

FAIRS AND CHOLERA.

APROPOS OF THE COMING GATHERING AT Hurdwar, the "India Medical Gazette" insists strongly on the need for extraordinary measures of sanitary precaution. The Aushodoy Yog, which spread the germs of cholera through an enormous tract of country, was a serious affair, but North India is threatened with something far worse. The festival has always been accompanied by an outbreak, more or less serious, and there is little ground to hope that the fair of 1891 will be an exception to the rule. In this connection it is however, gratifying to note that the authorities have for some months past, been making preparations for the event; and although, owing to the gigantic nature of the gathering, these arrangements may not be so complete as could be desired, they may nevertheless go far to lessen the danger. The writer in our medical contemporary would fain see more thorough precautions taken against the spread of disease. "The first duty of a Central Health Department in India, when one is established, which seems not yet to be thought of, would be to devise means by which every place of pilgrimage shall be put into a proper sanitary condition, and not be permitted, as they are at present, to remain in a disgracefully insanitary state and a hot-bed of disease. And the next duty is to provide rest-houses and hospitals on the great routes of travel; also to regulate and control the general movement of pilgrims, while at the same time affording every facility of travel consonant with a due regard to the safety and health of the public and of the pilgrims themselves." The idea of a Health Department for India is not a new one, and there is much to be said in favour of it. But meanwhile we trust that the precautions taken in connection with the Hurdwar Fair will be found efficacious.

THE FATE OF "MOTEE."

SUCH EXTRAORDINARY INDIAN QUESTIONS ARE being constantly asked in Parliament that we need not be surprised to find that the epidemic has broken out in a fresh place. Still there is something uncanny in a paragraph which appears in *Truth*, and upon which more light may well be desired. We read:—"I have a favour to ask of my Indian readers. Can any of them tell me whether a certain tiger (I believe 'Motee,' by name) and a fine bear (known, I fancy, as 'Kulloo') have lately disappeared from the zoological collection in the Lawrence Gardens at Lahore? A singular story has come into my hands respecting the fate of these two noble beasts, and I should be much obliged for any information as to their recent movements." To calm the nerves of this anxious enquirer we may say that Motee's death from rheumatic fever was announced some three years ago, and that from that day to this there has never been a suspicion of foul play. Motee was a beautiful and highly civilised tiger. Having been a pet in early life, she had formed a liking for cigarette smoke, which grew stronger in captivity. When Motee was in a saucy mood, and refused to budge from her den, a few well-directed whiffs of smoke blown through the outer cage never failed to bring her forth. Her delight on these occasions was a thing to see: she purred and rubbed herself against the bars, and snuffed up the smoke with every sign of exquisite enjoyment. In her frolicsome youth, Motee once escaped, and was the innocent cause of much terror in Lahore. Hours sped and nothing could be seen of the tiger. When the sun went down, the excitement became a panic. Every house was barricaded, and courageous sahibs stole forth in the night to slay the brindled terror. A dread stillness fell upon Lahore like that of a Census night. But in the early morning, one of the garden maids came suddenly upon his old friend at a road corner. The mail promptly went down on his knees and did puja to the lord of the forest, and then, taking off his pugri he fastened it round Motee's neck and led her back, nothing loth, to her old quarters. Lahore, we may be sure, breathed more freely when it became known that she was once more caged, and no harm done. As for the bear in the gardens, he may be there to this day. But, at the same time, he ought never to have been there at all, for his disservice in the hot weather was pitiful to behold.

There will be no St. Patrick's Day dinner at Delhi this year.

Brigadier-General Van Straubenzee has left Madras to inspect the East Coast Railway Volunteers, the Ganjam Volunteers, the 27th Madras Infantry at Berhampore, and the 9th Madras Infantry at Vizianagram.

A Bombay paper states that it was intended a short time ago to organise a Eurasian Volunteer Artillery Corps, but this idea has been abandoned, and the formation of a Naval Artillery Corps has taken its place.

A Meerut telegram of the 11th instant says.—It rained a little last night, and was very windy. The sky remains cloudy, and there is promise of more rain, which, if at all heavy just now, will seriously injure the crops. The prices of grain have already increased to nearly famine prices.

ITALIAN AS A CIVIL SERVICE SUBJECT.

A VERITABLE STORM IN TEAPOT APPEARS to have arisen in England in consequence of the decision of the Civil Service Commissioners to exclude the Italian language from the subjects in which candidates for the Indian Civil Service are liable to examination. There are a number of learned and literary men in England with sufficient leisure to plunge into any controversy in which they see anything that is opposed to their own cherished fads. The Commissioners have excluded the Italian language from the examination curriculum, on the ground that it is too easily acquired. It would have been well for the Commissioners if they had followed the well-known precedent of giving no reason for their decision. At any rate, it might have been supposed that they held that Italian was not likely to be of much use to a member of the Civil Service during the term of his servitude in India. But unfortunately for them, they said that Italian was too easily acquired. This is undoubtedly true in a certain sense, as anyone who has a competent knowledge of Latin will find, if he takes up such a work as the *Secolo* or the *Capitan Fracassa*, or even books of higher celebrity in the Italian language. He will find that he can pick out the words and translate the sense of the passage before him, and probably little more than this was required in the Civil Service examination from the very few candidates who took up the subject. But, of course, it is a very different thing if the student is required to show a full and complete knowledge of the language. It hardly needed the assertions of Mr. Churton Collins, or the evidence of Mr. Gladstone, or Cardinal Manning, or Dr. Williams Smith, and a host of others, to prove that a thorough mastery of Italian can only be acquired with much toil and assiduity. Italian bears to Latin a position very similar to that which the Bengali language bears to Sanskrit. A man who has learned Sanskrit can pick up the rudiments of Bengali with much facility. But Bengali resembles Italian in another way, for it takes a life-time to obtain a complete mastery of it in all its written and colloquial forms. After all, the Civil Service Commissioners should have taken their stand on the *cui bono* of Italian in India, if the biographer of the late Judge Unokool Chunder Mookerjee will permit that phrase to be borrowed. What practical use can Italian be to an Indian Civilian? Cardinal Manning is reported to have said that it is a widespread commercial language in the East. This is hardly true of Calcutta, where most of the Italian residents can speak English well.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

WE HEAR THAT THE SUN LIFE ASSURANCE Co. of India, Limited, will shortly commence the business of life assurance in India, with their head office at Calcutta, under the management of Mr. Kemp, who has had considerable experience in India. The Company is brought out under the auspices of the Sun Life Office as the parent office, and the English Company gives certain guarantees as to bonuses to assurers which will practically have the effect of placing the Indian Company upon a footing similar to that held by older Companies.

THERE IS GROUND FOR SATISFACTION IN THE work done last year by the Bombay Customs. During the past four years there has been a steady growth in revenue from this source; and the figures for 1890 show that this upward tendency is still as decided as ever, the net increase last year exceeding a lakh and a-half of rupees. It is a noteworthy fact, however, that the revenue from exports is scarcely more than ten per cent. of that derived from imports, although there are some signs of improvement in this respect. The working of the Merchandise Marks Act is responsible for an increase of over ten thousand rupees in fines and confiscations, the number of cases having considerably more than trebled since the new law came into force.

AT ITS PRELIMINARY MEETING AT BELVEDERE on Tuesday, the Volunteer Conference consulted the advisers of the Bengal Government as to certain details regarding the subject of their enquiry. The conclusions arrived at in due course will be submitted in a report to the Government of India. The members of the Conference at the Hon. F. M. Halliday, Mr. A. Smith Commissioner, Presidency Division, Mr. Rivett-Carnac, Mr. C. E. Buckland, Mr. P. Nolan Mr. H. Lee, Colonel Chatterton, Mr. W. B. Hudson, and Mr. R. C. Stensdale. Many things conduce at present to make the Volunteer question one of pressing importance, and doubtless the Conference is resolved to act in the spirit of Sir Frederick Roberts' speech of Saturday last, bearing in mind that every increase to the number of our Volunteers will enable a corresponding increase to be made in the strength of the army we could place in the field.

ALREADY THE DOINGS OF THE KUCH BEHAR camp have been chronicled, but the wonders of the camp itself are almost equally worthy of notice. It is seldom even in the best of Indian camps de luxe that one finds the arrangements so complete in all their details. Every day brought the mails and supplies of ice from Calcutta, and the tired sportsman could always

count on an exquisite dinner, to be eaten to the strains of the Maharaja's band. Besides a doctor, the camp boasted a barber, a photographer, and a post-master, and was better supplied with all the comforts of civilised life than many an Indian station. But with all its delights, this dainty camp would have been left of its chief attraction had the Maharani not been present with the Maharaja, to do the honours and to preside over her little court with the grace, tact, and courtesy for which she is famed.

LIEUTENANT OTTO EHLERS HAS JOINED Mr. Savi in the Garo Hills, and is just in time to witness the closing elephant drive of the season. He made his way from Kuch Behar to Dhubri with elephants lent by the Maharaja of Durbhuanga, travelling at the rate of about thirty miles a day. From Dumra, he went on another 120 miles to the Kheddah Camp at Kisu, where the latest haul of elephants was still in the enclosure. The traveller will now be able to form an accurate opinion as to the difficulties to be encountered in introducing the Kheddah system into Africa. As some six thousand elephants are sacrificed annually in Africa for their ivory alone, the question which Mr. Ehlers has raised would certainly seem to be a matter worthy of the attention of the English Government. The honour of transplanting the Kheddah system of India to the Dark Continent ought not to be left to Germany.

MR. ARNOLD WRIGHT'S VOLUME OF BABYISM is likely to provoke a fresh outpouring of examples. Several have already reached us, but we give the place of honour to the following letter, which is perfectly genuine, and which reached a Calcutta law firm in the way of business a few days ago:—"The case is too long and tedious one. Men in the other side trying their head and heart with this or that fickle causes to throw suspicions over our rightful claim. Witnesses coming in numbers, applications and counter applications of title of no value coming from both the side one after another. A month passed and the case is not half finished. From morning till 8 o'clock in the evening of these days I have been so very busy with the affairs of the case that hardly I could secure time to take my dinner even. This utmost exertion, this self-devotion, this hard bodily and mental labour, is surely the work of a mind encouraged with the hope of ample remuneration, and I hope your justice, generosity, and liberality will not fail to favour me with a hopeful reward." The writer is a Mukteer, and we trust that his frankly avowed desire for "ample remuneration" will be gratified.

PLANTERS IN CEYLON ARE THOROUGHLY well satisfied with the results of tea cultivation last year. The total crop amounted to upwards of forty-five millions of pounds, or an increase of eleven million pounds as compared with the previous twelve months. The progress made in the development of the Australian and New Zealand markets continues to be in every way satisfactory; the amount exported in this direction more than doubling itself every year. The greatest proportionate increase has, however, taken place in the American and Canadian markets, where the consignments of Ceylon tea have nearly quadrupled themselves in the course of one year. There has, moreover, been a considerable increase of tea coming into bearing during the year 1890, and the total area under cultivation is now estimated at over two hundred thousand acres. It is thought that the present year will show a still larger increase. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that the Annual General Meeting of the Ceylon Planters, Association, held a few weeks since at Colombo was from first to last a most successful event.

THERE IS A CERTAIN MELANCHOLY INTEREST in a statement such as that which Captain Petley has drawn up on the wrecks and casualties in Indian waters during the year 1889. It was not an eventful year in this respect; indeed it was singularly free from those great maritime disasters which from time to time send a thrill of horror through the world. But in the driest details of its mischances there is much to remind us of the many perils in store for those who elect to go down to the sea in ships,—of the thousand and one accidents to which the man-of-war or the merchant liner is equally liable with the tiniest fishing craft. Curiously enough, in the case of Indian navigation, it is the river and not the ocean which is most to be feared. The Hughli was responsible in the year under consideration for more casualties than any part of the coast. Not less than forty-eight vessels came to grief during the twelve months on the voyage from Calcutta to the coast, as against thirty-six on the Bombay, and twenty-six on the Malabar coast. Against this it should, however, be mentioned, that the proportion of wrecks is far greater in the two last instances. On the Bombay coast alone eleven British Indian and Native craft became total wrecks. It is satisfactory to note that, although the number of casualties was not exceptionally low, the total tonnage lost was less than in any year since 1865; one-fourth of the total loss in 1885, and one-third of 1882, but unusually stormy years. The loss of life more-

over was also unusually light, amounting to 35, as compared with over a thousand in 1887, and more than nine hundred in 1889. The balance of probabilities is obviously against the recurrence of so favourable a season for some years to come; but it is to be hoped that the work which is now being done in improving the lighting of the coast, in providing harbours of refuge, and in supplementing our present knowledge of the highways and byways of the ocean, may tend eventually to reduce to a minimum the preventable accidents which now form by far the largest proportion of the annual list of casualties.

FRENCH OFFICIALS MAY PROTEST AS MUCH AS they please against Mr. Justice Scott's appointment, but the fact has been fully accepted, in Egypt. A Judicial Committee has already been formed consisting of the rion. Mr. Justice Scott, Judicial Adviser, Mr. Moriondo, Khedivial Adviser, and the Procureur Général of the Native Tribunals, to supervise the working in general of the Tribunals of First Instance and of the Delegations. It will report to the Minister of Justice on any irregularities it may discover.

BY A CURIOUS CHANCE, THE NEWLY APPOINTED Kidderpur Dock Committee were the last to walk over the floor of the tidal basin. In the course of their visit on Tuesday morning Messrs. O'Callaghan, J. L. Mackay, G. A. Ormiston, and Horace Bell, descended into the basin and examined the dry floor, and the same night the water got through the dam in front of the sixty-foot lock, and filled the basin. Had the inspection been deferred for a day, the Committee would have seen nothing but a sheet of water. No damage has been done by the "letting in of water." In another week the band would have been cut, and the event has thus only been anticipated by a few days.

A TOUCHING INSTANCE OF LOYALTY AND SELF-devotion came by the last mail from Ceylon. At midnight, a few days ago, the denizens of the jungle near Kollupitiya were startled by the appearance of a white man clad in the scantiest of night attire, his feet bare, and his hair dishevelled, forcing his way at top speed through the undergrowth with sublime disregard of danger to life or limb. It was Mr. de Freisch, the local representative of his Imperial Majesty the Czar, in quest of the Czarwitch's baby elephant. This playful infant, it appears, had been presented to the Czarwitch, and handed over to the Consul pending its shipment to Russia. In the course of the evening it untied the knot with which it was fastened to a tree in Mr. de Freisch's compound, and as soon as it was free began the night's proceedings by careering round the courtyard and breaking everything within reach. Mr. de Freisch promptly turned out and endeavoured to catch the truant, but he was knocked down twice, and the elephant, making a bolt for freedom, broke down the gate and escaped into the jungle. Without hesitation the Consul followed, but the elephant had by this time a good start, and despite all the efforts of his pursuer he succeeded for the time in making good his escape. Leaving the jungle, he called at several bungalows on his way, doing an infinity of damage, or which Mr. de Freisch will have to pay. He was, however, eventually captured, and is now in the hands of an experienced trainer. Meanwhile the Russian Consul's noble self-sacrifice under these very trying circumstances may be cited as an emphatic refutation of the widespread assumption that the sentiment of loyalty is dying out. While the Czar and his family have such adherents, there need be no fear for the stability of the Romanoff dynasty.

FOR THE PAST DAY OR TWO THE TELEGRAPH service between Europe and India has been very tardy and defective. We now learn that the blizzard in England is to blame. The Indo-European route via Teheran is intact, but the Eastern Company's route is interrupted at the English end, the snowstorm having completely destroyed the land lines. Later news says that the lines are working again, but badly. They are blocked with messages.

"TO TAKE TEA TO HONGKONG" SEEMS AT FIRST sight quite as forcible a figure of speech as the well-worn phrase "to take coals to Newcastle." Some one appears, however, to have found his interest in this first pursuit, for the Ceylon papers mention with surprise that not less than eighty-four thousand pounds of tea were shipped last year to China and Hongkong. Is this a new dodge of the heathen Chinese, or is he developing a taste for the Ceylon product?

IT SEEMS THAT THERE IS SOME MISUNDERSTANDING as to the so-called Conference on the Volunteer question which met at Belvedere the other day. There is no Volunteer "Commission," and there will be no further meetings at Belvedere. All that has happened is simply that the Government of India has addressed the Bengal Government on the subject, and that Sir Charles Elliott, before replying, has called together a few gentlemen to advise him as to his answer.

IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO NOTE THE POLICY of the new Governor-General of Portuguese India in regard to the five men who fled into