

practical ways; sea-salt normal solution, or sterilized seawater itself, may turn out to be the best restorative and it is still further suggestive in connection with the comparatively recent researches of Morgan, Loeb, and others on the parthenogenetic development of certain organisms in differently modified marine media. There is possibly a large field for study and work in the direction here indicated.

ERGOGRAPHIC TESTS IN SCHOOL CHILDREN.

The article by Dr. Christopher, published in this and the preceding issue of *THE JOURNAL*, treats of a subject that has a more than passing interest. The welfare of the child, and especially at the critical period of puberty, is an important matter and it is easily seen how faulty educational methods may have a damaging influence that will be felt through all the future life of the individual. Dr. Christopher has utilized the methods of modern physiologic research and has availed himself of the services of assistants skilled in instrumental psychologic experimentation, which would naturally add to the value of the observations. From this study he demonstrates already some facts that are suggestive, if not conclusive, such for example as that shown by the power curve through the school-day and the corresponding ergograms. It is apparent, at least, that the child needs more frequent respite from school duties than is always given by modern pedagogues. School-teachers are liable perhaps more than others to become opinionated and arbitrary, hence the need of their proper instruction on matters that concern the welfare of their charges. It would be well, therefore, could they generally study such articles as that of Dr. Christopher, which illustrates by graphic methods the effects of mental work on muscular and nervous endurance. At present we have a strong suspicion that some popular teaching methods are unphysiologic and liable to produce serious effects by the overstrain of immature and, therefore, especially vulnerable organizations. The paper we publish is essentially a preliminary one, as the investigation is still being carried on. That it involves a possibility of important and beneficial results needs hardly to be stated.

MYOSITIS OSSIFICANS.

The calcareous degeneration of certain tissues is a well-known fact, but the formation of true bone in the tissues, not normally thus developing, and apart from any direct connection with the natural bony growths, is still to some extent a pathologic curiosity. This is especially true of the ossifications of the muscles, of which a comparatively small number of cases have been reported in medical literature. Dr. Lydia M. Dewitt reports¹ a case, with the discussion of the literature of this subject, in part honestly acknowledged as second-hand, with the theories that have been proposed to account for the condition. The fact that in certain animals the so-called splint bones occur has a certain physiological bearing, but the facts do not fully apply to the human subject. The curious malformation that has been observed in some 75 per cent. of the recorded cases of this disease of microdactylia and imperfection of the thumb and

great toe is of interest, and is one of the unexplained but indefinitely suggestive peculiarities that we sometimes meet with in connection with obscure diseases. Dr. DeWitt's idea seems to be that on the whole the condition is not so mysterious a one as might be supposed. The fact that different members of the connective-tissue group change with special readiness into other forms of connective-tissue structure is, she holds, a probably sufficient explanation, lacking others a little more definite. She does not consider the suggestion of Gegenbaur, of specialized osteoplastic nuclei existing from before birth, as necessary to account for the pathologic bone formation. The cells which in certain regions act as osteoblasts are not, she thinks, necessarily histogenetically different from those which in other localities develop into fibrous connective tissue. The subject is by no means definitely cleared up, but her communication is a reasonable discussion of the facts and probabilities.

THE DISASTER AT GALVESTON.

The terrible disaster at Galveston, the reports of which have as yet only partially reached us, seems likely to be one of the worst on record, exceeding even Johnstown in loss of life and property. If commercial reasons make it inevitable that we shall build our cities where they are subject to such disasters as those that have twice afflicted Galveston, it would seem necessary that some special measures should be taken to ensure their protection. The building of houses directly in the sand, where they are liable to be flooded, appears to court disaster, and the chances for such a hurricane, even only once or twice in a century, should be kept in mind. The results of the catastrophe, aside from the direct mortality, are most serious, as there is said to be an immense number of injured and maimed, and the sanitary conditions, as in Johnstown and Titusville, following such a flood require thorough and immediate attention. This is a matter of more importance in the latitude of Texas than it would be farther north. More than this, the survivors, in their wrecked and dismantled homes, are exposed to still other perils and hardships, the water-supply is cut off, and, hence, the dangers of fire and of a water famine are also imminent. With all these things to affect the health, there is yet the moral effect of such a catastrophe, which can not well be estimated, but which can only be a factor in the total outcome of the misfortune. The revival of the city is, we trust, beyond question; and the injury it has received we hope may prove to be only a temporary one. It should and will have the active sympathy and aid of more fortunate sections of the country. It is to be hoped that engineering skill will, in repairing the mischief that has been done, find a way to insure against a repetition of the calamity.

THE LATEST DECREE OF THE ANTIVIVISECTIONISTS.

Among the numerous Congresses held in Paris during the past summer, there was one called the International Congress of Animal Protection Societies. While not ostensibly in the interests of the antivivisectionists, it was evidently captured by them. A resolution was introduced stating that "vivisection is a crime unworthy of the toleration of any people calling themselves civilized." A separate vote was taken of the anti-cruelty societies,

¹ American Journal of the Medical Sciences, September.