

The resignation of Dr. Pentreath, the Medical Superintendent, opens up the question of general management. At present, Drs. Reid and Edmonds, of Cambridge, have been appointed Medical Visitors. This arrangement is working very well.

I visited many of the sanatoria in the Old World quite recently, and I have no hesitation in saying that "Te Waikato" need fear nothing by comparison. Its constructive cost per bed is less than that of many, and the methods of treatment are quite up to date.

REGULATION OF THE SALE OF "PATENT MEDICINES."

There is, I am very pleased to say, evidence on the part of many of the leading newspapers in the colony of a desire to help in the war against the circulation of harmful so-called patent medicines. Canada has, I believe, brought into force a regulation on all-fours with the one introduced here last year, and several of the States of America have followed suit. I have suggested therefore that an amendment of our Public Health Act should be made, so that the term "patent medicine" shall include what undoubtedly the Legislature meant it to embrace—namely, all secret or proprietary medicines. In a strictly legal sense a patent medicine is one the formula of which has been deposited with the Registrar of Patents. As a matter of fact, patent medicines proper cover but an infinitesimal part of the nostrums now on the market. Many of the "cures" now being so lavishly advertised are in the very gravest sense injurious. A large number of the "invigorators" recommended with such profusion of adjective and literary skill are nothing more than mixtures of alcohol with colouring-matter, to which has been added a small quantity of some simple medicinal gum or vegetable. The exhaustive and scathing series of articles which appeared in *Collier's Weekly* from the pen of that master of clear and incisive English, Mr. Adams, are worthy of the most serious attention of all interested in the physical and moral welfare of our community.

The regular imbibation of such mixtures as Peruna, specially recommended as they are to combat the lassitude and loss of energy which sometimes follows parturition and suckling, containing as it does twice as much alcohol as champagne, can be attended by only evil results. Unknowingly, the users become more and more dependent upon the tippie, and in the end may become confirmed drinkers. Surely no consideration need be given to the vendors of such articles. Victoria has decided that such "medicines" containing more than 10 per cent. of alcohol must be so labelled and so sold. Such a regulation is of value, but there are many nostrums on the market which are even more dangerous than those which depend upon alcohol for producing the feeling of *bien etre*. Some merely serve as kites for blackmailers. I am convinced that a law having for its end the suppression of all such things would be good. A large number of the sellers of so-called electric belts are swindlers pure and simple. I have received many letters from men and youths who have sent ill-to-be-spared money to such people. As one correspondent puts it, "The man who has been had says nothing, because he does not care to show that he has been such an ass." These people are people the State should step in and guard. The monetary damage is often great, but not infrequently that is the least among many injuries done the poor dupe. In the case of such diseases as consumption and cancer, the wiley advertiser of a cure steals not only the sufferer's money but his only chance of recovery. At a time when removal of the tumour or a sojourn in a sanatorium might have effected a restoration to health the poor victim is wasting his money and "losing the tide."

SANITATION AMONG THE MAORIS.

Dr. Pomare, in his report, again emphasizes the necessity which I have pointed out in several reports of instituting a system of birth and death registration for the Maoris. The greatest blow will have been struck at the mana of the tohunga when all deaths will require to be certified to and registered. May I again recommend this matter for your consideration.

I am not certain whether the remarks of Dr. Buck traverse paths which are forbidden, but I heartily concur in his description of the evils attendant upon the communal holding of land. Until every Maori realizes that a particular patch is his and his alone, steady and consistent cultivation will never take place.

Dr. Pomare's report on his recent trip amongst the islands of the Cook Group is interesting, and I cordially indorse his suggestion that all Natives returning from work outside should be examined for syphilis and other venereal diseases. The ravages of such diseases are undoubtedly great, and their results could be greatly controlled if such an examination were carried out.

VITAL STATISTICS.

I am indebted to the Registrar-General, Mr. E. J. von Dadelszen, for these most valuable figures:—

BIRTHS.

THE number of births registered in the colony during 1905 was 23,682, or 27·22 in every 1,000 persons living. The rate is the highest reached since the year 1894, the number of births being 916 in excess