apprenticeship with an employer, whether by way of manual labour, clerical work, or otherwise, and whether the contract is expressed or implied, is oral or in writing.

It will be seen from this that medical assistants and dispensers, clerks, shop assistants, and travellers, as well as workmen of all kinds, grooms and gardeners, will be able to claim under the proposed Act. I suppose also curates, tutors, and governesses, who are certainly not domestic servants, will also be able to claim.

From the foregoing it will be seen that if the Act comes into force on Jan. 1st, 1907, as is proposed, a very large number of medical men will have to insure, unless they like to take the chance of being rather heavily hit. Luckily, I believe the rates of insurance will not be prohibitive, but after the passing of the Act certainly it will be wise to inquire what premium will cover any individual risk and to obtain a policy of indemnity if possible. I would urge, however, that until the Bill has passed medical men should retain an open mind and not in any way promise to insure with any particular agent or insurance office. The rates of premium have yet to be fixed and many questions will arise that will need careful consideration.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

ALBERT BENTHALL, F.R.C.P. Edin., &c.
South Hampstead, N.W., Nov. 1st, 1906.

"THE PROFESSION" IN PUBLIC ESTIMATION.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The profession owes Sir Dyce Duckworth no small debt for plainly stating its social decadence. If he suggests no remedy, it is perhaps because the remedy is obvious. The British public, in spite of all its present literary shortcomings, retains a wholesome reverence for general education, and a profession whose standard of general education at entry is no better than that of the pharmaceutical chemist and veterinary surgeon need feel no surprise or displeasure at being classed with its literary equals. A great deal of nonsense is often talked about the educational value of the medical curriculum and about the mind deriving an equal, though a different, culture from "science" and from "the humanities." The effects of the two on the mind are absolutely distinct. To attempt to replace "the humanities" by "science" is just as sensible as the reverse process, and is much the same as to discard one's necktie because one has bought new bootlaces. "An educated man" in the old English sense will never be produced by cutting up frogs or making smells in a laboratory. He can only be produced—as he always has been produced—by a study of the experience of the past, of the greatest thoughts and deeds and lives of the race, and by letting the mind dwell most, during its most impressionable period, on noble and beautiful things. If the profession wishes to be thought a profession of "gentlemen" let it insist that those now entering it shall have the traditional "education of a gentleman." Much as the General Medical Council has done to improve medical practice in this country, its deplorable weakness, in permitting the educational, and therefore the social, decadence of the noblest of callings, is something which cannot be condoned.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Exeter, Nov. 3rd, 1906.

W. GORDON.

THE WORKING OF THE SALE OF FOOD AND DRUGS ACTS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The annotation on this subject in THE LANCET of Nov. 3rd appears to require both a correction and an amplification. The correction refers to the alleged "difficulty of" a private purchaser "complying with the requirements of the Act in regard to the formula to be observed at the time when the purchase is made." Your contributor has lost sight of the important judgment given in *Buckler v. Wilson*, (1896) 1 Q. B. 83, in which it was clearly laid down that the purchaser of a commodity *for consumption* can send the same, or part thereof, for analysis and take proceedings under the Acts, without going through the "formula" of declaration, division of sample, &c., prescribed by Section 14 of the Act of 1875. Moreover, it appears that it is not necessary that the analysis should be made by the public

analyst of the district as required by Section 12 of the same Act. A lucid annotation on the point, too long to be quoted here, is to be found in Bell and Scrivener's "Sale of Food and Drugs Acts" (p. 38, ed. 1900), which makes the above contention clear and gives a list of the cases prior to and since the case quoted. The amplification which I would suggest is a reference to the provisions of Section 14 of the Act of 1899, under which the purchaser of any commodity (food or drug) can obtain the services of the local inspector, who will *on request* take a sample of the commodity on delivery at the purchaser's house. I have frequently directed attention to these provisions and think it is a misfortune that so little (practically no) use is made of them. That there is scope for work under the section is, I think, amply demonstrated by the figures given in your annotation.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Maida Vale, W., Nov. 3rd, 1906.

REGINALD DUDFIELD.

* * Our correspondent is right. It was decided in 1896 that the provisions of Section 14 do not apply to the case of a private purchaser *purchasing for consumption*. When, however, a sample is taken by an official purchaser for analysis the provisions of Section 14 must be strictly complied with. We agree with our correspondent and repeat what we said in the annotation referred to that "it is a pity that 'customers' do not more often submit samples to analysis."—ED. L.

INFANTILE MORTALITY AND GOATS' MILK.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In my paper on Infantile Mortality and Goats' Milk published in your issue of Nov. 3rd I stated that the infantile death-rate of Italy was 66 per cent. less than that of our own country and that of Norway was 44 per 1000. I find that my information was incorrect and that the figures should be 14 per cent. above and 75 per 1000 respectively. These alterations do not affect, however, the validity of my arguments in support of the feeding of infants on goats' milk as opposed to sterilised depôt milk.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Glasgow, Nov. 5th, 1906.

WILLIAM WRIGHT.

ANOTHER CASE OF ACTINOMYCOSIS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—It is rather significant that a day or two after I had corrected the proof of a paper on a case of actinomycosis of the cheek I should meet with another case of the same disease also on the cheek. This appears to offer a proof that it is necessary to be familiar with the external appearances of the swelling caused by this disease in order to recognise the disease in its earliest manifestations. I shall give a brief history of the case and shall no doubt be able to supplement these notes at a later date when the patient has had an opportunity of benefiting from the administration of iodide of potassium.

Last August the patient, a man, aged 22 years, noticed a swelling on the inner side of the left cheek which after a week or ten days discharged into the mouth; the swelling diminished somewhat in size but did not altogether disappear; it left two hard nodules on either side of the opening. About Oct. 17th he noticed that the induration around the lumps was increasing in size and shortly afterwards two nodular masses appeared on the outer side of the cheek midway between the upper and lower teeth; these gradually became larger until the lower one began to soften and point outwards. He consulted me on the evening of Oct. 25th and the following appearances were noted. His height was 5 feet 4 inches and he weighed 8 stones 4 pounds. The teeth on the lower jaw were decayed, especially on the right side; on the left side two lower molars were missing; one rather rugged stump was situated close to the area of the early abscess in the mouth; the mucous membrane was puckered and cicatricial between the upper and lower teeth. Externally there was a large indurated swelling situated between the two jaws and extending down to the lower border of the lower jaw, irregular in outline, and having two nodular swellings of about the size of a small nut situated one above the other;

the lower swelling gave fluctuation on palpation and evidently contained pus. The patient refused to have the abscess opened, so he was ordered to apply fomentations of boric lint and return next morning. Early next morning he reported himself; the abscess was almost through the skin and slight pressure was all that was necessary to get a specimen of pus. This was characteristic; it contained large numbers of yellow granules; a specimen was taken to Dr. G. L. Eastes who reported as follows: "This pus contains streptothrix actinomycotica."

On Oct. 26th the suspicious stump was extracted under nitrous oxide anæsthesia; the bleeding was fairly copious and continued during the night but had ceased by the following morning. The patient was at once put on to iodide of potassium, five-grain doses every four hours; this was increased next day to ten grains. In three days the swelling has diminished considerably in size, no doubt as a result of the free discharge of pus from the small abscess which opened externally. The temperature was elevated in the evening to 102° F. and is usually about 100° in the morning. The lungs and other organs so far as one can judge appear to be normal. The prognosis is favourable and the patient should soon show marked signs of improvement.

The interesting point in this case is the source of infection and as a result of very careful cross examination I obtained the following facts which I give for what they are worth. The patient has lived in London for over three years; the first two years were spent in Battersea Training College for Teachers; the last year has been spent for the greater part in Tottenham. September and October he has resided in Highgate. He has been in the habit of spending his vacations at his home in Brightlingsea. From June 2nd to 5th he spent a short holiday at home and at that time he had no knowledge of having anything the matter with his mouth. He states that during the hot weather he had been in the habit of plucking stalks of grass and grain and chewing them thoroughly and recollects having on several occasions pushed the stiff stalk between his teeth. He has been in the habit of doing so for years at odd times. His next visit to his home was early in August and it was while there that he had the abscess and discharge in the mouth.

Obviously the period of infection cannot be associated with the August visit, but there are strong suspicions that if he were infected in this way it might have taken place during the short visit in June. It is also possible that he may have been infected at an earlier date and in a different manner, but I give the facts as I found them and am anxious to attach due importance to them. This is the one case in four which I have had under my care where I have been able to get any history of straw or grain chewing on the part of the patient. It would be interesting to find if the disease is at all prevalent amongst cattle in the vicinity of Brightlingsea and no doubt when this letter is published some of your readers in that locality will be good enough to supply me with information on this point. If by chance the disease is detected in any part of the country it might also be possible to get the organism in its vegetable host. Apologising for troubling you at such length,

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Highgate, N., Oct. 30th, 1906.

ROBERT KNOX.

FREE AND COMPULSORY FEEDING OF ALL SCHOOL CHILDREN AT VERCELLI.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL SANITARY COMMISSIONER.)

Vercelli, Italy, October.

IN the Fabian tract No. 120, entitled "After Bread, Education," p. 9, occurs the following passage: "There is a little town in Italy, Vercelli, where this policy is carried out with logical completeness. There attendance at meals is as compulsory as attendance at the school, unless a medical certificate is produced to show that feeding would be injurious to the child." This was so startling an announcement that I at once determined to seize the first opportunity of verifying the facts on the spot, particularly as the pamphlet in question gives no further information on the subject. Vercelli is just half way on the main line of railway between Turin and Milan. There was consequently no difficulty in proceeding to that town after I had completed my visit to the Milan exhibition, schools, and slaughter-houses. Vercelli is what in England would be described as a sleepy little town with the grass growing up between the pavement stones of some of the streets. But it has a cathedral and, what is more interesting, a church dating from 1219 and the early Gothic of the interior is well preserved. The last edition of Baedeker sets down the population of Vercelli at 17,900, but I found that the inhabitants were quite indignant at this assertion, maintaining that 30,000 would be nearer to the correct figure. In any case there are many educational establishments, and twice a week the town does seem well peopled, for these are the market days. Farmers from many miles around then come to buy or to sell, notably the rice which is extensively grown in this part of the country. Considering the very rural character of the town, the absence of any large industry, and the slight contact of its population with the great centres of political thought and activity, it was scarcely to be expected that such a place as Vercelli would take any very daring initiative such as is suggested by the heading of this article. It has, however, done so and this as the result of party politics. Such political considerations are outside the scope of those who deal with the question from a purely scientific point of view, but their results demand attention.

In pursuit of my inquiry several documents were submitted to me and notably the report sent by the Vercelli municipality to the Educational Department of the Milan exhibition. They were far too lengthy to attempt anything more than a brief summary of some of the leading points. From these I gather that on April 19th, 1900, the municipality of Vercelli appointed a special committee with the mayor for president. Signor Pietro Lucca, the representative of Vercelli in the Italian Parliament, was the chief instigator of this measure and he explained that the committee was nominated so as to study how education as well as instruction could be imparted to the children attending the primary schools. The law rendered education compulsory but it left the local authorities free to select the means by which education was to be enforced. The debate and the arguments were all devoted to the question of education as distinct from instruction. The instruction given was judged satisfactory, but the education was very deficient. Attendance at school was obligatory, yet some parents were too poor to send their children. They could not provide them with food or with books. Therefore measures had already been taken to supply books and stationery, at least in the elementary classes. The principle of assistance in kind had thus been established; there was no legal objection to its more extensive application. By the aid of municipal subventions and of charitable donations the poorest children had received some instruction and the object now was to educate them. The committee then came to the conclusion that the most practical method of education would be to provide a midday meal. It was not a question, as in England, of starving children and of physical degeneration, nor was it a question of mere instruction, of the mere learning of lessons; it was a question of education in the higher sense of the term, of moral education, of education in the art of *savoir vivre*. The teachers had urged that during class hours there was no time or opportunity to educate the children in the principles of etiquette and

A DEMONSTRATION OF HYPNOTISM.—A demonstration of hypnotism was given by Dr. Edwin Lancelot Ash at a meeting of the Psycho-Therapeutical Society held at Bloomsbury Mansions, Bloomsbury, W.C., on Nov. 5th. The audience which was a fairly large one, included members of the medical profession. The lecturer, after giving a general description of hypnotic phenomena, placed his subject, a young man, in a trance and showed that he was amenable to suggestions offered to him. Dr. Ash warned his audience against the danger of treating diseased conditions of the body by hypnotic methods unless the operator was qualified to diagnose disease. At the present time, he said, we were only playing, in his opinion, with a great force which we did not understand and which we were not able to control fully. Much harm was done by ignorant people using hypnotism in cases where surgical interference was necessary and in this way not only was discredit brought upon the investigation of hypnotic and allied methods but lives were actually sacrificed. He pointed out that the diseases which could be influenced by suggestive methods were the so-called functional diseases and not those associated with organic changes.