

HEALTH MATTERS.

The Difficulties of the Medical Profession.

"AN Old Doctor" deplores the visible decadence of the profession in a long letter of lamentation in *The Lancet*. Among other things, he says, —

"In these advertising days, in medicine, as in every thing else, people who know little or nothing of a subject, who presume ignorantly to address the public in the daily and weekly press, attract more notice than those who have devoted their lives to their particular work. It is a misfortune that in this country (i.e., England) a very large amount of medical practice (and that the most easy and profitable) is lost to the profession by the fact that almost all chemists prescribe largely. This is a great and crying evil. The practice is, instead of diminishing, largely increasing. This should be stopped. The chemist nearly always prescribes, but generally says, to cover himself, 'If worse, take patient to a medical man.' And so the medical man reaps all the hard work (often without being paid), and the chemist most of the profits. Then, again, hospitals, both special and general, take away largely from the proper, legal, and rightful profits of the profession. The public have a notion that they get advice and medicine of the highest character from the hospitals for nothing, but, if they pay for it to the general practitioner, they get a second-rate article. This is a bad system. Why not set up legal dispensaries for free legal advice, free places to get married in, free clothing establishments, free meat-stores, etc., all paid for by subscriptions or rates?"

"The fact is, the medical profession is gradually and surely committing suicide, and its career on the downward path should be promptly arrested. If we were true to ourselves (which we are not, and never have been), the present increase in the profession would be insufficient to supply the needs of the public. But, if we go on working on the 'sweating system,' (for who sweats more, mentally and physically, than the hard-worked medical practitioner, night and day doing his best to preserve the health and life of the people?) often indeed without reward, then we shall be fools indeed. This idea, that medical services can be had for nothing, and so ought to be paid for at that price, is spreading. We are doing away with all professional reserve. We make every thing plain, and it is valued accordingly. The more a profession is lowered in the eyes of the public, the less respect it receives."

THE BACILLUS OF WARTS. — Dr. Kuhnemann has found, says *The Medical Record*, in sections of warts (*verruca vulgaris*) a bacillus which is always present in the prickly layer. It has distinctive qualities as regards its capacity for color, and is found both between and in the cells. Its form is that of exceedingly delicate, slender rods, the thickness bearing the proportion to the length of one to six. It is seldom found in the skin surrounding the warts, and is found most plentifully when the wart is recent.

MEMORY FOLLOWING CRANIAL INJURY. — The following case is reported by the patient, a distinguished member of the legal profession. The loss of memory has been permanent for certain subjects extending over a certain area of time preceding the accident. In all other respects, says *The Medical Analectic*, the mental faculties are of a very high order. "When twelve years and ten months old, I fell over a cliff at Howth, County Dublin. The cause of my accident was a kind of landslide, and I fell and rolled about thirty feet, when I caught a bush, which gave way with me, and I fell about thirty feet more on to rocks. I was picked up quite insensible. My jaw was broken in four places, but no other bones. I am told, however, that my appearance was like that of some one who had been beaten into a jelly from head to foot. I have no recollection of the accident beyond holding on to the bush or bramble which gave way with me. Nor do I remember being picked up, nor any thing which subsequently occurred, until about ten days after the accident, when I seemed to awake out of a long sleep, in great pain, and seeing Surgeon Butcher standing over me and setting my jaw, or doing something to it which caused me great pain. I was more or less incapable of doing any thing for seven or eight months, owing to the shock to my system. My father had died about seven months before the accident; and I am told that I used constantly to be with him, and that he was very fond of me, but I have not the smallest recollec-

tion of him, or what he was like, nor can I remember a single incident of my life before the accident; and, in fact, up to the time it occurred, every thing is a complete blank in my memory, both as regards individuals and events. I am told that I was practically insensible for about a week after the accident occurred."

INFLUENZA. — We are now passing through one of the periodic visitations of this annoying disease. For the last four centuries these attacks have come at varying intervals, those most pronounced being at intervals of forty or fifty years, although others have occurred at shorter intervals. These last, however, have been confined to smaller areas, where for some reason the conditions were favorable to the spread of the disease. A peculiarity of the great attacks has been their universality, spreading as they have from the equator to the poles. We are now inclined to connect some micro-organism with each disordered state of the human system. So it may be that this enemy of human comfort has his periods of activity, just as the seventeen-year locust has his. Influenza comes suddenly, and goes as quickly. The cause, whatever it may be, descends on a community with the result that the least robust, of whatever age, are afflicted most. The outbreak of epizootic among horses in 1870 has been connected by some with the influenza in man.

NOTES AND NEWS.

THE government of Chili has had a committee of engineers examining the water-works of the principal European cities, with a view to establishing similar works, on a large scale, in some of the Chilian cities.

— Professor R. H. Thurston has received the university decoration, "*Officier de l'Instruction Publique de France*."

— The canal to connect the North Sea, at the mouth of the Elbe, with the Gulf of Kiel on the Baltic, which was begun two or three years ago, is making fair progress. It will be 61 miles long, 85 feet broad at the bottom, and nearly 200 at the water-level, and of sufficient depth to take the largest German war-vessels. It will have only two locks, one at each end.

— The sixth annual meeting of the American Historical Association was begun in Washington, Dec. 28. Among those present were President Charles K. Adams of Cornell University; the Hon. John Jay of New York; John F. King, president of the New York Historical Society; Dr. Justin Winsor of Cambridge, Mass.; Mrs. Martha J. Lamb, editor of the *Magazine of American History*; Gen. James Grant Wilson of New York; Horatio King, Washington; Gen. George W. Cullom, William F. Poole, Chicago; Senator Hoar, President Gallaudet, of Washington; Judge Chamberlin of Boston; and Gen. Charles Darling of Utica, N.Y. Professor George L. Burr of Cornell University delivered an address on the literature of witchcraft. Ex-President Andrew D. White of Cornell followed in a paper entitled "A Catechism of Revolutionary Reaction." It calls attention to the fact, that, while there are so many histories of the French Revolution, there is as yet no history of the re-actions which have followed it. The next paper was on the "French Revolution in San Domingo," by Herbert Elmer Mills, instructor in history, Cornell University. Clarence Winthrop Bowen, Ph.D., read a paper entitled "A Newly Discovered Manuscript: Reminiscences of the American War of Independence, by Ludwig, Baron von Closen, Aide to Count de Rochambeau." This contained a description of the movements of the allied armies in the neighborhood of Manhattan Island in the summer of 1781, of the meeting of Washington and Rochambeau, and of the scenes following Cornwallis's surrender. The writer gives many interesting personal reminiscences of the Washington family and of early American society. The subject of President Charles K. Adams's inaugural address was "The Recent Advancement of Historical Studies in the Colleges and Universities of America and Europe." Mr. Talcott Williams of Philadelphia read an interesting paper on "Historical Survivals in Morocco." The full programme has already been published.

— A careful computation of the speed of a routing-machine cutter, made recently in Chicago by mechanical experts, showed it to be making 23,466 revolutions per minute. This was the regular