

volume of moving air. By this method of application of the fan there is no disturbance of the "thermo-neural" equilibrium of the body, and the writer has thus enjoyed the luxury of a cool bed without stint, in the hottest weather, without any evil effects.

It is the hope that others may profit by the above suggestion, that shall serve as an apology for this communication.

T. G. DABNEY

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BLANDING'S TURTLE

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: Mr. Howe's note in SCIENCE of September 1, reporting the capture of Blanding's turtle in Massachusetts, reminds me that I should make a note of the introduction of this turtle in Orange County, New York.

In 1909 I placed three pairs of Blanding's turtle (*Emys blandingi*) and three pairs of the map turtle (*Malacoclemmys geographica*) in Little Long Pond, near Southfields, Orange County. Some naturalist may discover them by and by, and it is desirable that a record be made of their introduction. Both species were collected in Erie County, Ohio.

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NEW YORK AQUARIUM

QUOTATIONS

MEDICAL PRACTISE IN GREAT BRITAIN

As every one knows, the lines of work pursued by medical men vary greatly in different cases. Of all medical students a large proportion probably hope to develop into consultants or specialists, but sooner or later they learn that it is only to the few that a career of this kind is practically open. Even after a brilliant studentship success involves years of weary waiting, during which not even a bare living is made from practise; and, in fact, only those who have private means can afford, as a rule, to wait. Moreover, in every case the result is extremely uncertain, and one late outcome of legislation now in progress may be restriction of the field open to consultants and specialists of independent mind.

Despite, therefore, the apparent wealth of choice, the average newly qualified man has to elect between private general or family practise and an official career. Most men necessarily choose the former, if only for the reason that the number of posts in the public services is very limited. It is the more unfortunate, therefore, that the prospects of private practise are inferior to what they used to be. Complaints of lessened incomes and increased expenses began, indeed to come in a few years ago in such numbers that the subject was specially investigated by this *Journal*, and the results recorded in two articles on "The Financial Prospects of Medicine," which appeared in the *British Medical Journal* for June 12 and July 17, 1909. The net outcome of those articles was to prove that not only was the number of possible patients less, but each one of those that remained needed less medical attendance than formerly, especially for the zymotic diseases, which used to furnish so much work. In this connection must be mentioned the decline in the birth-rate, which not only affects the medical men of this generation, but must seriously influence the prospects of those who may succeed them. The counter-prescribing by chemists, the enormous sale of quack remedies, the growth of badly-paid club practise and of hospital abuse, have all taken away from medical men former paying patients. At the same time the State has from time to time thrown sundry unpaid duties on the shoulders of medical men.

The state has no conscience, but individual members of the public often seem, in their dealings with medical men, to have very little. The newly-qualified practitioner often thinks he is making a practise quickly, judging by the number of patients that come to his surgery, but too often he is disillusioned when he sends out his bills. If he press for payment before he is well established, the growth in his practise soon ceases, and, what is still more irritating, the very patients who had seemed to regard him as an angel of mercy not infrequently spread charges of incompetence or

neglect which, however fully disproved, invariably damages his practise.

The foregoing is a faithful account of the present drawbacks to private practise, and it must be repeated that the insurance legislation in view will not improve matters. Medical men who have gone in for contract practise at all have been able to afford to do so thanks to their possession also of ordinary practise among the same class of persons. But under the National Insurance Bill the whole of the working class will be swept into the contract practise net, and a smaller income will almost certainly result from the same amount of work despite the absence of bad debts. There may also be an extension upwards of the contract system, and a great deal even of the best class of private practise may thus be abolished. Another disadvantage which can not be ignored is that it will become impossible to build up a practise which can be sold in part or altogether. Indeed the mere introduction of the bill has already lessened the value of many practises as facultative assets.—*British Medical Journal*.

SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

Publications of the United States Naval Observatory. Second Series. Volume VI., with ten plates. Volume VII. Washington, Government Printing Office. 1911.

In accordance with the new policy of the Naval Observatory by which volumes are issued from time to time as material suitable in nature and quantity for simultaneous publication becomes available, we find volume VI. of the present two volumes made up as follows: (1) the data and results of all the observations made with the two equatorial telescopes, the 26-inch and the 12-inch, since the removal to the new site, or for the years 1894-1907; (2) Appendix I., a series of thirty-six astronomical papers by various members of the staff, embracing a determination of the mass of Titan, of the Solar Parallax from observations of Eros, and determinations of the orbits of a number of satellites, minor planets and comets; (3) Appendix II., a presentation of the observations of the transit of Mercury in

1894 made by more than twenty-three professional and amateur astronomers at as many stations in the United States from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast; (4) Appendix III., a complete and minutely described list of the publications of the observatory, from the beginning in 1845 till 1908.

This volume is of special interest to a wider public inasmuch as it contains, we believe, the first series of plates that have been generally distributed in illustration of the buildings and equipment of the new observatory. The frontispiece exhibits the dome and the attached, low, office building of the great equatorial telescope, making one harmonious structure, with white marble walls, standing apart on the spacious grounds. Probably this is the most gracefully formed astronomical dome in the country, if not in the world. Similar praise is to be given when we regard the plate which gives a view of the front of the main building. Here, again are fitness and beauty of proportion, a simplicity of outline and detail, which are an honor to the architect, the late Richard Morris Hunt. Besides these there are six plates which exhibit the construction and equipment of the 26-inch telescope and one which gives a general view of the 12-inch telescope.

This volume contains the work of a number of observers who have succeeded one another at the instruments in kaleidoscopic change. Indeed, one who has followed the annual pamphlet reports of the superintendent for several years past, is likely to have his head full of visions of a chain of observers marching and counter-marching around a circle of instruments, and to get the conviction that our National Observatory properly belongs in Alice's Wonderland. But here is a great mass of original astronomical data which appear to have been carefully derived, and the full value of which can only come out upon comparison with similar results from the different observatories of the world. If certain astronomers, of a type not unrepresented in this volume, would confine themselves to careful observation and leave the theorizing in newspaper and magazine articles