

system children remained in the workhouse until they reached maturity, growing up without any knowledge of ordinary social life. The first improvement was the providing of schools apart from the workhouses. In some cases this resulted in the barrack-schools system, the children being massed together in great numbers under conditions both beneficial and otherwise. In his opinion the mechanical uniformity of life in the barrack schools was a serious defect, tending to retard mental and physical development. Boarding-out is in some respects an ideal system, but requires extreme care in supervision; and some of the homes have been unsatisfactory, so that it is not likely to be of universal application. In his opinion pauper children should, as far as possible, be treated so that they may grow up without knowing that they are paupers. This is impossible when they are kept in special institutions, because they feel that their mode of life somehow differs from that of their neighbours outside. The grand merit of the Sheffield system is that the children are thereby prevented from ever coming within the workhouse walls, and if the experiment proves to be successful the inauguration of it on the present occasion would mark a red-letter day in their social history.

THE HEALTH OF THE POPE.

THE customary good health enjoyed by the Pope has not, we regret to say, been maintained. The wave of cold that has passed over Italy has had an unfavourable effect on the octogenarian Pontiff, insomuch that on the morning of the 7th inst., which was raw and rainy, his body physician, the Commendatore Dr. Lapponi, forbade him to leave his private apartments. Catarrhal symptoms had already declared themselves when this precautionary measure was taken, and so Dr. Lapponi, fully cognisant of the excessive labour his illustrious patient is apt to impose on himself, particularly in the season of Advent, deemed it prudent to restrict the Pontiff's business to his "affari ordinari," in the transaction of which he received, as stated, in his private apartments, the prelates deputed *ad hoc* and two cardinals. In consequence of this enforced interruption of arrangements in progress the Consistory will not be held sooner than the March of next year, at which (our correspondent at Rome incidentally informs us) the cardinals to be created will be limited to three Italians (Ferrata, Jacobini, and Nocella), two Frenchmen, and one Spaniard.

SUFFERING LONDON AS A RECRUITING GROUND.

THE Vicar of Old Ford, in East London, sends a communication to the *Globe*, *apropos* of the subject of what becomes of our Board School children. Speaking from long experience, he says that thousands of boys and girls can obtain little or no employment when they leave school, and only serve to swell the criminal and idle ranks of London streets, or the list of sick applicants for admission into its hospitals. At the same time there is a constant complaint about the scarcity of army recruits and the immaturity of so many of our young soldiers. Now that the State has to pay for the education, and philanthropy largely for the food and raiment, of these classes, why should not the former have some claim to their services for national ends? The State has stood *in loco parentis* to a large number of these boys, and if many of them were only given country air, food, raiment, and some physical training they would make excellent soldiers and sailors, instead of growing up idle and ignorant, with every inducement to juvenile crime. As things are at present we neither begin at the right end nor apply our rates and taxes to the wisest and most judicious purposes in this respect. Large sums of money are diverted in directions which are

less worthy in themselves and less necessary to the welfare of our social organism. One of our main objects should be to train our youth in order to make good citizens of them, and afford them, as far as practicable, a fair start in life. Board school education is, no doubt, very good in its way, but it is not everything. To educate boys and girls in these schools, and then to turn them broadcast on our streets, vainly attempting to obtain a livelihood which they cannot procure, is only to increase their discontent and unhappiness, and not at all the way to make them into good law-abiding citizens. The law compels parents to send their children to Board schools, and for the real or assumed good of the commonwealth interferes with the liberty of the subject in various directions. Philanthropy supplements the aid of the State and largely provides for the sick and indigent. It is, of course, quite right that this should be so, but it is conceivable that the growth and development of this system may reach a stage when the liberty and responsibility of the poorest of Her Majesty's subjects will be represented as a liberty to bring children into the world that their parents need not provide for, because the Poor-laws and philanthropy have accepted the responsibility of doing so. If some of the poorer children could be taken from the East-end of London and transferred to institutions, camps, and training-ships, with a view to their entering the naval and military services, the keen edge of labour competition, leading to destitution, crime, and sickness, would be dulled and the services of the State proportionately benefited. It seems but reasonable that those who have discharged the responsibilities which ordinarily devolve upon parents should have some claim on the services of those whom they have brought up and educated.

THE PATHOLOGY OF OPTIC NEURITIS.

IN the recently issued volume of the Transactions of the Ophthalmological Society there is an interesting and valuable contribution by Dr. James Taylor bearing on this unsolved problem. It was pointed out some time ago by Mr. Victor Horsley¹ that, as a rule, optic neuritis associated with intra-cranial tumour subsides after pressure has been relieved by trephining and opening the dura mater, even when the tumour could not be reached. Dr. Taylor succinctly quotes a number of cases of optic neuritis due to intra-cranial tumour which had been trephined at the National Hospital for the Paralysed and Epileptic. There were six cases in which tumours of the cerebral cortex were removed, and in all the neuritis subsided. Later the growth recurred in three cases and caused the death of the patients, but in none of these was there any return of the optic neuritis discernible with the ophthalmoscope up to the time of death. In three other cases pressure was relieved by trephining, but the tumour was not removed, and in these also the neuritis began to subside at once and had completely disappeared in two of them before they passed out of observation. We have here a clear demonstration of the paramount importance of pressure in keeping up optic neuritis when present. Taken by itself, it might also be held to be conclusive that optic neuritis was caused by pressure; but, as Dr. Taylor is careful to point out, there are many facts which cannot be reconciled with this theory. He quotes, for instance, the absence of optic neuritis in some cases of large, slowly growing tumour within the skull; and we may add that in cases of fairly rapidly growing tumours it may occur only as a final symptom. Enormous intra-cranial pressure is often met with in the non-tuberculous basic meningitis of young children, in which optic neuritis is decidedly rare. Besides, there are many cases of optic neuritis indistinguishable by the ophthalmoscope from that produced by intra-cranial tumour,

¹ Brit. Med. Jour., 1893, vol. ii., p. 1365.