

he adopts one of these little books. The same firm's calendars for the waistcoat-pocket are also neat. Letts's Diaries are probably known to most of our readers and are issued in the usual styles at a moderate cost. We can recommend especially the cloth-bound No. 10 Diary, which is of a handy size and contains a deal of useful information in the preface. In the same series Messrs. Cassell issue a small and compact medical diary reduced to its simplest form. Many of these publications of both firms carry with them a coupon insuring their holder against accident. Amongst the best medical diaries we have seen is that of Messrs. John Wright and Sons (Bristol), which has reached its seventeenth edition, and the chief feature of which is the ingenious insertion of half-leaves by which the record of a whole month's visits to 40 patients can be seen at one "opening" of the book. At the same time such comparison requires the utmost neatness of entry, and we should advise practitioners to look upon all pocket account-books of this class as useful note-books only, or at most, as day-books, and not be tempted to let them replace the ledger as a record of their professional transactions which may assume much importance in the event of the sale of a practice or of a legal dispute.

Months of the Year. By the Rev. PEMBERTON LLOYD. London: W. H. and L. Collingridge. 1909. Pp. 307. Price 5s. net.—The object of the reverend author in writing this book is so good that he somewhat disarms criticism from a literary point of view. A great admirer of rural England, and a profound believer in the value of the influences of the country upon the population, he has written a desultory book round the months of the year, telling the main characteristics of the plants and flowers that grace each season. Interspersed with this information are talks about the church festivals as they occur, and about the sports peculiar to the periods, the whole compost being permeated through and through with quotations from a wide range of reading. The author is a convinced and vehement believer that the salvation of England lies in the revivifying and reorganising of village life. Moreover, as a good clergyman he is confident that this village life—happy, contented, and dignified in its peace and culture as he would have it—must centre round the Established Church. Unfortunately the forces of sociology and political economy make many of us find the cry of "back to the land" one which cannot be shouted vehemently; while still more certain is it that if a clerical element is insisted upon in any such movement unanimity is lost. We do not think that this book, which is evidently the result of much labour—labour which the author has enjoyed, will bring him many adherents to his views, but apart from that he is to be congratulated on having incorporated in his pages so much pleasant and diversified reading.

JOURNALS AND MAGAZINES.

The Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine. Vol. III., No. 1. November, 1909. London: Longmans, Green, and Co. Price 7s. 6d. net.—Even though the Royal Society of Medicine is not satisfied with its house, the publication by which the scientific world judges it continues to be of a quality that does credit to it. In carefulness of editing, in type, paper, and illustrations, the first number of the new year shows no departure from the high standard set by its predecessors. A large part of it is occupied by the presidential addresses of the different sections, most of which have appeared, in abstract at least, in these columns. Dr. Leonard Williams's thoughtful address to the Balneological and Climatological Section, entitled "To Redress the Balance," comes first by alphabetical right, and in the same section Mr. J. J. Eyre writes on the Hygiology of Naples. The remaining presidential addresses reported

are by Dr. Samuel Sloan on Electro-Therapeutics in Gynaecology, in the Electro-Therapeutical Section; by Dr. James Niven on Poverty and Disease, a suggestive discourse, in the Epidemiological Section; by Dr. H. Macnaughton-Jones on Pain Associated with Disorders of the Female Genital Organs, in the Obstetrical and Gynaecological Section; by Mr. William Hern on the Relation of Dentistry to Other Branches of Medicine and its Bearing upon the Public Health in the Odontological Section, to which Mr. A. Hopewell-Smith contributes a paper on Infective Disease of the Jaws Associated with Absorption of the Teeth; by Mr. Rickman J. Godlee on Prognosis in Inflammatory Diseases of the Lungs and Pleura, commonly treated Surgically, in the Surgical Section; by Dr. F. W. Mott on the Present Position of the Neuron Doctrine in Relation to Neuro-Pathology in the Pathological Section, which is followed by a report from Mr. S. G. Shattock on a case of Rhabdomyoma of the Urinary Bladder. The Section for the Study of Disease in Children is occupied by clinical reports, following upon a paper on Subacute Liver Atrophy and Liver Pathology in Childhood, by Dr. A. Dingwall Fordyce. The Clinical and Dermatological Sections are also filled with case reports. In the Medical Section is Dr. Robert Maguire's paper on the Treatment of Oxalate Calculus which we published recently. In the Surgical Section is Dr. William B. Coley's paper on the Treatment of Inoperable Sarcoma by Bacterial Toxins, which aroused much interest at the time of its delivery; and in the Therapeutical and Pharmacological Section a discussion is opened by Sir T. Clifford Allbutt, followed by Professor William Osler on the Teaching of Therapeutics in Hospital Wards.

Looking Back.

FROM
THE LANCET, SATURDAY, Dec. 24th, 1831.

EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As your pages are frequently devoted to the communication of interesting subjects, not exclusively connected with physiology, I should feel obliged by your insertion of the following well-authenticated narrative, which, if it cannot be satisfactorily explained, may serve as a caution against rash vows, and that impious dissatisfaction which some express at the providential dispensations of that God, who governs all events with unerring wisdom.

The wife of a Mr. Higgins, a farmer of Baltonsborough, near Glastonbury, Somerset, having brought him three daughters in succession, and no son, he was so disconcerted at the repeated disappointment, that he vowed, should his next child be a daughter, he would never speak to her. On the approach of his wife's fourth confinement, he repeated this vow. To his great joy, his wife gave birth to a son, and nothing occurred to lessen his satisfaction, until the child began to speak. To his astonishment and distress he then found, that, while the boy would readily address his mother and sisters, and, indeed, any female, nothing could induce him to utter a word to his father, or any male person. This singularity continued during the whole of his father's life (30 years); entreaties, threats, or promises, were of no avail, and the unhappy man frequently bewailed, with tears, the distressing consequence of his rash vow.

On the death of Mr. Higgins, which happened about two months since, the young man, to the astonishment of all who knew him, began to speak fluently to males as well as females, although for thirty years previously he had never been heard to utter a word to any one of the former sex. Mr. Higgins had no other son; he is in good health, and is ready, as are his mother and sisters, and many other respectable persons, to attest the truth of this narrative.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Warminster, Dec. 9th, 1831. JOHN HOARE, M.R.C.S., &c.

The Editor of THE LANCET added the following cautious comment:—"We insert this communication as we received it, but offer no comment on its contents."

THE LANCET.

LONDON: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 25, 1909.

THE ANNUS MEDICUS 1909.

It is, perhaps, an arbitrary custom which leads us year by year to carry out a medical stock-taking at Christmas time, for if Science has no frontiers she assuredly knows no limitation of months or years. That Medicine has advanced during the last 12 months we have no doubt, though the time is too early to pick upon any given piece of recorded work and point to it as the beginning of a new principle or the embryo of a method of treatment with which great things will be wrought. Our task is to record rather than to criticise. Perhaps, indeed, the present stock-taking has left out of notice some innovation big with future hope, for a survey of such a nature, whatever pains be spent upon it, must necessarily fall short of completeness, but we are encouraged to continue the custom of our predecessors and to add another chapter to the history of modern medicine that has been compiled in these pages and in its present form for 40 years, nearly half the lifetime of THE LANCET. Year by year the chapters have grown longer, and space forbids us to make each of them more than an expanded index, but it is, we trust, a discriminating index. Each year, too, the record of medical events, not strictly scientific, becomes longer, as medicine and hygiene enter more prominently into the counsels of the nation and into the daily consideration of our countrymen, as is abundantly evident in this story of the Annus Medicus for 1909.

MEDICINE.

Tuberculosis.

THE principal medical event of the year, which we notice in a separate section, was the Sixteenth International Medical Congress held at Budapest. At that congress, which is fully noticed in another section, no definite pronouncement was made in regard to the treatment of pulmonary tuberculosis, and such would have, perhaps, been premature. The employment of tuberculin in small doses has been further adopted, the remedy being given either by the mouth or hypodermically, and the time of administering it being regulated by the temperature chart. Considerable success is claimed by this method, but the time that has elapsed since it was introduced is too short to allow of any definite conclusions being formed. The results, however, are decidedly encouraging, and more extended trials are certainly desirable.

Important suggestions have been made in respect to the prophylaxis of pulmonary tuberculosis. Two interesting official papers have been published—one, the report of the British delegates to the International Congress on Tuberculosis at Washington, and the other a memorandum by the medical officer of the English Local Government Board, which is intended to supplement the Public Health (Tuberculosis) Regulations, 1908. The delegates to the Washington Congress lay stress in their report upon the coördination

between public and charitable organisations, and it is doubtless desirable to make more use in this country of the several organisations which already exist. It may not be always practicable or desirable to institute dispensaries for the tuberculous, as has been done in more than one continental country, but it is an easier matter to adapt existing dispensaries to the necessity of the situation. The memorandum of the Local Government Board is intended primarily for the use of Poor-law medical officers who are now required to notify cases of tuberculosis coming under their care. The general scheme of the memorandum is one which we welcome, because many points, not all, for which we have contended in THE LANCET for many years are fully accepted. The absolute necessity is urged of differentiating between the acute infectious diseases and tuberculosis in the matter of infectivity, and the fact is emphasised that the infectivity of the latter is low and not improbably only operative under certain conditions of deprivation, overcrowding, or other eminently unwholesome circumstances. The emphasis laid in the memorandum upon the importance of doing nothing which will deter the patient from following his occupation is excellent. "Above all," it says, "the investigation must not pursue inquiries in a manner, or give information, that may prevent a consumptive patient from continuing to earn his livelihood." As a result of all the steps proposed the medical officer of the Local Government Board looks forward to a quicker decline in the death-rate from tuberculosis than has hitherto been experienced, although, he adds, "results cannot be measured with accuracy except after the lapse of a considerable number of years." The Tuberculosis Prevention (Ireland) Act encountered a good deal of opposition in its passage through Parliament, and was considerably modified in the process, but its operations are bound to be beneficent to the country.

The subject of tuberculosis in children is rightly attracting considerable attention. In a paper read before the Washington Congress, and subsequently published in our columns¹ Dr. THEODORE SHENNAN recorded some interesting statistics obtained as the result of an investigation of the post-mortem records of the Royal Edinburgh Hospital for Sick Children. 1085 cases came under review, of which 413 died from tuberculosis. These cases were examined in two series, the first containing 105 and the second 308 cases. 68 per cent. of the children were under five years of age. The lymphatic glands were tuberculous in 97 cases (92·4 per cent.) in the first series and in 243 cases (78·8 per cent.) in the second series. The mediastinal glands were more often affected than the abdominal glands, and dissemination took place more frequently, apparently, from the former group. Tuberculosis of the mediastinal glands was commonly unaccompanied by primary tuberculosis of the lungs, but was frequently accompanied by recent tuberculosis of these organs, in many cases evidently secondary to the gland tuberculosis. Primary ulceration of the intestines, in the absence of any previous excavation of the lungs, was frequently found. It was usually accompanied by caseation of lymphatic glands, mediastinal or abdominal, or both simultaneously. The tables drawn up by Dr. SHENNAN refer to children of the poorer classes, and it would be interesting to know in what respects, if at all, statistics dealing in a similar manner with children of the better classes would disagree with those given in the communication under consideration. Dr. J. ALLAN also published an article insisting on the importance of the early recognition of tuberculous mediastinal glands in children, so that by appropriate treatment the progress of the disease may be checked or cured. In the Address in Medicine delivered before the British Medical

¹ THE LANCET, Jan. 30th, 1909, p. 315.