It is satisfactory to learn that there is a sovereign remedy for Guinea-worm, which acts as a poison to the parasite, and is at the same time a safe medicine. This is assaeetida, given in the form of tincture, in doses of thirty drops three times a day. If experience confirms the efficacy of this simple treatment, Dr. Horton will, indeed, well deserve the thanks of the profession and of the public, for having published his pamphlet, defective though this be in lucidity.

Art. IV.—Annual Report of the Commissioners for Administering the Laws for Relief of the Poor in Ireland. Including the Twenty-First Report under the 10 & 11 Vic. c. 90. And the Sixteenth Report, under the 14 & 15 Vic. c. 68, with Appendices. Dublin: A. Thom, for Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1868.

It is pleasing in these days to be able to turn to any record of facts connected with the real state of the Irish nation.

Though a slight increase in the number of workhouse inmates occurred in the winter of 1867-8, a decrease in the number of sick and in the mortality, as well as a small decrease in the number of able-bodied inmates in workhouses took place.

The open character of last winter, and the unremitting industry of the agricultural population, seem to promise a continuous decrease in the numbers in workhouses.

"Upon the whole it should be regarded as satisfactory that the political disturbances of the last two years have been attended with so little apparent increase of distress, and by so little abatement, if there be any, of confidence in farming enterprise."

"The farm rents, according to all information on the subject, have been most promptly and cheerfully paid during those two years, and the poor rates certainly were never more easily collected."

The population in the manufacturing districts were not so favorably circumstanced last year as the more agricultural portion of the people. Speaking of distress occurring in some parts of Ireland—owing to the rise in the price of bread-stuffs—and the appeals for relief made frequently through the public press, the report states that—

"It is to be apprehended that this form of distress occurring locally from time to time in certain districts of Ireland, and being made the subject of very exaggerated descriptions in the public press, has had the effect of misleading many persons as to the actual present condition of the great bulk of the population of Ireland, who live by agriculture, and in causing to be overlooked the very
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rapid progress that population has made during the last eighteen years in improved comforts, as regards their food, their clothing, and their dwellings."

Again—

"The researches of Dr. Edward Smith, and other scientific authorities on dietetics, have established the fact that the Irish farm labourer is better fed, and at far less cost, than his representative in England."

"The peasantry of Ireland are now far better clad than they were twenty-five years ago. Their dwellings, too, have undergone a great improvement; more than 400,000 of the worst class of cabins are known to have disappeared from the face of the country since 1841. It is true that the class next above the lowest is still the dwelling most in use. This class, though ill-lighted and much inferior in cleanliness and comfort to the English cottage, has one sanitary condition which atones for much of its apparent discomfort. The one room which serves for both day-room and dormitory, occupies the whole length, breadth, and height of the building, and is ventilated all day by a draught from the open door to a blazing turf fire under an ample chimney. At night, even when the door is shut, there are crevices which, with the aid of the never extinguished fire, effect a continual process of ventilation. Above all, it is not ceiled, but open to the thatched roof, through which the foul air which has been breathed is subtle enough to escape outwards. Compared with the ceiled bed-rooms of the indigent poor resident in towns, the thatched cabin of the Irish is comparatively free from that most active and fruitful source of fever, the presence of a highly vitiated air within the dwelling. Accordingly, the rate of mortality by fever in unions containing large towns is more than twice that of unions with a rural population; and nowhere is it greater than in Dublin."—p. 15.

Very satisfactory progress has been made in improving the sanitary state of Ireland, as regards epidemics; but much still remains to be done, especially in reference to fever, scarlatina, and measles. Suitable hospitals exist for the reception of all such cases, and by this means, when adopted in time, both for the benefit of the patients themselves, and for that of their families and neighbours, much has been achieved; however, much difficulty often occurs in inducing the working-classes to send their children to hospitals when attacked first with these diseases.

The working of compulsory vaccination, carried out by the system of dispensary medical relief, has been attended with highly satisfactory results. In the year ending 30th September, 1864, the number of cases of smallpox attended by medical officers of dispensary districts, was 1965, with a mortality of 854; in 1865 the numbers were

1 See also C. F. Moore, M.D., in 'Dublin Quarterly Journal of Medical Science,' 1854, "Cases in Practice."
respectively 2000 and 347; in 1866, 579 and 187; and lastly, in 1867, 105 and 20. Upon this important subject we will quote
the Commissioners' report:

"When the Irish Compulsory Vaccination Act was passing through Parliament, the remark was made that similar provisions had been
in force in England for ten years, under Lord Littleton's Act of 1853, and had not been successful. It appears right at this time to
point out how much the success obtained in Ireland has been due to
the machinery adopted for carrying out the compulsory provisions of
the Act.

"The dispensary medical officers to whom the duty of public vac-
cination continued to be confided exclusively, became at the same
time registrars of births, under the Births and Deaths Registration
Act,—this Act and the compulsory Vaccination Act beginning to
take effect on the same day.

"As registrar of births, the dispensary medical officer was required,
by the Act, to serve on the parents, when registering the birth of a
child, a notice requiring them to bring it to him within six months
to be vaccinated, and a notice stating the times and places appointed
for the purpose. At the expiration of that time, if default had been
made by the parents, the public vaccinator had ready means at hand
for verifying the fact, &c."

Alluding to another point of great importance the Report con-
tinues thus:

"In conclusion, we believe that the prosecutions of inoculators
for smallpox, and the exemplary sentences which they have received
during the last four years, have been of the utmost service in pro-
ducing the apparently satisfactory state of things at which we have
in so short a time arrived."

In reviewing the report of last year, we quoted an inquiry carried
out by one of the English Poor-Law inspectors, who therein alluded
to the subject of the inadequacy of the remuneration1 received by

1 As an instance of the inadequacy of the remuneration received by poor law
medical officers, we may mention the case of Dr. Suffield, late medical officer to
the Clifden Union, County Galway, who for twenty-seven years discharged the
onerous duties of medical officer in that district, to the utmost satisfaction of the
guardians and public generally, for £60 a year, and who is now paralysed and un-
able to leave his bed. He was refused a pension of even £40 a year, though the
guardians repeatedly applied in his behalf, the poor law commissioners stating
that on account of his having taken private practice he did not come within the
law that enabled them to grant pensions.

Dr. Suffield was one of those whose public service extended over some of the
darkest periods of Irish history, living through the famine years and the period
when the awful fever that followed that time of destitution, when one medical man
in every fifteen died of fever throughout Ireland in one year, and he distinguished
himself at those times as well as during the last three visitations of cholera; and
now he is denied a pittance, though his illness has been mainly brought on by
his exertions in behalf of the sick and destitute during the long period of his
public service.
the Irish Poor-Law medical officer; as yet his position has not been improved, although additional onerous, responsible, and dangerous duty has been inflicted upon him, viz. the examination of lunatics, the 10th section, Act 30 & 31 Vic., c. 118, distinctly providing that this most disagreeable duty, involving such risk, loss of time, and responsibility, shall be performed “without fee or reward.”

It is, however, to be hoped, that the valuable services rendered to the State by the indefatigable and intelligent dispensary medical officers of Ireland, will not be much longer overlooked. The justice of granting improved pay to the medical officers is the more evident as another duty, of late expected of him, has been that of sanitary officer, and the strongest evidence of his efficiency is afforded by the remarkable diminution of smallpox, and the comparatively small mortality from cholera, fever, &c.

Up to the present time the medical inspection of the dispensaries and the dispensary districts has been conducted by medical men, and with what excellent results we have seen above. In the present year, however, *An Act to extend the Powers of Poor-Law Inspectors and Medical Inspectors in Ireland* (31st July, 1868) was passed to enable inspectors not having the qualification of physician or surgeon to assist in carrying out the provisions of the “said Act” as fully and as effectually as if he was a qualified medical practitioner. It seems an unusual proceeding to pass an Act of Parliament conferring the powers of carrying out the duties of a medical inspector upon a gentleman (not possessed of a medical education) as “fully and as effectually as if he was a qualified medical practitioner.”

What will our professional brethren say to legislation such as that; those who, of late years, have had to register their qualifications, and pay heavily to a government body for their rights as medical practitioners? The question naturally arises, what are our privileges if those who may never have devoted their thoughts for one moment to the great medical questions, which must come under the notice of every one filling the office of medical inspector, are empowered to hold medical inquiries into the best means of alleviating the severity of, or, in the language of the day, “stamping out” the cholera, typhus, or other disorder; or of holding an inquiry into the treatment of epidemic meningitis, or into the correctness of the line of treatment pursued in any particular case of a surgical, obstetrical, or purely medical nature?

Who will believe that gentlemen acting as medical inspectors, solely by virtue of an Act of Parliament, are now to sit in judgment upon the prescriptions and treatment, in all its varied details, of cases occurring in the practice of the Irish Poor-Law medical service. If the system and machinery of that service had been found wanting in the hour of trial; and if, instead of being looked to as a model,
upon which the English Poor-Law authorities have founded certain alterations in their machinery,—that of appointing medical men as inspectors being a part of such alterations,—and if, instead of being viewed with confidence by the people of Ireland, and of serving as one great means in alleviating the sufferings of the Irish poor, in distress and in sickness, and of being, under Providence, the great means of almost banishing smallpox, and of materially lessening the fatal effects of cholera and fever, then we should have said the whole system required reform. But when the reverse of all this is the case, we cannot see why that which has worked well for many years should be altered.

We do not hesitate to call public attention to this matter, which appears to have been made law, without having been fully under the attention of either the Parliament or the Government.

The Irish people have judgment to perceive the value of medical science, as seen in their willingness to comply with the requisitions of the Compulsory Vaccination Act; we would assert for them, therefore, the right to continue to have the benefit of all that medical men, both as Poor-Law executive medical officers and as medical inspectors, can afford them, and we should rejoice in being able to claim for the whole of the people of England the same intelligent acquiescence with a law, so replete with good as the Compulsory Vaccination Act, as that afforded by our fellow-subjects in Ireland.

ART. V.—Address on Health, delivered at the Congress of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, held at Birmingham, October 1868. By Henry W. Rumsey, M.D., President of the Health Department of the Association.

No one can refuse to Dr. Rumsey the credit of earnestness—some would go to the extent of calling him an enthusiast—whatever the opinion that might be formed of his schemes for sanitary and sanitary administrative reform. These may be practicable or they may be Utopian. However it may be, there is this to be said, that each of us who has lived to middle age has lived to see a wondrous revolution both in public sentiment and in parliamentary efficiency in regard to questions of health and education, which, if not formerly wholly disregarded, were thrown into the shade by matters of political interest of quite a different nature. We are not among those who would put down enthusiasm as a feeling destructive of all calm judgment, with the well known injunction of the great diplomatist, "Surtout, mon ami, point de zèle." On the contrary, it is from among the men who have exhibited this feeling most obviously, that we can pick out those who have been the originators of some