

Review of Public Health Laws

The annual compilations of "State Laws and Regulations Pertaining to Public Health" for 1917 and 1918 have just been issued by the U. S. Public Health Service. They contain the text of all statutes on health subjects passed by the various state legislatures during the respective years. In 1918, thirty-two states enacted laws dealing with the prevention of venereal diseases, and more laws were passed on this phase than on any other subject pertaining to public health.

Foreign Letters**LONDON**

(From Our Regular Correspondent)

Jan. 10, 1920.

John Beattie Crozier

John Beattie Crozier, physician and distinguished philosopher, historian and political economist, has died in London at the age of 71 years. His reputation was made outside his profession, and his name is unknown to the great majority of its members, for few of them take interest in the highly intellectual work to which he devoted his life and for which he sacrificed himself. Born of a border family among the little Scottish colony of Galt, Canada, he was educated at Toronto University, where he took the degree of M.B. in 1872. From his earliest days he was interested in philosophy, and as he felt that he could not both pursue it and earn his livelihood as a physician in Canada, he came to London. Here he practiced for some years but not with much financial success. This was only to be expected, for he declined work which might have led to a good position because it interfered with his studies. At first he embraced the doctrine of evolution expounded by Herbert Spencer in his "First Principles," which seemed to show that religion and science are alike manifestations of a persistent, inscrutable force. But the later "Principles of Psychology" of that writer seemed to him an unmitigated and desolating materialism. He then studied the metaphysicians from Descartes to Hegel, but they seemed to him never to have established a true relation between mind and brain. His own difficulty was that while he accepted Spencer's account of mind as arising from molecular vibrations in the nervous system, he could not admit that virtue differed from vice, or right from wrong only in the number and complexity of these vibrations. On the contrary, he held that they differed in kind and represented an ideal in the mind which came from without and sat in judgment on all its thoughts and feeling. He embodied this view in an article entitled "God or Force," but no editor would take it. He then issued it as a pamphlet with articles on Carlyle, Emerson and Spencer, which made up a small book on "The Religion of the Future," published in 1880. It fell almost dead from the press. Undaunted, he undertook the more ambitious task of tracing the ideal through history and determining how far civilization was advanced by the factors of religion, government, science and material and social conditions. A study of previous writers convinced him that much help could not be obtained from Hegel, who attended only to the religious factor; from Comte, in spite of his three stages; from Buckle, whose doctrines had become obsolete, or even from Spencer, who made progress depend on abstract and impersonal laws rather than on concrete, human facts. He arrived at the conclusion that progress rested chiefly on material and social conditions, that government took its character from them, that things made their own morality, that improved dwellings and better education had effects which no mere teaching could achieve, that science was the only factor which amended the conditions and, by over-

throwing the religious philosophies opposed to it, made way for religion itself as the factor that completed the ideal. This survey appeared in 1885 as a volume entitled "Civilization and Progress," but it received no immediate attention. Three years later a demand for it arose, and eventually it reached a fourth edition and was translated into Japanese. His next important work was a "History of Intellectual Development," of which the first volume occupied him from 1892 to 1897. He endeavored to show that the course of thought from the Greeks onward largely followed laws. Reviewing the transitory forms of supernaturalism, he kept his belief in a coordinating power not ourselves making for righteousness. This book had an excellent reception. The government then came to his aid and awarded him a pension for his services to philosophy, and his old university, Toronto, conferred on him the degree of LL.D. He had planned a second volume on the connection between ancient and modern thought, but impaired eyesight prevented the necessary research and he turned to the completion of his autobiography, a most interesting work. On the advice of Lord Morley, he confined a further volume to the practical problems of reconstruction as affecting Great Britain, France and the United States in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In this book his main contention was that present ideals, if not to mislead or end in fanaticism, must be tested by the fate of the past ones, and that to avoid pitfalls statesmen ought to study the previous course of civilization. The *Times* described the book as the work of a man not only enlightened, but singularly open minded and impartial, who rarely wrote a page without a striking phrase or sentence. In a later work entitled "The Wheel of Wealth" he maintained against economists that production and consumption are continuously passing into one another in a circular movement. In 1911 appeared "Sociology Applied to Practical Politics," in which he maintained the great value of science in solving such problems as socialism, free trade and imperial preference. Then his sight no longer allowed any close research. In 1917 he published "Last Words on Great Issues," a remarkable survey of the democratic, economic, intellectual and religious movements brought about by the war, with a summary of his own creed. April 23, 1919, he received a letter of congratulation signed by Lord Morley, Lord Bryce, Sir William Osler, Frederic Harrison and other distinguished men, expressing appreciation of "his eminent services to British scholarship and speculation, and of his unselfish endeavors for human welfare."

An Unusual Source of Tetanus

An inquest has been held on a baby who died at the age of 5 days from tetanus. The source of an infection was unusual: An ointment had been applied to the child. The pot of ointment was submitted with six similar unopened pots to the ministry of health for analysis. The report showed that there were disks of coarse paper in the unopened pots which separated the stopper from the contents. These disks contained tetanus germs. A representative of the firm which supplied the ointment said that this was the first complaint received and that steps were being taken to insure that paper disks would not be used in future.

Vital Statistics

The recently issued registrar-general's report for 1919 contains some interesting facts. Some of the most important are:

1. Great increase in the number of young widows remarrying.
2. General increase in marriages of middle aged persons, especially among bachelors. The number of widows remarrying under the age of 25 was 10.7 times and between 25 and 36 times as great as in 1911. These are explained by the great number of young widows created by the war. But there is also an increase in the marriages of widows over 45 which

cannot be explained in this way. It is partly due to the general increase of marriages at this time of life in men and women both single and widowed. It is manifested in its most extreme form by bachelors, whose marriages at ages over 45 both in 1915 and in 1918 were twice as numerous as in 1911. 3. Estimated loss of births due to the war, half a million, very similar to that of deaths on active service. 4. General decline of infant mortality, especially in London. Cancer forms the one great exception to the general tendency for the mortality at most ages to decline. The death rate from measles and whooping cough is by far the lowest on record.

PARIS

(From Our Regular Correspondent)

Dec. 31, 1920.

The Taxation of Medical Journals

Dr. Pierra, secretary of the Association de la presse médicale française, recently communicated to the medical group in parliament the resolution passed by the association demanding that the tax on the volume of business, as applied to medical journals, be either removed entirely or at least determined not by the number of subscribers or the number of copies sold but by the amount received for advertising.

This resolution seems justified by the precarious position in which the medical press in general has been placed by the advances in the cost of labor and material, which have increased the cost of publication by at least 500 per cent. The situation has been such that a large number of journals have discontinued publication since the war. Those that continue to appear have been obliged to reduce the number, and sometimes even the size, of their pages. Pierra likewise emphasized the importance of medical journals from the standpoint of their value as promulgators of French ideas in foreign countries, and pointed out in this connection that our economic expansion is closely connected with our intellectual influence in the world. He also brought out the point that our competition is almost solely German, and stated further that, before the war, French medical journals were widely read in Spanish speaking countries, some French journals having even gone so far as to publish separate Spanish editions for circulation in South America and Spain. It was evident that such journals carried French ideas and influence to these various countries. Today a number of German journals are published in Spain in the Spanish and even in the French language, all of which spread German thought and influence among our neighbors. Pierra concluded by saying that he regarded it as a matter of vital national interest to relieve the French medical press from the burdens of taxation, thus permitting it to continue to play a part in the dissemination of French ideas throughout the world.

The medical group in parliament has decided to support the resolution in question and to take such steps as may seem necessary in order to bring the matter before the minister of finance.

The Milk Question Again

At the last meeting of the medical group in parliament, which was presided over by Dr. Chauveau (senator), one main topic discussed was the commotion caused in the ranks of the medical profession by the recent order of the prefect of the department of the Seine requiring that sick persons, old people and children, for whom milk is an imperative necessity, procure a certificate, entitling them to prior consideration, from some physician of the public charities board (THE JOURNAL, Jan. 29, 1921, p. 324). After a discussion, in which several of those present took part—Prof. Pinard, Dr. Chauveau and others—it was decided: (1) to approve the restriction of the sale of milk in cafés, tea rooms, restaurants, hotels, etc.; (2) to recommend to the prefect of the depart-

ment of the Seine that, in the case of young children and old people, only a birth certificate be required in order to establish the right to prior consideration in securing milk, with the added provision that children must be under 3 years of age and aged persons over 65; (3) patients should not be required to furnish any further proof of their need than the certificate of the physician in charge of the case, unless there is evidence of frequent abuse of the privilege.

Physical Culture

Under the name of Cercle d'études medico-sportives, a society has been formed which will take up the study of all questions of a purely scientific nature pertaining to physical education, physical culture and general sports, both from the physiologic and the pathologic point of view. It will endeavor at the outset to unite the efforts of all colleagues who are interested in these questions, as up to the present time these have not been grouped together in any society. The society proposes, furthermore, to standardize instruction in these subjects and all official documents relating thereto. Such topics as the physiologic aspects of physical training, and the amount and type of physical culture required by various age groups illustrate the type of questions that will be studied.

The Tax on Physicians' Incomes During the War

M. Saget, member of the chamber of deputies, having addressed an inquiry to the minister of finance as to whether a tax inspector can, without violating the right of privileged communication, demand of a physician that he produce the book containing the names of his clients, the nature of their disease and the amount of the fees received, is in receipt of the following reply:

Physicians, like all others who are subject to taxation, must exhibit to the tax commissioners all documents that may be necessary to establish the basis for taxation. In case they are thus led to divulge the name of a client they do not render themselves liable in any way, since it is evident that they are only complying with a legal requirement, and, furthermore, the financial agents to whom the information would be furnished are themselves bound by the right of privileged communication.

The New Officers of the Academy of Medicine

At a meeting held December 28, the Academy of Medicine elected the following officers for the year 1921: president, Dr. Richelot; vice president (president for 1922), Professor Bourquelot, and annual secretary, Professor Achard.

The Bestowal of an American Medal on a French Scientist

The American Genetic Association has bestowed the Frank N. Meyer medal on Dr. Trabut, a botanist of repute who is a member of the faculty of the University of Algiers. Trabut is attached to the botanic service of Algeria.

Budget of the Board of Public Charities

The general report on the budget and the receipts and expenditures of the Assistance publique shows, by numerous interesting statistics, the great influence that the war had on the administration of public charities in Paris. Before the war the municipality of Paris contributed 26 million francs annually toward the work of the society. In order to provide the society with the funds needed to support all their services during the war, this fund was increased to 145 million francs, an augmentation of 457 per cent., which signified an increase of 72 per cent. in the total budget. In 1919 the expenditures for the assistance of the needy by the various bureaus of charities amounted to 147 million francs. The budget for 1921 amounts to 228 million francs, 194 million of which are for hospitals and municipal shelters.