pompous and dogmatic on the ventilation question. I once went, at the instigation of some members, to inspect the ventilation arrangements of the Victorian Parliament Houses, architecturally one of the finest buildings in the world. The first thing I noticed was a row of holes somewhat like spittoons between the Treasury bench and the table. I was gravely informed that carbonic acid being heavier than air fell to the bottom and that these holes were so placed as to let it escape and keep the Ministers in a purer atmosphere than the rest. I was quite satisfied and left hurriedly.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

D. BOSWELL REID, Brigade-Surgeon-Lieutenant-Colonel, Victorian Military Forces (retired list);

For 30 years chief surgeon of the Geelong Hospital, Australia; formerly Demonstrator of Anatomy and Operative Surgery, University College, London.

April 25th, 1903.

A NEW ORDER OF NURSES.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—May I, as a nurse, crave a portion of your valuable space to say a few words in answer to "R. A. R.'s" letter on the above subject in THE LANCET of April 4th, p. 991? It is only natural for a medical man to wish to provide "a scientific practical nurse" for patients under his care at a price within their means, but has he thought of the nurse's side of the question? A "scientific practical nurse" cannot be produced without at least three years' training; she cannot enter on this training before from 23 to 25 years of age at the best training schools, 21 at the minor hospitals. It follows that she cannot begin to earn her living as a trained nurse until she is from 24 to 28 years of age at the earliest. At 40 years of age she will find it difficult, and at 45 almost impossible, to obtain work as a nurse. Her working days are at the longest from 12 to 20 years and in those years she must save enough to provide for herself when they are past. If during the whole 20 years she were never out of work, took all her own fees, and had but four weeks' holiday a year, the utmost she could earn at £2 2*s.* a week would be, in round figures, £100 per annum. If, after paying for her holiday, clothing, and everything else, she saved £50 a year she would do wonders and have at the end of 20 years' hard and continuous work the sum of £1000, bringing her in at 3 per cent. just £30 a year to stand between her and starvation. But to do even this she must never leave off work for illness, family calls, or any other reason, during the whole 20 years and must always be able to command £2 2*s.* a week. The great majority of nurses have nothing but their own earnings to depend on; many help to support relatives; can they, ought they to be asked to, work for less than a sum which, even with the greatest care, can only just produce enough to keep them out of the workhouse when too old to work any more?

Cheap nursing must either be unskilled labour or if skilled must be provided for by charity, either directly by subscribing to institutions for providing nurses at reduced fees to people who cannot afford to pay the nurse a living wage or indirectly by supporting the nurse when her working days are over, who has worked for fees which have made saving an impossibility.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

April 10th, 1903. A NURSE.

CERTIFYING FACTORY SURGEONS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I shall be glad to hear the opinions of certifying factory surgeons as to the fees paid under the present Factory Act. In my opinion the fees are not only extremely low, but derogatory to the profession. The sixpenny fee for each examination at the surgeon's house is surely degrading and in the case of accidents 2*s.* 6*d.* to perhaps 5*s.* for a thorough investigation at the works, followed by a visit to the injured person and a long written report, appears most inadequate remuneration for the time and labour expended. If the general opinion is in accordance with these views, is it not possible for the Association of Certifying Factory Surgeons to draw up a petition signed by all certifying surgeons and to approach the Home Office with a view to improving the position?—I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

April 25th, 1903. M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.

THE FOURTEENTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF MEDICINE.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

THE OPENING CEREMONY.

Madrid, April 24th.

THERE can be no doubt that a large theatre, like, for instance, Covent-garden or Drury-lane in London, lends itself admirably to such a ceremony as the opening of a great international congress. Everyone present must have been greatly impressed by the wonderful aspect of the interior of the Teatro Real on Thursday afternoon, April 23rd. All the scenery and side wings had been removed from the stage and it was walled round to its farthest extremity with magnificent tapestry. The carpet at the farthest extremity, which was of about the size of a small house, was of a gorgeous crimson tint, with the arms of Spain in the centre. This formed a resplendent background to the scene. The flooring of the stage sloped down to the stalls and on to the extreme end of the pit, making one vast sloping surface. In about the centre of the stage three long tables, placed so as to be slightly arched and covered with red velvet and gold braid, constituted the presidential bureau. In front a space was left clear; behind and to the right and left were stalls for the official delegates and representatives of foreign Governments. On the side of the open space that faced the Royal box a tribune or small platform had been erected which the speakers were called upon to ascend by the major-domo or reader of the protocol who was arrayed in a magnificent uniform and whose imposing presence added much to the impressiveness of the ceremony. At the centre of the table sat the Prime Minister, Señor Silvela, wearing the blue scarf or band of the Order of Carlos III., supported on his right by the Minister of Public Instruction, who wore the crimson scarf of Cristo de Portugal. Then there were Professor Brouardel with the Grand Cross of Isabel the Catholic, Dr. Calvo with the Order of Alfonso XII., and Dr. Cortejarena in grand uniform. On the left of the Prime Minister sat the Bishop of Madrid-Alcalá, Professor von Leyden, and Dr. Dubois, official representative of Belgium. All round on the stage were the leading notabilities of the Congress and among them the red gowns of the English attracted great attention, materially assisting in giving life and colour to the scene.

In front of the stage and throughout the whole house every seat and every inch of standing room were densely packed with members of the Congress and any number of other persons who somehow or other had gained admittance. It was intended that all the members of the Congress who were not on the stage should be in the body of the house—namely, the part usually occupied by the stalls and pit. But this was not done and consequently many members of the Congress were driven for want of room right up into the gallery, where they were crushed and crowded on those most uncomfortable seats which, during operatic performances, are occupied by what are popularly termed "the gods." Great was the heat and great was the sense of relief when, within a few minutes of the appointed hour, the strains of the Royal anthem announced the approach of the King Of course, when His Majesty Alphonso XIII. entered the Royal box, accompanied by the Queen Mother, the whole house rose and cheers were given in welcome of the Royal presence. After bowing acknowledgments the King took his seat and the Prime Minister at once opened the proceedings. He called upon Dr. Julian Calleja, President of the Congress, to read his inaugural address. Of course, Dr. Calleja's first remarks were to acknowledge gratefully and gracefully the help which the patronage of the King and Queen Mother had been to the organisers of the Congress. Then he addressed himself to the learned visitors from other countries, pointing out that the splendour and renown of many of the Spanish monarchs were founded on science. "The glories of our learned men and of the golden age of our history cannot be forgotten. Though some may ignore what we have done in the past our national genius is a genius possessing an ample spirit that can freely discern and day by day, more and more, it forms a centre full of life and toleration, of scientific harmony