

that the Bill will become law, for the relief from rates is a matter of too great importance to the hospitals to be left to the judgement or caprice of local authorities.

#### FOREIGN MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS IN ITALY.

THE question of the legal status of holders of foreign degrees or diplomas who wish to practise in Italy came again before the Italian Legislature on December 14th, 1903. Dr. Santini, the leading spirit in the recent agitation to preserve Italy for the Italians, asked a question on the subject. Signor Giolitti, the Minister of the Interior, said the existing law allowed foreign doctors to practise their profession in Italy when they were called in to advise in special cases, or when they undertook the charge of foreign patients exclusively. If such practitioners attended Italian patients, that was an abuse which the Government would do its best to suppress. With regard to reciprocity he promised without delay to enter into negotiations on the matter with such foreign countries as did not grant equivalent privileges to Italian practitioners. He added, however, that foreign practitioners were not sufficiently numerous in Italy to make their competition a serious matter for Italian graduates. Signor Orlando, Minister of Public Instruction, stated that he would admit to the examinations of the Italian faculties only foreign practitioners who had pursued their studies in universities of good repute, recognized by the Medical Faculties and the Superior Council of Public Instruction.

#### HYPNOTISM IN ABYSSINIA.

M. ILG, described as a confidential adviser of His Majesty Menelek, Emperor of Abyssinia, appears to have confided to a French interviewer some curious facts as to the uses to which hypnotism is put in Abyssinia. From time to time a number of children under the age of 12 are selected for the position of *labascha* or detector of crime. They are believed to have the power, when hypnotized, of revealing to the proper authorities the identity of any criminal who may be "wanted" for a given offence. For instance, not long ago there was a case of arson at Adis-Ababa. A *labascha* was taken to the scene of the crime and there thrown into hypnotic sleep. The child forthwith set off in the direction of Harrar. He ran without stopping for sixteen hours on end, and his pace was so severe that the professional runners told off to accompany him gave up one after the other. When he got near Harrar, the boy suddenly took a path which led into a field where he laid hold of a labourer who was quietly at work there. Thereupon the man confessed his guilt. Again, a robbery with murder was committed in the neighbourhood of Adis-Ababa. A *labascha* was procured, and after being hypnotized proceeded to visit a number of churches and private houses, and at last lay down at the door of an empty hut. The owner on his return was arrested. He at first denied all knowledge of the crime and was subjected to a searching interrogatory. His movements were traced, and it was found that they corresponded exactly to the course taken by the *labascha* in finding the hut. The criminal, tortured by remorse, had thrown himself down at the door just as the *labascha* had done. There must be a considerable number of criminals at large in this country. On the venerable principle *Anceps remedium melius quam nullum* we venture to commend the Abyssinian method to the attention of Scotland Yard.

#### THE CARNEGIE INSTITUTE.

ON December 9th a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Carnegie Institute was held at Washington, when a report on the year's work was presented. The number of grants made by the Executive Committee for scientific research was 66, involving an aggregate of £30,000. Twenty-five research assistants were appointed. It was announced that arrangements had been made for the early publication of all scientific papers, most of them in large and costly volumes. The trustees authorized an aggregate expenditure of £74,600 in grants for scientific researches and £8,000 for publications during the ensuing

year. The following officers were elected: Chairman, Dr S. Billings, New York; vice-chairman, Mr. Elihu Root, Secretary of State for War; secretary, Charles D. Walcott, Director of the United States Geological Survey. Drs. S. Weir Mitchell and Carroll D. Wright were re-elected members of the Executive Committee for three years. It was decided that in future a yearbook should be printed by the Board of Trustees, giving in full the names of the recipients of Carnegie fellowships and the colleges at which they are studying.

#### THE CORONERSHIP FOR EAST MIDDLESEX.

THERE were thirty-five candidates for the office of coroner for East Middlesex; from this list three were selected, and eventually Mr. A. M. Forbes, solicitor, was elected by a large majority. None of the candidates who had had considerable experience as deputies, and were doubly qualified in medicine and law, were among the selected. It would thus appear that experience in the work and special qualifications had no weight in the election. It must, however, be remembered that Mr. Forbes had been for seven years previously a member of the Council and resigned his seat to become a candidate for the coronership. At the last election to the coronership for the Eastern Division the same thing occurred, but we trust that this method of election does not generally obtain in county and borough councils, otherwise intending candidates, however good their qualifications, will have very little chance of success unless they have served an apprenticeship in the council at whose hands they seek the appointment.

#### THE KAISER AND HIS DOCTORS.

If certain foreign newspapers are to be believed, the German Emperor has been not only liberal, but commendably prompt in marking his sense of the value of the services rendered him by the medical men who had charge of him during his recent illness. On Surgeon-General von Leuthold he is said to have bestowed the Grand Cross of the Red Eagle with oak wreath and crown. His Physician-in-Ordinary, Dr. Ilberg, has received the decoration of the Red Eagle of the Second Class. To Professor Orth has been given the Order of the Crown, second class; and to Dr. Spiers, of Frankfort, under whose direction the Emperor has gone through a course of vocal gymnastics, the Cross of Commander of the Hohenzollern Order. As already stated in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL, the title of "Excellenz" has been conferred on Professor Moritz Schmidt, who removed the growth from the Kaiser's larynx.

#### RADIUM IN THE BATH WATERS.

AT a meeting of the Bath City Council on January 5th Councillor Cotterell recalled the fact that for some considerable time Professor Dewar had, at the expense of the Royal Society and with the concurrence of the Baths Committee, collected the gases that rise from the largest of their mineral springs, that of the King's Bath. An analysis of these gases revealed the presence of helium. Some weeks ago a quantity of the iron deposit collected in the tanks and pipes of the New Royal Spring was obtained and sent to the Hon. R. Strutt, son of Lord Rayleigh, who made a careful investigation of the material. That gentleman reported that he had found that the deposit contained radium in appreciable quantities, though not enough to make extraction profitable. He thought there could be little doubt that the helium of Bath owed its origin to large quantities of radium at a great depth below the earth's surface. A little of this radium was carried up by the rush of hot water and was found in the deposit. He added that his experiments promised further interesting developments, which would be brought to the notice of the Committee in due course. In reply to an inquiry by Mr. Cotterell, Mr. Strutt explained that by appreciable quantities of radium he meant quantities such that its presence might pretty easily be detected. But the amount of radium in the deposit was very much less than that in the ores at present used. The Council agreed to give Mr. Strutt every further facility for continuing his researches.