

BOSTON AND NEW ENGLAND.

THE WEEK'S DEATH RATE IN BOSTON.—During the week ending April 1, 1916, there were 245 deaths reported, with a rate of 16.80 per 1,000 population, as compared with 262 and a rate of 18.25 for the corresponding week last year. There were 35 deaths under one year as compared with 28 last year, and 71 deaths over sixty years of age against 81 last year.

During the week the number of cases of principal reportable diseases were: Diphtheria, 45; scarlatina, 70; measles, 167; whooping cough, 44; typhoid fever, 4; tuberculosis, 44. Included in the above were the following cases of non-residents: Diphtheria, 9; scarlatina, 17; whooping cough, 2; tuberculosis, 5.

Total deaths from these diseases were: Diphtheria, 5; scarlatina, 3; whooping cough, 2; measles, 5; tuberculosis, 19. Included in the above were the following deaths of non-residents: Diphtheria, 1; scarlatina, 3; tuberculosis, 2.

ST. MONICA'S HOME.—The recently published report of Saint Monica's Home for sick colored women and children calls attention to the need of that modest and worthy institution for help in the completion of an extension to the Home begun some months ago. The report states that \$2,000 only is required to finish the necessary alterations, and asks that subscriptions may be received. The capacity of the Home will then be increased to fifteen beds which, with the twelve fresh air beds in use, will make a total of twenty-seven beds.

WOMEN MEMBERS OF HEALTH BOARDS.—The Massachusetts State Senate has recently passed to a third reading a bill permitting women to serve as members of local boards of health in this Commonwealth. The vote stood 16 to 15.

BOSTON CITY HOSPITAL.—A meeting in the interest of medico-social work at the Boston City Hospital is to be held in Vose House on Thursday, April 6, at 4 P.M. The principal speaker of the afternoon will be Dr. Alexander Lambert, for many years a director of the social service department of Bellevue Hospital, New York City.

MEASLES EPIDEMIC IN BROCKTON.—The Brockton Board of Health has reported over 500 cases of measles since the outbreak first occurred. A rule which holds force in a Montello school to the effect that pupils suffering from colds, who have not had measles, are not permitted to attend school, it is hoped may assist in preventing the further spread of the disease in that section.

SCARLET FEVER IN NORWOOD.—The number of cases of scarlet fever reported in Norwood has reached 21 and, in an effort to prevent the further spread of the disease, schools and churches have been closed and public meetings prohibited.

Correspondence.

A RARE DANGER OF ETHER ANESTHESIA.

PHILADELPHIA, PA., March 20, 1916

Mr. Editor: In my Ether Day address on "The Dangers of Ether as an Anesthetic,"* I failed to note one rare, but important, danger, to which a correspondent has just called my attention. The reason why it did not occur to me was that I had never personally experienced, nor heard of, any trouble such as my correspondent describes. His personal case is as follows: He was operated upon at a large hospital by one of its best surgeons. The anesthetist, however, was a medical student of little experience and evidently more interested in the operation than in his duties as an anesthetist. He carelessly poured a quantity of ether into the patient's right eye. Unfortunately the patient was blind on the left side. Naturally he struggled. This was, again unfortunately, mistaken for resistance to the anesthetic and still more ether was forced upon him. The result was a "severe burn to the eye, with the formation of an ulcer, blindness for six weeks and glasses ever since."

My correspondent writes that he is cognizant of another similar case.

My own anesthetists almost always have been careful to avoid any such accident, and in addition to that have had a bowl of warm boric acid solution at their elbow. From time to time they have bathed the eyes so as to protect them even from the vapor of ether, and very often have put a pledget of absorbent cotton wet with the boric acid solution on the eyes, during the administration of the anesthetic.

Yours very truly,

W. W. KEEN, M.D.

COCCYODYNIA AS A MANIFESTATION OF SYPHILIS.

BOSTON, MASS., March 21, 1916.

Mr. Editor: To suspect syphilis as a common cause of this painful complaint would be manifestly an exaggeration of the possibilities. At the same time it is wise to keep an open mind on the subject.

The occurrence of this symptom in obscure cases, which later I have proved to be unrecognized syphilis, has happened a sufficient number of times to make the matter more than a coincidence in my opinion. Unexplained "neurasthenia" has of late been proved to be unrecognized syphilis more than once. It has been found that patients suffering with pain in the back of the head and at the "base of the brain," seemingly typical neurasthenics, are really suffering from high vertebral syphilis.

The probable explanation of these cases of coccygodynia is similar; they have a definite pathologic process to account for their pain. The coccyx is a "bone of stress," similar to the tibia, and we are dealing with a true osteo-periostitis, often started up in these cases by a *fall or blow*, so often the history in specific bone troubles. Combined rectal and external palpation gives bone pain, which can be compared in every way with that of the pain of pressure over specific tibiae.

Very truly yours,

WILLIAM PEARCE COUES, M.D.

ERRATUM.

We regret exceedingly that, by an inadvertence in proof reading, the word "cows" was printed instead of "horses" in Dr. Walcott's article in the issue of the JOURNAL for March 9, 1916, (Page 338, column 2, line 14). The clause in question should read, therefore: "we were able to verify the diagnosis by means of one of the horses."

*On October 16, 1915. See BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL, December 2, 1915.