

oil in gelatine capsules after each meal, to be taken with a glass of milk, the quantity to be gradually increased until from one to two drachms of the oil are taken daily, but few patients can take as much as two drachms daily without suffering from diarrhoea. At the same time the patient is bathed every second day with warm water and soap, and the oil is warmed and well rubbed into the skin over the entire body, including the ulcers and maculæ.

#### THE INFECTIOUS DISEASE (NOTIFICATION) ACT.

IN view of the constant requests we receive for advice as to difficulties under the Infectious Disease (Notification) Act—and the number of cases where difficulties have arisen has become considerable and shows no sign of abatement—we have prepared a statement embodying the decisions and published opinions of the Local Government Board on this subject, a first instalment of which will be found on p. 171 of our present issue.

#### DEATH UNDER NITROUS OXIDE GAS DUE TO TIGHT-LACING.

MORE than one fatality from tight-lacing has recently been noticed in our columns. In all conditions in which free respiration becomes a necessity if the vital processes are to be carried on tight-lacing means death. Of all states that in which a patient takes an anæsthetic is the one when absolute freedom of breathing is a necessity. Unhappily, but few know this elementary fact in physiology, and hence the sad death of a girl who had taken nitrous oxide gas at a dentist's rooms, and while recovering from its influence had a fatal attack of syncope. The statement is made that her stays were five inches too small for her natural body, a disparity of shape which we imagine the dentist might have seen and acted upon before he ventured to give the unfortunate girl nitrous oxide gas.

#### THE METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY DURING DECEMBER, 1894.

DR. FRANKLAND, in his December report on the condition of the London water supplies, states that on Dec. 10th the Thames at Hampton was turbid and pale yellow in colour, but otherwise it was chemically in excellent condition. Bacterially the same water was of very inferior quality. As delivered by the five companies drawing their supplies from the Thames the water was in every case efficiently filtered, though owing to the previous impounding of flood water it was, on the whole, less pure organically than the untreated river water passing the intakes at the time the samples were taken for analysis. The bacterial improvements effected by the various Thames companies ranged from 99.21 per cent. in the case of the Grand Junction to 99.96 in the case of the West Middlesex. The water as delivered both by the New River and the East London companies was efficiently filtered, but it was slightly inferior to the unfiltered water in respect of organic purity. The bacterial improvement averaged 99.39 per cent.

#### THE DIFFUSION OF SMALL-POX.

IN London there was a slight increase in the number of small-pox attacks last week, these being 11, whilst 8 were admitted to the institutions of the Metropolitan Asylums Board, leaving 28 patients under treatment. Birmingham was free from fatal cases last week, but experienced fresh attacks to nearly a score, 13 cases being admitted to hospital, leaving 67 therein at the close of the week, some neighbouring districts also having suffered invasion. There were 3 registered deaths in Liverpool, where small-pox has shown a slight disposition to increase, some score of attacks occurring, and the adjacent borough

of Bootle would seem to have had cases also last week, several being reported towards the close. In Edinburgh there were 15 registered deaths last month, with a serious recrudescence of the disease, which was fatal to the extent of 3.4 per cent. of the total mortality. Glasgow has during the present month had experience of the malady, but prompt removal of the patients to hospital has, it is hoped, stayed the disease. Dublin, after a heavy fall in the number of admissions to hospital from 113 to 32 in the concluding fortnight of December, had again an alarming increase in the first week of this month, no less than 71 admissions being chronicled, with 16 deaths. Of the 5 registered deaths 2 of adults were in vaccinated persons, and the remaining 3 in young persons all unvaccinated, aged respectively five weeks and twelve and sixteen years. The close of the week found 170 patients under treatment, exclusive of 121 convalescents.

#### DR. THOMAS GORDON HAKE.

THE connexion between medicine and letters—a connexion which an abstract of an interesting paper<sup>1</sup> by Mr. Simeon Snell printed in our columns recently showed to be not so rare as is generally supposed—was not much exemplified in the work of the late Dr. Thomas Gordon Hake, the poet, for, roughly speaking, Dr. Hake never practised at all, and, unlike Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, he made no use of his medical knowledge in his beautiful and imaginative verse. Dr. Hake was a personal friend of the late Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Mr. Algernon Charles Swinburne, and for these reasons, if no other, will always be classed in the popular mind as a pre-Raphaelite; but he took no active part in the promulgation of the tenets of that remarkable band of successful revolutionaries. Yet the titles alone of some of his poems, "The Serpent Play: a Divine Pastoral," and "Maiden Ecstasy," for example, show that he derived his inspiration from similar sources. Dr. Hake was considerably older than Rossetti, having reached the age of eighty-six when he died on Friday last (Jan. 11th), and was in enjoyment of a Civil List pension in recognition of his merit as a poet.

#### HOSPITALS AND PORT DUES IN THE EAST.

THE Chamber of Commerce of Liverpool has petitioned the Foreign Office for British shipping to be relieved of the hospital dues paid at the ports of Constantinople and Smyrna. It appears that Her Majesty's Consul-General at Constantinople levies dues on British ships at the rate of about one-third of a penny for every registered ton, so as to defray the cost of the British Seamen's Hospital in that city. This brings in about £5000 a year, but the hospital does not cost more than £3000 annually; consequently, since 1888 a surplus of about £14,000 has accumulated. At Smyrna the hospital tax is equal to 1½d. per ton, bringing in an average of £1414, and the Smyrna hospital costs an annual average of £1079, so it is reckoned that a surplus of £1900 is in hand, thus making, for the two ports in the space of five years, a saving of £16,000. Under these circumstances, and considering the very severe competition from which British shipping interests suffer, it is urged that the hospital dues actually levied in these two ports should be reduced or abolished. In this matter we have at present before us only one side of the question. We are very pleased indeed to hear that so large a reserve fund has been accumulated. This speaks well for the management of these hospitals, and it suggests that there is some useful scheme to which these sums will be ultimately applied. Galata is one of the most unhealthy quarters of Constantinople, and we know that at Smyrna it is proposed to remove the

<sup>1</sup> THE LANCET, Dec. 8th and 15th, 1894.