

Brussels, 30·5°, being exceptionally low. Both at home and abroad the period was dry. On the French Riviera, as represented by Nice, there was no measurable quantity of rain, while at almost all the other foreign resorts, as well as those on our own south coast, the number of days with rain was very small. As a rule, the month was very sunny in Italy, the Riviera, and the Mediterranean region generally, and there was also much more sunshine than usual on the south and south-west coasts of this country. The figures from the foreign resorts were not available and those for the home resorts are not given in the above table, but the number of hours registered at many places in the south and south-west of England was between 80 and about 100. At some spots the figure was about twice as high as usual. Over the more inland parts of the country the sun was frequently obscured by fog and mist. In London (Westminster) there were only 22 hours of sunshine, while at Manchester there were no more than about ten hours. It would not be fair to compare the duration of sunshine in London with that at places on the south coast, but as the sun shone brightly for 64 hours at Bath, an inland spot practically in the same latitude as the metropolis, it may be assumed that the smoke and dust robbed the more central parts of London of at least 40 hours of health-giving sunshine. At Manchester there were 25 sunless days, at Westminster 14, and at Nottingham, where the aggregate number of hours of sunshine was 38, there were also 14 sunless days.

#### ALCOHOL IN THE TREATMENT OF PNEUMONIA AND ENTERIC FEVER.

THE International Union of Medical Abstainers, founded at Stockholm in 1907, has resolved as part of its operations to attempt the solution of the question as to the value of alcohol in the treatment of lobar pneumonia and enteric fever. A statistical inquiry is to be instituted and "all hospital and infirmary physicians, medical superintendents, or registrars are earnestly requested to assist in this work, both in the interests of medical science and of the sick." Whilst agreeing that trustworthy information on this point is desirable we cannot give unqualified approval to the methods which it is proposed to adopt. The proposed lines of the inquiry are as follows. There are two distinct plans which may be adopted by those wishing to help in the accumulation of statistics: "Plan A. 1. Every participator declares himself prepared to treat all cases of lobar pneumonia and enteric fever over 15 years of age which he may have to treat in hospital or otherwise between January 1st and December 31st, 1908, alternately—i.e., the first with, the second without, alcohol, and so on. 2. The administration of alcohol is to be as usually given by the reporter both as to form, quantity, and duration. It is desirable that a mixture of alcohol and water should be used of definite strength as the commercial wines and spirits vary considerably. 3. The other treatment will be on the usual lines according to circumstances. 4. Departure from the treatment in turn is especially deprecated, but if for some reason (such as intolerance of alcohol) it occurs it should be noted on the form with the reason for such occurrence. Plan B. 5. If the alternate treatment of cases with and without alcohol is objected to it is hoped that the alternative proposal will be adopted—viz., a simple return of the treatment as regards alcohol and the result on the same form. 6. Every case is to be reported on a form which will be supplied on request. These forms should be returned to Dr. J. J. Ridge, Carlton House, Enfield, not later than January, 1909." We imagine that few physicians, who have been accustomed to give alcohol in cases of lobar pneumonia and enteric fever, would consent to have their treatment dictated in this manner, so that their patients should be treated alternately, with or without alcohol, although they might be perfectly

willing to give the statistics of the results of cases that have come under their care. Plan B commends itself to us more favourably than Plan A, but whether any trustworthy conclusions will be arrived at from this inquiry remains to be seen. The personal equation in such an investigation is difficult to eliminate but nevertheless we have no wish to discourage any attempt to arrive at the value of alcohol as a drug and we shall watch the result of this endeavour with interest.

#### ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF LONDON.

THE lectures of the Royal College of Physicians of London for the present year will be delivered at the College, Pall-mall East, on the following Tuesdays and Thursdays at 5 o'clock: The Milroy lectures on *Melitensis* Septicæmia (Malta or Mediterranean Fever) will be delivered by Dr. J. W. H. Eyre on March 5th, 10th, and 12th; the Goulstonian lectures on the Influence of Pregnancy on certain Medical Diseases, and the Influence of Certain Medical Diseases on Pregnancy, will be delivered by Dr. Herbert French on March 17th, 19th, and 24th; the Lumleian lectures on Points of Practice in *Maladies* of the Heart will be delivered by Sir James Sawyer on March 26th and 31st and April 2nd; and the Oliver-Sharpey lectures on the Present Position of our Knowledge regarding the Supra-renal Capsules will be delivered by Professor A. E. Schäfer, F.R.S., on April 7th and 9th.

#### WATERSHEDS AND RAINFALL.

AT the annual meeting of the Royal Meteorological Society, which was held at the Institution of Civil Engineers on Jan. 15th, Dr. H. R. Mill, the President, delivered a most interesting address upon "Map Studies of Rainfall." Dr. Mill is the director of the British Rainfall Organisation, so that he dealt with a subject of which he possesses special knowledge. After describing the method of preparing annual, monthly, and daily maps of rainfall, he went on to draw attention to the extreme importance of accurate knowledge of the rainfall of a county, for the problem of the rivers is becoming acute. He added that the increasing strenuousness of the struggle for the possession of large water-supplies is producing in England, and especially in Wales, a great amount of local jealousy and strife, for the boundaries of parishes and counties coincide but rarely with water partings and the argument has been brought forward again and again that the rainfall of one county should not be diverted for the use of the inhabitants of another. But, continued Dr. Mill, "I think that the study of rainfall can do something to suggest the lines on which such disputes should be settled. . . . Most of the rain is borne to our islands from the Atlantic; . . . it is of the air, and no boundary checks it; the largest annual falls come down on and near the watersheds because there the land produces its maximum influence as a rain compeller." Therefore, concluded Dr. Mill, care for the water-supply of the country is by no means a parochial but in the fullest sense a national matter and should be dealt with in the interests of the nation as a whole, the units of subdivision when such are required being the natural units of river basins. We congratulate Dr. Mill upon his address which deals with a matter of the first importance. He shows that physical geography may be taken to afford as good an argument for the precipitation of the West being used to supply the great towns of the East of these islands as political geography may be taken to afford an opposite argument. London and the busy Welsh towns of Cardiff and Swansea are already arming for the fight for the possession of the Welsh watersheds. Liverpool has annexed the Vyrnwy district and Manchester the waters from Thirlmere. Unless that congeries of cities called London becomes