glories in generalizations, and is gladly indifferent to the harassing details and preliminaries, with which, if it continues active, it will afterwards be chiefly and sensibly occupied.

The *young* man is often a would-be revolutionist. He is surprised that older and wiser and better men are so benighted. Let us not be misunderstood. The young man we are characterizing is the one in whom the faults his years are prone to are strongly accented. We have no intention of wholesale condemnation towards a class to which we have belonged, and therefore may be supposed to think of respectfully. If the unfortunate individual or type we are discussing betakes himself to science, he may do useful and praiseworthy work, but he is pretty sure to injure its meritorious part by adjuncts of misshapen generalization, and of criticisms very bad in taste and unjust in substance. His pages show a saddening spectacle of overgrown self-confidence, betrayed by the tone of expression, by the ill-repressed laudation of his own theories, and the bad-mannered fault-finding with others, perhaps merely because their observations, without which the young man could have done nothing, were not exhaustive of the field. Next follows pitiless criticism; the pedestal of flimsy logic is dashed away; the victim falls from his eminence. The specious argumentation is reft, and the man's ignorance is exposed nakedly. Last comes the cruel abasement, all the worse to bear because it is the public sequel of elation. And still the young man must be grateful if the late lesson can be learned by his aching and repentant mind. Would that the fire of the soul always purified, and never consumed!

PROHIBITION.

INTERFERENCE with the voluntary actions of people is to be deprecated, except when such actions trespass on the rights of other members of the community.

A chemical factory, emitting noisome fumes, must not be established in the midst of a town or city, or measures must be enforced against it to prevent the contamination of the surrounding air; a boiler-factory, with its din of rivet-hammering, must not be suffered to disturb the peace of a residential neighborhood; a gunpowder-factory must not be allowed to endanger other properties by its proximity; a graveyard must be kept away from centres of living population. These interferences with the voluntary actions of factory and graveyard owners are justified by the fact that the interdicted operations are trespasses on the rights, because baneful to the health or comfort, of the community.

Is there any similar justification for the prohibition of the manufacture or sale of alcoholic liquors?

We know that use is very apt to degenerate into abuse of such commodities; and we know that more than half of the immorality that afflicts society, and of the crime that fills our prisons, is directly traceable to the abuse of alcoholic liquors. We know also that the heaviest portion of the burdens on tax-payers — the cost of protective, detective, judicial, reformatory, and punitive establishments — is largely owing to the same cause. Everybody admits, therefore, that society would be justified in doing whatever is requisite to protect itself from the gigantic evils which spring from the liquor traffic.

Here, however, the policy now widely advocated diverges from the line of justifiable interference. Prohibition of manufacture or sale is not the proper protective policy. This interferes with the voluntary action equally of those who innocently use as of those who criminally abuse. No notice need be taken of the bigot theory, that innocent use of alcoholic liquors is impossible. Let us grant a place in the world for every thing to be found in it, and for every production of man's hands. Use and abuse are possible for all things.

What, then, is the proper line of social action?

Society does not, and can not, prevent the playing of games of chance by those who choose to waste their time and means in such demoralizing pursuits; but society does interfere with the business of the gambler, the card-sharper, the lottery-ticket seller, etc. Society does not seek to stop, by futile prohibitory measures, the prevalence of other forms of 'social evil,' but society does prevent the flaunting of immorality before the public eye, and the use of the streets for its advertising purposes.

So in reference to the liquor traffic. No attempt need be made, or should be made, to interfere with manufacture or sale; but the most absolute prohibition should be laid on the *business* of selling liquor 'to be drunk on the premises.' Saloons and bar-rooms are evil, and only evil, and that continually.

If a man wants beer or brandy, let him buy it as he does beef or bread, and by due measure of