

It was favoured by good weather, a wide sympathy, and crowds of sightseers. In Ireland bazaars are popular, and every few years it is possible to conduct one on a scale of great splendour as this was. Every county had a committee, and there were elaborate stalls, cafés, and dancing halls, and the other arrangements which are essential to the success of such an undertaking. It is hoped that a substantial addition has been made to the hospital funds. About 50,000 persons passed the turnstiles in five days.

IRISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

The annual general meeting of the Irish Medical Association will be held in Sligo on Tuesday, June 8th, when the chair will be taken by Sir William Smyly, President of the Association.

Special Correspondence.

VIENNA.

Morbidity and Mortality in Vienna.—Food of the People of Vienna.

THE report of the Board of Health for 1908 contains some very interesting figures regarding the public health and mortality in this city. The general health is improving, and the expectation of life has been steadily increasing since 1873. The number of deaths in the past year was a little over 35,000, or about 17 per thousand, with a population of two millions. But an analysis of the causes of death gives a good illustration of the importance of infantile mortality in the records of large cities. More than 27 per cent. of the deaths are those of infants under 1 year of age, while 8 per cent. are those of children from 2 to 5 years, so that about one-third (32 per cent.) of all persons who died belonged to the lowest age. Twenty-five years ago 38 per cent. of the deaths came under this heading. The constant remarkable diminution of infant mortality is a most gratifying feature of the modern endeavours to reduce the loss of young lives—*gouttes de lait*, mothers' associations, free milk distribution. As regards the causes, tuberculosis is responsible for 19 per cent. of the total number of deaths, infectious diseases for 11 per cent.; disorders of the intestinal canal, excluding neoplasms, caused 7 per cent. Only 29 persons died of typhoid fever (forty years ago typhus was an every-day affection), thanks to the splendid water supply of Vienna. All cases could be traced to a source outside the town. Brain disease and neoplasms were rather less fatal last year than a few years ago. This, however, may be accidental. Special attention has been paid to diphtheria. The number of cases does not vary considerably, but the mortality has been found to be less than 10 per cent., even in hospitals, where only serious cases are received. The absence of deaths from small-pox is also noteworthy; nearly the whole population, with insignificant exceptions, is now vaccinated, thanks to the scare in 1907. On the whole, the health of Vienna is fairly satisfactory, especially as the tendency to improvement is steady.

For about two years the nature of the daily food of the people of Vienna has altered appreciably, partly from a change of taste, partly from an increase in the price of various articles of food, especially meat. The latter has become more than 30 per cent. dearer, when compared with 1902, and it is still going up. The report of the market board shows that there is a decided fall in the sale, and therefore consumption, of beef, whilst pork is more favoured. On the other hand, the increased consumption of eggs, potatoes, milk, and flour shows that large numbers of the population have adopted a more vegetarian mode of life. It may be doubted, however, whether this is done from any other reason than economy. The conditions are manifest enough to arouse public attention, and a deterioration of the national physique is justly feared. Therefore all public corporations have taken up the matter, and Government and municipalities are asked to bring about a change of the present policy, which makes the poor man's meat and bread dear, without enabling him, by better pay, to procure it in sufficient quantity for his family. The "antiagrarian" movement is spreading fast, and it is hoped that it will succeed in bringing ordinary food once more within the reach of the consumer.

Correspondence.

THE DOCTOR AS A VICARIOUS PHILANTHROPIST.

SIR,—I have at different times and in divers places urged on my professional brethren that if they take up a determined stand they will secure that recognition and reward for their professional services to which they are entitled.

Here is a case in point:

At 7 o'clock last night a group of men brought a boy into my surgery, saying he had been run over by a cab. I asked of them, "Who guarantees to pay my fee for attending to the boy?" There was no answer. I then asked the cabman if he would not guarantee my fee on behalf of his employer, and he declined to do so. I then ordered the boy to be taken to the infirmary. The boy was taken away, and a hostile and threatening crowd gathered outside my surgery, cursing me for not attending to the accident. Five minutes later the boy was brought back by two policemen, and I said, "I refuse to attend, unless my fee is guaranteed."

One of the policemen said he would do so on behalf of the police, whereupon I attended to the boy. When the crowd and the boy had gone, the police remained to get particulars of the injuries.

In the course of the conversation I referred to the readiness of the public to call on the doctor for his help and of their unwillingness to pay the doctor's fee, and I was staggered to learn that the supposed cabman whom I asked to guarantee my fee in the first instance was the owner of the cab and the son of a large hiring proprietor.

The fee I shall get is a very small one, no doubt, but I have done a great deal for the vindication of a principle, upon which I wish more of my professional brethren would act. We have all suffered from being called to accidents, in having our clothes destroyed and our convenience set at naught; and when we have given freely of our physical powers, our professional skill, and our lint and bandages, we have all been turned into sad philosophers when liability was repudiated all round.

The payment of the doctor for street accidents is but a small phase of the social question which could be so easily settled, but which never will until the profession is united.—I am, etc.,

Glasgow, May 27th.

J. WISHART KERR.

RURAL DISTRICT NURSING ASSOCIATIONS.

SIR,—The attention of the Chairman of the Central Midwives Board having been drawn to a letter signed "G. P.," appearing on pages 1153 and 1154 of your issue of May 8th, the letter was considered by the board at a meeting held yesterday.

I am directed to inform you that the board is prepared to investigate the matter if the writer of the letter will communicate with me.—I am, etc.,

G. W. DUNCAN,
Secretary.

Caxton House, Westminster, London, S.W.,
May 28th.

PAYING PATIENTS AT VOLUNTARY HOSPITALS.

SIR,—It is to be hoped that this subject will receive careful consideration before the Association is definitely committed upon it, for it is of great importance to a large section of the public, no less than to those members of the profession who are attached to public hospitals.

The resolution passed by the Liverpool and Birkenhead Joint Divisions, as reported in the *JOURNAL* of May 29th (SUPPLEMENT, p. 327), disapproves of the practice of treating paying patients at public hospitals because it is wrong in principle and unjust. If it were true that hospitals compete with private nursing homes by charging the same fees or lower ones to those who can afford to pay more, the principle would be wrong indeed. But what does really take place is that patients who require treatment at an institution and whose means do not allow them to go to a private nursing home but who on the other hand are not poor enough to claim charity make use of an arrangement which is a great convenience to them while causing no loss to the hospitals. The arrangement may be regarded something like that upon which are based self-supporting