

question. There is no reason, says Sir John Gorst, why it should not be the duty of every class-teacher to make a daily inspection of the children in the class and to record and to report anything abnormal, such as hunger, nakedness, dirt, and disease. This daily inspection could be periodically supplemented and checked by the visit of a trained nurse and by such means it is suggested that we should soon learn whether we were degenerating or improving. With much of Sir John Gorst's words we fully agree, but we question whether the teacher is, as a rule, capable of giving the systematic help that is thus expected of him. He could report about clothing and to a great extent about personal hygiene; he could inquire about feeding; but disease would be beyond him save in its grosser manifestations. Medical examination of all school children upon some pre-arranged plan would be necessary before the information to be obtained from school authorities could be relied upon. If all teachers of the young were themselves instructed in physiology the position would be different. An address delivered at the University of St. Andrews by Dr. D. Fraser Harris at the beginning of the week and referred to briefly by one of our Scotch correspondents urged the necessity of the schoolmaster being familiar with at least the groundwork of physiology and Sir John Gorst's excellent paper teaches a similar lesson.

#### CHRISTMAS ENTERTAINMENTS AND THEIR DANGERS: A WARNING.

FAR be it from us to detract in the smallest degree from the joys and amusements which are commonly indulged in at Christmas time for the sake chiefly of the little people. But previous experience has taught us unhappily that Christmas time is prone to bring a sad chapter of accidents (much sadder than usual because of their occurrence at a peculiarly joyous time) which with a little forethought might have been avoided. Perhaps it is in connexion with domestic theatricals that the worst accidents have arisen. Children and adults alike have been dressed up, for example, and almost buried in a profusion of cotton-wool intended to represent snow without the least regard having been paid to the ready inflammability of the material and without any precautions to keep it from coming into contact with a naked flame. Some most heart-rending scenes have resulted from this want of care and a very sad sequel to happy moments has been the consequence. It cannot be too well known that cotton-wool burns with the fierceness of spirit and that the flame is very hot and very difficult to extinguish. Great caution should also be exercised in regard to the drapery used for scenic purposes which should consist so far as possible, if not entirely, of non-inflammable or of not easily ignited material. There is again a similar danger connected with celluloid ornaments and toys. The celluloid ball is fiercely and easily inflammable and if it does not ignite something else and lead to an alarming conflagration it may itself inflict severe burns and injury. This warning is all the more needed, it seems to us, as so many toys are now made of this highly combustible material. The festive season is associated with many things bright and pretty in which danger may easily lurk. The painted doll may be pigmented with poison, the coloured candles on the Christmas tree have been known to be a source of arsenical poisoning at Christmas parties, while the sweets may not be above suspicion. We cheerfully admit, however, that there never was a time when colouring materials were as a rule so innocent in character as at the present, thanks maybe to the publicity given in our own columns to the practice at one time in evidence of using poisonous materials for this purpose. If to be forewarned is to be forearmed this little note may not be written in vain.

We feel strongly that a warning of this kind is timely and we issue it not with the slightest desire to cast a wet blanket over a promised joyous time but in the sincere hope that this Christmas may not be marred by those sad occurrences which have occasionally marked previous festivals and which could have been avoided by taking care and by the application of ordinary intelligence as to the possibilities of danger.

#### THE BALLACHULISH QUARRIES.

FURTHER proof reaches us during the week that the Ballachulish quarriers are determined not to yield on the question of their medical officer, and it seems clear that the mass of them, unless the directors of the company revise their opinion, will seek permanent employment elsewhere. The persecution, for it is nothing else of Dr. Lachlan Grant will not be endorsed by the men whom he has served well and whom he is desirous of serving further, nor are the men prepared to accept dictation as to what medical man they shall employ while the payment of the medical man is made by themselves.

#### 5000 MIDWIFERY CASES IN GENERAL PRACTICE.

A NOTE on 5000 midwifery cases in private practice has reached us from a contributor who desires to affix only the initials "G. P." to his work. The note commences with an analysis of the cases as follows: cases attended, 5000; twins, 50, or 1 per cent.; triplets, 2, or 0.04 per cent.; transverse presentations, 74, or 1.48 per cent.; face presentations, 7, or 0.14 per cent.; placenta prævia, 17, or 0.34 per cent.; puerperal eclampsia, 6, or 0.12 per cent.; puerperal mania, 2, or 0.04 per cent.; ruptured uterus, 2, or 0.04 per cent.; version, 66, or 1.32 per cent.; forceps, 326, or 6.52 per cent.; craniotomy, 1, or 0.02 per cent.; 306, or 6.12 per cent., paid no fees. Deaths occurred as follows: acute septicæmia, 2, or 0.04 per cent.; influenza (?), 2, or 0.04 per cent.; pyæmia, 1, or 0.02 per cent.; shock after craniotomy, 1, or 0.02 per cent.; ruptured uterus, 2, or 0.04 per cent.; puerperal eclampsia, 3, or 0.06 per cent.; post-partum hæmorrhage, 1, or 0.02 per cent.; total, 12, or 0.24 per cent. Other deaths not directly due to parturition: acute bronchitis, 2, or 0.04 per cent.; phthisis, 2, or 0.04 per cent.; cerebral hæmorrhage, 1, or 0.02 per cent.; puerperal mania and phthisis, 1, or 0.02 per cent.; total, 6, or 0.12 per cent.; total number of deaths, 18, or 0.36 per cent. All these cases were attended in the East-end of London and do not include those in which help was given to other practitioners or midwives. The number of cases of placenta prævia is small. In cases where the foetus was not viable they would have been looked upon as miscarriages. Abortions and miscarriages in the East-end of London are too numerous to mention. The two deaths attributed to influenza occurred as follows. Both were attended by A one afternoon. In the evening he was prostrate with a sharp attack of influenza. Both cases ran a similar course. On the second day the patients were feverish, with pains in the back and the limbs; no rigors were present. On the third day the temperature rose to 104° F. and there were abdominal tenderness and sleeplessness. There was no milk and the lochia were scanty. The symptoms continued till the seventh day but the temperature dropped. One case was then seen by a specialist in gynecology, who found no uterine, pulmonary, or cardiac physical signs. The diagnosis was influenza and the prognosis was favourable. That evening vomiting and delirium came on and continued till the eighth day, when death occurred. In the three deaths from eclampsia convulsions took place in one case three hours post partum, in the second 11 hours post partum,

and in the third before the os had begun to dilate. The patient who died from post-partum hæmorrhage was delivered by forceps at 8 P.M. She had had difficult labours previously and had always lost blood considerably. At 6 A.M. her friends sent to say that she was dead. There had been a good deal of hæmorrhage externally and the uterus was distended with blood. In the following series of monsters in each case the husband and wife were cousins: (1) miscarriage; (2) anencephalous monster; (3) living, normal; (4) hernia cerebri, five fingers and six toes on each hand and foot, double talipes varus, cleft lip and palate; (5) normal, living; (6) normal, living; (7) anencephalous monster; (8) has left the district and is said to have had "another monster." Besides the 306 who did not pay anything a large number paid only a part of their fees. When "twelve good men and true" are so ready to censure a practitioner who demands his fee before turning out from his bed they should bear this in mind. Seeing the conditions under which many of these cases are attended—the rooms, the bed, the skirt, worn during labour, which has swept the streets for months—the practitioner can only be thankful that there is such a thing as the vis medicatrix naturæ.

#### NURSING STAFF TROUBLES.

THERE are few positions in which correct, judicious, and considerate conduct is more difficult of attainment than it is in the case of the matron of a large hospital. The position of an autocrat is a difficult one, even when he is a man among men; when the autocrat is a woman among women great indeed are the merits of her who pleases both those whom and those for whom she rules. Governing bodies generally and wisely interfere but little in the direct control of the nurses by the matron. Very great, therefore, is the credit due to the ladies whose rule in these difficult positions seldom gives rise to complaint, to friction, or to insubordination. Many of our readers no doubt are aware that there has lately been some difficulty in connexion with the nursing staff at Charing Cross Hospital. If we may trust the account given in the general press the matron, as representing and as acting for the supreme authority in the institution, seems to have behaved with perfect openness and justice. In her opinion the retirement of certain sisters was advisable. The hospital authorities gave these ladies the opportunity of retiring in a convenient and graceful manner. Here, it seems to us, the matter should end.

#### QUARANTINE WORK IN THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS.

THE annual report for the period ended July 31st last, of Captain V. G. Heiser, United States Public Health and Marine Hospital Service, chief quarantine officer of the Philippine islands, has just been made public. From a perusal of the summary of a year's quarantine work in the Philippine Archipelago it is gathered that there are now on duty in the Philippines four commissioned officers at Manila and Mariveles, one each at Cebu, Iloilo, and Jolo, one pharmacist at Manila, and 70 attendants who act in the capacity of clerks, launch crews, quarantine employés, and so on. 207 vessels were fumigated with sulphur. 105 vessels infected with cholera were disinfected. Seven vessels with small-pox aboard and two with plague cases were disinfected. In addition there were 119 vessels disinfected because they came from infected ports. The report states that with the possible exception of Tor, Egypt, there is probably more disinfection accomplished at the Mariveles quarantine station than at any other plant in the world. Cholera was the disease with which the quarantine officers in the Philippines had chiefly

to deal. 68 vessels with cholera on board arrived at the port of Manila and on 37 vessels cholera appeared during the time they were serving their outgoing quarantine. Captain Heiser is a strong advocate of strict quarantine regulations and says: "It is a matter for congratulation that the practice prescribed by the quarantine laws and regulations has been so thoroughly vindicated by practical experience. Of the 105 cholera-infected vessels that were disinfected at the Manila station only one developed the disease after being released from quarantine and then nine days after disinfection." With regard to the plague the report states that it is particularly creditable to the officers on duty in China and Japan that notwithstanding the fact that plague has been epidemic at Hong-Kong and Amoy during the year and present at other ports in those countries not a single case of this disease found in Manila could be traced to infection from without. The destruction of rats, other vermin, and cockroaches on board vessels at ports in the Philippine islands has been carried on with energy and much success during the period covered by the report. A few cases of leprosy were detected on vessels visiting Manila during the year. According to the report, the endeavour to prevent the occurrence of quarantinable diseases in the Philippine islands after those now present have been stamped out will require the strict observance of the quarantine laws and regulations at the ports of entry. As some of these ports are less than 48 hours by steamer from countries in which diseases like cholera are endemic the problem will be a difficult one and perhaps more than can be expected of the quarantine service alone, but it is hoped that with the assistance of an intelligent, energetic Board of Health it will not be impossible.

#### THE AFTERMATH OF BAYLISS v. COLERIDGE.

WE deal in another column with the purely legal aspects of the libel case of Bayliss v. Coleridge which was recently decided in the law courts. We had hoped that with the finding of the jury the matter would have been allowed to drop. But events have happened and are happening which tend to prolong a useless controversy and which do not show the morality of an antivivisection society in a very favourable light. Mr. Coleridge was compelled by the verdict of the jury to pay a sum of £2000 damages and also to pay the costs. He thereupon, according to a statement made by his solicitor which appeared in the *Times* of Dec. 2nd, paid over from his private account a cheque for £2000, which cheque was duly sent to the plaintiff's solicitors on Nov. 19th. A paragraph afterwards appeared in the *Manchester Daily Dispatch* to the effect that the National Antivivisection Society had paid Mr. Coleridge's damages and costs. This was the statement which Mr. Coleridge's solicitor wrote to contradict. He added: "Mr. Coleridge also requests me to state that he has no intention of asking the society to contribute in any way to the payment of the damages or any of the legal expenses." As was to be expected, the London correspondent of the *Manchester Daily Dispatch* was not going to allow this traversing of his statement to pass unnoticed and accordingly in the *Times* of Dec. 7th appeared a letter from him inclosing for the information of the editor of the *Times* a circular sent out from the National Antivivisection Society under date Dec. 1st appealing for subscriptions to defray Mr. Coleridge's expenses and damages. The society also wrote on Dec. 2nd to the correspondent of the *Manchester Daily Dispatch* asking him to contradict a statement in which there was no word of truth and stating, moreover, that not only had the society not paid the costs and damages but that it had no intention of doing so. Mr. Coleridge may not have asked his society to pay his damages and costs but it is quite evident either that the society is