

street accidents, railway collisions, and similar catastrophes. As special facilities of transport are granted to the Society in times of war, no doubt similar concessions would be made by the Belgian Government in carrying out the present project.

At the last meeting of the Metropolitan Asylums Board a letter was read from the Islington Guardians, in which, among other suggestions, the Guardians stated they thought the time had arrived when the Asylums Board should be re-constituted, and its members elected directly by the ratepayers.

Owing to the death of one of the patients of the York Retreat—a Hospital for the Insane—from the eating by her of some of the yew leaves taken from the evergreens used in the Christmas decorations, all the fine old yews which have stood for nearly a hundred years in the grounds of the Asylum, have been cut down and removed.

Local opposition to the establishment of Infectious Hospitals takes many forms, but it remained to the inhabitants of Oakridge, near Stroud, to inaugurate a very drastic remedy. A small-pox Hospital there, to the establishment of which there had been great opposition in the neighbourhood, was surrounded by a mob of several hundred persons, and, in the presence of several constables who were quite powerless, set fire to in various places and burnt to the ground. Most of the ringleaders have been arrested and will be called upon to bear the penalty of constituting themselves into so arbitrary and destructive a Sanitary Authority.

At a general meeting of the Sanitary Inspectors' Association, held recently at Carpenters' Hall, Mr. Skinner read an interesting paper on "Difficulties encountered by Sanitary Inspectors in the Discharge of their Duties."

A new departure in Hospital finance has been taken by the committee of the National Hospital for the Paralysed and Epileptic, Queen Square, Bloomsbury. The object of the scheme is to attract money on the basis of investment, and it is proposed to pay on sums of £50 and upwards rates of interest varying from 4 to 5½ per cent. per annum, according to age. Under this scheme a donation of £1,000 would endow a bed and entitle the donor to a life annuity of from £40 to £55. This would confer the right to name the bed, and the other privileges of a donor.

The ninth Universal Cookery and Food Exhibition will be held at the Imperial Institute from April 27th to May 2nd. Several new features of an attractive and popular character are promised, among which may be mentioned model kitchens for the mansion and cottage, cookery demonstrations by cooks of the Brigade of Guards stationed in London, the Royal Navy, and the Mercantile Marine Cookery Schools in Great Britain, not the least of which will be the practical demonstrations of Indian cookery by native cooks.

It is hoped that the inquiry to be instituted by the council of the Hospital Sunday Fund, into the abuses of the out-patient departments of the London Hospitals, will be searching and thorough.



Our Foreign Letter.

THE WONDER DOCTOR.

HAVE we *really* drifted so very far away from mediæval quackery? Has popular education been *altogether* successful? Let the reader judge for himself. Here are simple unvarnished facts from the most learned country in the world. They are well known there. I have heard them discussed by very clever people, the cleverest of whom, after patiently listening to a eulogy from one of the Wonder-Doctor's patients, mildly shook his head, observing that "Faith travelled far."

I am fairly safe in saying that there is at present no more popular healer of human ills in Germany than the "Wonder-Doctor." Patients flock to him, not by hundreds, but by thousands. They come from all parts of Germany. They even come from abroad.

The "Wonder-Doctor" is by profession a shepherd. His proper address is Schäfer Ast, in Radbruch bei Winsen an der Luc, a town not far from Lüneburg. He is a peasant in appearance and manners. He has never studied at any university. He has observed his sheep (so I was told), and studied herbs. He speaks Low-German, he lives in a peasant house; he must be exceedingly rich, he is said to carry off his fees in corn-measures, but he never alters his simple way of living, nor does his wife alter the cut of her gown. This trait of common sense is, by-the-bye, rather usual among German peasants. But I will let one of Ast's patients speak herself—a delicate fine-featured woman she was, fragile to the extent of making one wonder what her relatives were about in allowing her to travel at all.

En route for Hamburg, the train had stopped at Winzen, where I had helped this fellow-passenger into my carriage, and where she at once became very confidential and communicative.

"I come from Doctor Ast," she said; "you have heard of him, of course?"

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