delegates from Germany, England, Austria, Denmark, Spain, France, Holland, Italy, Norway, Russia, and Switzerland; the United States and Japan were unrepresented. In all, seventeen chemical societies are affiliated to the international association, representing nearly 20,000 members. Much valuable assistance was received from M. Tassel and from M. Heger in arranging for the meetings.

It was agreed that the place of meeting for 1914 should be Paris, with M. Haller as president. The business done at the Brussels meeting was satisfactory; steps were taken to affiliate the committee on atomic weights; to unify the methods of abbreviating the names of journals; to secure publication of important memoirs which have appeared in one of the less known languages in English, French, or German; to open negotiations to diminish the multiplicity of abstracts, by cooperation among the various bodies which publish extracts; and some important resolutions dealing with nomenclature, and with symbols for physical constants, were adopted.

The need of such an association has now been amply shown. Much can be done to simplify methods, and, by cooperation, to diminish labour, and increase convenience. There is still much to be done, however, and the usefulness of the association will doubtless survive the period at which Monsieur Solvay's gift will be exhausted. The assembling of chemists from various nations, with free interchange of ideas, cannot fail to stimulate all working at the science of chemistry, and cannot fail to promote cordial international relations. "La Science est sans patrie!"

WILLIAM RAMSAY.

HEALTH IN INDIA.

UNDER the title, "A Modern Miracle," *The Pioneer Mail* of September 12 gives some striking figures of the improvement of health among the European troops in India—these figures being taken from the Army Medical Report for last year. With a strength of more than 71,000 British troops in India, there were positively only 328 deaths during the year, equal to 4·62 per 1000. This is really a remarkable achievement; and the smallness of the death-rate is not due in any way to an increase in the invaliding to England—as shown by the fact that the invaliding also fell markedly during the year to 6·68 per 1000, compared with 23 per 1000 in 1892. These are by far the lowest rates on record, and are comparable with the great decrease in the death-rate and the invaliding among non-native officials in West Africa, as disclosed by recent Colonial Office Reports.

Enteric fever, which was once such a terrible pest in India, has now decreased so much that there were only 118 admissions to hospital for it among the whole British garrison. This is undoubtedly due partly to the very great care now exercised in dealing with potential carriers of the disease, both human carriers and flies, and also to anti-typhoid inoculation. Malaria also has shown a very marked decrease during the year, though, as *The Pioneer Mail* points out, this may possibly be partly due to the usual fluctuations in the prevalence of the disease caused by variations in climate. Cholera and plague have also diminished.

Those who are interested in the subject would do well to compare with this fine record a remarkable paper by Sir Charles Pardey Lukis, Director-General of the Indian Medical Service, in the October number of *Science Progress*, entitled "The Sanitary Awakening of India." Sir Pardey Lukis describes the whole position of sanitation in India, and also the very extensive advances which are now being made in the investigation of disease, and the practical application of preventive measures there. Since he has occupied his important post, energy has been redoubled in all these directions. The whole Indian Medical Service, and the Officers of the Royal Army Medical Corps now serving in India, must all be heartily congratulated for the splendid work which they are now doing. Of course, there are ideals still before us; but the old apathy which used to exist in many quarters seems now to be a thing of the past.

Vaccination in India is also doing extremely well. Nearly two million vaccinations were performed in the Bengal Presidency alone during 1912–13, and the total number of deaths from smallpox in that Presidency during the year was only 0·21 per thousand of the population—a very good figure for a country where vaccination has been much opposed on account of "religious" scruples. The lanoline lymph, which I believe was originally invented by Colonel King, is principally responsible for this good state of affairs, and Colonel King is to be much congratulated upon it.

RONALD ROSS.

THE PROBLEM OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.

SINCE the article in our issue of December 11 was written, further events of importance have taken place. We referred in that article to the proposal of the Higher Education Sub-Committee of the London County Council to recommend the London County Council to invite the Senate of the University of London to express approval of Somerset House as a place for the further development of the University. The recommendation in favour of this site was adopted by the Council at Tuesday's meeting, after discussion. The Council agreed, without a division, to an amendment proposing that, if the Government could not consent to the Somerset House suggestion, the Education Committee should be instructed to report on the proposal to establish the university on a site on the south bank of the river, "where it would form an important feature in the beautifying of London." This proposal has something to be said for it from the point of view of the improvement of

the amenities of London, but from the point of view of university policy it has nothing to commend it. If the south side of the river were chosen, nothing whatever would be achieved beyond the possible erection of a fine building for the university offices. No concentration of teaching institutions could possibly take place there, and, consequently, no university quarter could be created. The establishment of a university quarter is of the essence of the matter.

The speech of the Minister for Education at the Birkbeck College on December 10 further strengthens the view that the Government is in earnest in carrying through this important educational reform. The Minister dealt on that occasion with the recommendation of the Royal Commission for the establishment of an evening constituent university college by the development and re-organisation of the Birkbeck College. With this proposal we are in full sympathy.

Considerable care will be required in dealing with the question of the continuation of the external degree. Signs are not wanting to indicate that some members of the external party conceive that their future would lie in some kind of alliance with those institutions that are not accepted as constituent colleges. Such a device would merely set up a sort of second, and inferior, internal side. The only justification for the continuance of the external degree is that it should be truly and genuinely *external*. Every care must be taken in the efforts that are being made to secure agreement not to destroy the well-thought-out proposals of the commission. No one would think of instituting an external side at the present time; it exists and appeals, apparently, to a large number of people. If it is to be continued, it should be as a purely external and impartial examining board, unconnected with any particular educational institution.

NOTES.

THE President of the Board of Education has promoted Mr. G. W. Lamplugh, F.R.S., to the post of assistant director of the Geological Survey of Great Britain, and Mr. T. C. Cantrill to that of district geologist, the appointments to take effect on January 6, 1914.

WE notice with much regret the announcement of the death on December 15, at thirty-eight years of age, of Dr. P. V. Bevan, professor of physics at the Royal Holloway College, and formerly demonstrator in physics in the Cavendish Laboratory, Cambridge.

DR. R. R. GATES has received from the Royal College of Science, South Kensington, the Huxley gold medal and prize for research in biology.

A REUTER message from Melbourne on December 15 states that the steamer *Pacifique*, which has arrived at Noumea, reports that the volcano in Ambrym Island, one of the New Hebrides, has for many days been in active eruption. On December 6 six new craters were formed on the west coast, and on the following day Mount Minnie collapsed in the centre.

THE Board of Agriculture and Fisheries is engaged in an inquiry, through its horticulture branch, into the failure of fruit-trees to set properly through insufficient pollination. The Board will be glad to be put in communication with the occupier of any orchard of five acres and upward who has reason to believe that his trees are bearing less than the normal crop over a series of years. Fruit-growers who are planting new orchards are also invited to communicate with the Board.

THE Italian Meteorological Society has decided to arrange an international congress to be held in Venice in September next. Prominence is to be given to the discussion of problems in connection with the higher atmosphere, and there are to be sections concerned particularly with climatology, aërology, and pure and maritime meteorology. The price of a member's ticket is to be 10 lire, and special railway facilities are to be offered to those attending the congress. All inquiries and applications should be addressed to the general secretary, Barene Emile D. Henning O'Carrel, director of the Patriarchal Observatory in Venice.

AT a meeting of the executive committee of the British Science Guild held on December 9, it was announced that a permanent paid secretary had been appointed. It was resolved to support the movement which is being taken to induce the British Government to be represented officially at the San Francisco Exposition of 1915. Lord Sydenham, Sir Francis Laking, Sir John Cockburn, and others were added to the medical committee, and it was decided that the subject of reference to the Royal Commission of which Lord Sydenham is chairman should be considered by the medical committee. The subject of the charges made by the Postmaster-General to persons using the wireless time-signals sent out from the Eiffel Tower in Paris has been considered by the committee on the synchronisation of clocks, and it was resolved to approach the Government upon the subject.

BY the regulations for the protection of wild birds and mammals in Egypt, referred to by Sir H. H. Johnston at the end of his article in last week's NATURE, the following kinds of birds useful to agriculture are not allowed to be shot, captured, destroyed, exposed for sale, sold, or purchased:—Egrets, larks, pipits, wagtails, warblers, wheatears, flycatchers, orioles, bee-eaters, hoopoes, green plovers, spur-winged plovers, and winged plovers. Permission to collect or keep any of these birds for scientific purposes rests with the discretion of the Minister of Public Works. All shooting is forbidden on Lake Menzala, and gazelles are protected in certain districts. Governors of cities and Mudirs of provinces have the right to refuse to issue game licences, should they see fit to do so, and to make regulations within the limits of their jurisdiction concerning close seasons, reserves, the kinds of animals that may be shot, and special conditions. The virtual effect of the proclamation is that henceforth the killing of any bird but a hawk, kite, or crow is illegal throughout the Khediviate. It is most satisfactory to note that the Egyptian Government protects by these regulations