

Annotations.

THE FATHER OF MODERN ELECTRICITY.

Dr. William Gilbert, Queen Elizabeth's physician, is at length to receive honour in his own country. Three hundred years have elapsed since Gilbert laid the foundations of electrical science in his famous work, "De Magnete," published in 1600. It is time that Englishmen should do some honour to the man who was called by Priestly "the father of modern electricity," and by Poggendorff "the Galileo of magnetism." Gilbert was born at Colchester, and received his early education in the Grammar school of his native town. In due course he proceeded to St. John's College, Cambridge. Soon after taking his first degree in 1560 he became a Fellow of his college, where he remained in residence, taking part in its affairs, for ten years. As was said by Mr. Joseph Larmor in his presidential address to the Section of Mathematical and Physical Science at the last meeting of the British Association, all through Gilbert's career, both at Colchester and afterwards in London, where he attained the highest position in his profession, he was an exact and diligent explorer, first of chemical and then of magnetic and electric phenomena. Hallam, in his "History of European Literature," says of Gilbert: "In his Latin treatise on the magnet he not only collected all the knowledge which others had possessed, but he became at once the father of experimental philosophy in this island." Mr. Larmor adds that no demerit would be raised if Hallam's restriction to this country were removed. It is extraordinary that such a man should have so long remained without any public memorial in his own land, and we are pleased to be able to announce that this reproach is about to be removed from us. The medical profession at Colchester—the birth-place and burial-place of Gilbert—have the honour to be the originators of the first proposal to do suitable honour to his memory. It has been decided to erect a full length marble statue of Gilbert to occupy a niche in the main façade of the New Town Hall at Colchester, for which the sum of £150 is required.

A BILL FOR THE PREVENTION OF MALARIA.

A Bill for the prevention of Malaria, which was temporarily delayed by the fall of the late Ministry, has been again presented to the Italian Parliament. It proposes to combat this disease, which, be it known, annually kills more persons than any other known cause (1) by the

free distribution of quinine, (2) by the demarcation of malarious zones, (3) by the adoption of metallic nets against mosquitos in zones declared to be malarious, and (4) by the payment of an indemnity to families which have lost one of their breadwinners owing to fever caught while at work. Professor Celli, who urges the necessity for the measure, had a good case, and in support of it emphasised the following facts.

About 15,000 persons die annually in Italy alone from Malaria, and about 2,000,000 are infected, such infection implying the loss of an enormous amount of labour.

Owing to the prevalence of the disease in certain localities five million acres of land remain uncultivated, and the number of those which are ill-cultivated from the same cause remains unascertainable. It is certain that in Southern Italy these are of vast extent and are one of the causes of dangerous discord between Northern and Southern Italy, while around Rome great estates lie barren, and cause a state of barbarism and slavery which is a disgrace to Italy. Any measure which will tend to prevent the spread of this disease, must be beneficial to the whole human race and we shall watch the present efforts in Italy with great interest.

THE TREATMENT OF TUBERCULOSIS.

The investigations into the cause and cure of tuberculosis are meeting with considerable success, and last week MM. Rodin and Binet communicated to the Academy of Sciences an important discovery, by means of which tuberculosis can be diagnosed even when a bacteriological examination reveals no sign of it. The disease, diagnosed thus early, can be scientifically treated before it reaches a dangerous stage. This should give a great impetus to the eradication of a disease which at present devastates so many British homes.

The Annual Report of the Association for the Prevention of Consumption also contains much interesting information on the subject of tuberculosis. A considerable number of open-air sanatoria are in process of erection, and it may be hoped that the days of consumption hospitals in the centre of large cities are numbered. A sanatorium, embodying the most recent improvements at home and abroad, is being erected at Pinewood, near Wokingham. It is built of brick, with tile roofs, in separate blocks, and will accommodate 64 patients when completed.

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