can be little doubt that a measure of the kind would be heartily welcomed, and would meet with great support.

Your Committee trusts that the session will not terminate before the introduction of the promised Bill.

Such a Bill should include:

1. The compulsory therapeutic detention of habitual drunkards, after a judicial process, on sworn medical testimony, and with every possible safeguarding of the liberty of the subject.

2. The establishment and management of special homes for inebriates for the poorest, for criminal and non-criminal inebriate offenders.

3. The inclusion of intoxication by any narcotic in the term "habitual drunkenness."

4. The appearance of voluntary applicants for curative detention before one justice instead of two justices as at present, or before some other authorised official.

5. Magisterial discretion to award a term of curative restraint in a reformatory or hospital, instead of a term of imprisonment in a gaol.

It would also be desirable to have all habitual drunkards under curative treatment subject to State or municipal inspection.

The Committee is glad to learn that in Austria, while the authorities are considering the project of special legislation for inebriates, one clinic has been set apart specially for the treatment of habitual drunkards.

The Committee has to thank Sir Charles Cameron, Bart., M.P., Dr. Farquharson, M.P., and Mr. Lees Knowles, M.P., for excellent parliamentary services. The reports of the Massachusetts State Hospital for Inebriates have been specially valuable.

The Committee recommends its re-election as follows: The President and President-elect, *ex-officio*, the President of Council, Mr. D. B. Balding, J.P., F.R.C.S.; Dr. R. Welsh Branthwaite, Dr. T. Bridgwater, J.P.; Sir Charles Cameron, Bart., M.D., M.P.; Dr. C. R. Drysdale, Mr. Geo. Eastes, Dr. J. W. Eastwood, J.P.; Dr. R. Farquharson, M.P.; Dr. W. T. Gairdner, F.R.S.; Dr. J. Hill Gibson, Dr. A. Grant, Mr. F. J. Gray, Dr. C. J. Hare, Dr. Arthur Jamison, Mr. H. R. Ker, Dr. Norman Kerr, Dr. Longhurst, Mr. R. H. Nicholson, Surgeon-Major G. K. Poole, M.D.; Brigade-Surgeon-Lieutenant-Colonel R. Pringle, M.D.; Fleet-Surgeon Geo. Robertson, M.D.; Dr. Jas. Stewart, Dr. Geo. Danford Thomas (coroner), Dr. Wynn Westcott (coroner), and Dr. H. W. Williams.

NORMAN KERR, M.D., Chairman.

REPORT OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE MEDICAL CHARITIES COMMITTEE.

YOUR Committee beg to report that as they had shortly before the last annual meeting communicated with the authorities of the chief metropolitan medical charities or personally interviewed them in regard to the reforms suggested as necessary to the better administration of the out-patient departments of hospitals, it has not been deemed necessary during the past year to take any further steps in the same direction.

Your Committee are, however, confident that the work done since the Medical Charities Committee was first constituted in 1891 has been, and still continues to be, productive of good results. The publication of the exhaustive reports of our Subcommittees and the promulgation of the recommendations of the Association have directed public attention to the subject, and, we believe, stimulated others outside the profession to action on similar lines, and we may hope that their efforts will have considerable influence in assisting to bring about the object we all desire, namely, a more satisfactory administration of our medical charities. It is most gratifying to observe that during the last few months the question of hospital reform has been much discussed both in the London and the provincial newspapers, and that the public now generally recognise the fact that reform of the out-patient departments of our medical charities to more effectually check abuse is absolutely necessary.

It is especially satisfactory to find that the Charity Organisation Society has taken up this subject, and has formed a strong Committee, consisting of leading members of the medical profession as well as influential representatives of

the general public interested in medical charities to endeavour to effect the reforms aimed at by our Association. This Committee have adopted a petition to H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, asking for the formation of a Central Hospital Board to administer the Hospital Fund founded in commemoration of the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen.

Your Committee believe that such a Board would be of the greatest service in bringing about hospital reform, and suggest that the opinion of the members of the Association should be taken at the forthcoming annual meeting of the Association as to the desirability of supporting the action of the Charity Organisation Society, by passing a resolution to be forwarded to H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, expressing approval of the suggested Board as a guarantee to the benevolent public that the administration of our medical charities has been placed on a sound basis.

During the past year the efforts of your Committee have been supplemented by the recently-formed Hospital Reform Association, of which Dr. Ward Cousins, our late President of the Council, is President. The investigations of this new organisation confirm in their entirety the reports of our Subcommittees, and although its chief recommendations are identical with those suggested in the report of our Subcommittee dated April 6th, 1892, and which have been repeatedly laid before the managers of the various metropolitan medical charities, the fact that the Hospital Reform Association consists of members of the general public as well as medical men renders it probable that the conclusions of the new organisation may have some weight with persons who would not be influenced by the opinions and suggestions of an association wholly composed of members of the medical profession.

Your Committee suggest that they be authorised to take such action as may be necessary either alone or in combination with the Charity Organisation Society to promote the formation of a Central Hospital Board.

THOMAS BRIDGWATER, Chairman.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON THE MENTAL AND PHYSICAL CONDITIONS OF CHILDREN.

YOUR Committee on their reappointment continued the study of the conditions of childhood in conjunction with the Committee appointed by the Congress of Hygiene and Demography. Last year we referred to the Report¹ on 100,000 children seen in schools 1888-94 as published by the help of your liberality; that report has been circulated, and forms a basis of facts that has been appreciated by many engaged in advancing the welfare of children, especially those less favoured in mental and physical development. The report, or census of childhood, has been used in Governmental inquiries by Committees of the Local Government Board, the Home Office, and the present Departmental Committee of the Education Department on Defective Children; extended evidence from these researches was given to each by Dr. Francis Warner at the request of the Committee.

During the past year it was decided that it was desirable to found a society to continue the work initiated by the Council of the British Medical Association in 1888, the usefulness of which has been established; this has been effected under the title of the Childhood Society, for the scientific study of the mental and physical conditions of children. Lord Egerton of Tatton is the President, and Sir Douglas Galton, F.R.S., is Chairman. This Society proposes to continue scientific inquiry and research, and to report on schools and institutions as well as to give evidence or advice on questions concerning educational methods as far as they relate to mental and physical conditions of childhood, especially the training of feeble-minded children.

Lectures by members of the Society and others have been delivered during this year on the scientific and educational aspects of child life followed by useful discussions.

The work conducted by your Committee for a period of nine years has been followed by efforts for the benefit of children

¹ Report on the Scientific Study of the Mental and Physical Conditions of Childhood, with particular reference to children of defective constitutions, and with recommendations as to education and training.—Published at Parkes Museum, Margaret Street, London.

in many directions. The National Association for Promoting the Welfare of the Feeble-minded has been formed to establish homes for this afflicted class. The British Child Study Association was founded in 1894 as a psychological society to investigate child nature: we look with interest for the results of their work. In several towns, as well as in London, separate classes for children receiving special instruction have been established, and in many other directions there are indications of a desire to obtain knowledge as to the exceptional conditions of childhood to be provided for and the best means of making such provision.

The experience gained by your Committee, and the fact that this work has been found useful in various directions, lead us to ask for reappointment in order that we may be in a position to give continued assistance in shaping the practical outcome of investigations conducted under your auspices. The Committee therefore ask to be reappointed.

FRANCIS WARNER, Hon. Sec.

REPORT OF THE ANÆSTHETICS COMMITTEE.

SINCE the reappointment of the Committee at the last annual meeting, the work, being for the most part clerical, has been largely accomplished by clerks, under the supervision of the assistant honorary secretary. The "complicated cases," 733 in number, were first submitted to the same thorough scheme of analysis that had been employed in dealing with the "uncomplicated cases." Owing to the many facts chronicled, often supplemented by considerable correspondence with the observers, the devotion of much time to this work became necessary. The different data collected from the entire analysis were then tabulated, and averages worked out where necessary; so that the Committee is now in possession of tables which show the result of the whole analysis of the record books. Upon these tables as a basis a full report of the investigation is now in process of construction.

The Committee beg that the Council will again reappoint it, and are applying for a further grant.

JONATHAN HUTCHINSON, Chairman.

CHRISTOPHER CHILDS, Hon. Sec.

GEORGE ROWELL, Assistant Hon. Sec.

REPORT OF THE THERAPEUTIC COMMITTEE.

DURING the past year the Therapeutic Committee have continued their inquiry relating to the frequency of employment of certain drugs at present included in the *British Pharmacopœia*. The interest taken in the inquiry conducted in 1895, and further evinced in the inquiry in 1896 concerning extract of aconite, has encouraged the Committee to endeavour to ascertain the views of members of the Association concerning ammonium phosphate. Circular letters have been addressed to those members of the Association who in 1895 stated that they employed this drug, and they have been requested to supply information as to the doses they employ and the objects for which they have given ammonium phosphate. The answers have been tabulated, and they show much agreement concerning the dose; the answers relating to the conditions for which it has been prescribed show greater difference of opinion; some use it for gouty conditions, but even of these a large number state that they have found it of little service and have now discontinued using it. Very many answers indicate that in their original statement of employing it often or rarely they have made an error. As answers to this inquiry are still being received it is inexpedient at present to give full details of this inquiry.

At the request of the Committee Dr. C. D. F. Phillips has continued his investigations concerning the physiological and therapeutic actions of hydrastis. Some of the results of the work of Dr. Phillips and Dr. Pembrey were embodied in a paper recently read by them before the Physiological Society. In a recent communication to the Therapeutic Committee Dr. C. D. F. Phillips gave a summary of the constituents of *hydrastis canadensis*, and referred to the physiological action of the various constituents. In his more recent experiments he has mainly employed the hydrochlorate of hydrastine, and he notes the readiness with

which it produces salivation in cats. He is convinced that it does not act upon the muscles of the uterus, and that it causes abortion by producing contraction of the blood vessels. As he proposes reading his paper at the Montreal meeting of the Association, it would be unfair to give his conclusions in greater detail.

Other subjects which have engaged the attention of the Committee during the past year are the actions of preparations of quillaia upon the heart, and the uses of senecio; upon both of these subjects preliminary reports have been made to the Committee.

NESTOR TIRARD, Hon. Sec.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE CONTROL OF RAILWAY SERVANTS' AND MARINERS' EYESIGHT.

THE Committee regrets to have to report that its recommendations endorsed by the influential deputation of ophthalmic surgeons which waited upon the President of the Board of Trade in 1895 have not yet been adopted by the Government.

So far as the eyesight of railway men is concerned, the Board of Trade asserts that it has not as yet any legal authority to interfere. Fortunately much stricter precautions are now taken by the majority of the railway companies, and although further reforms are desirable, the case is not so urgent as that of the mercantile marine.

The Committee is of opinion that the time has come when Parliamentary powers must be obtained to enforce at least the eyesight examination on every seaman at the outset of his apprenticeship, and steps are now being taken to inform Members of Parliament of the facts of the case.

The Committee desires again to draw attention to the international character which the movement for reform has now assumed. Seeing the importance of international agreement in the conduct of marine traffic, and in the visual requirements of mariners, the Committee hopes that the Council will delegate one or more of the Committee to attend the Second International Conference on Railway and Marine Hygiene proposed to be held at Brussels this autumn.

N. C. MACNAMARA, Chairman.

GEORGE MACKAY, Hon. Sec.

REPORT OF THE GENERAL PRACTITIONERS AND ETHICAL COMMITTEE.

THE General Practitioners and Ethical Committee have held four meetings during the past year. The question as to the desirability of medical education including instruction in medical ethics was again considered, and the following resolution unanimously adopted:

That the examining bodies be asked to send a copy of any ethical rules or declarations to which their diplomates have to subscribe on obtaining their diplomas.

Your Committee have to report that this communication has elicited replies and valuable help from the following Universities and Corporations:—

Royal College of Physicians, London.
Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh.
Royal College of Physicians, Ireland.
Royal College of Surgeons, London.
Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh.
Royal College of Surgeons, Ireland.
Royal University of Ireland.
University of London.
University of Oxford.
University of Cambridge.
University of Durham.
University of Edinburgh.
University of St. Andrews.
University of Aberdeen.
University of Glasgow.
Trinity College, Dublin.
Victoria University.
Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons, Glasgow.
Society of Apothecaries.

The Committee are specially indebted to Dr. Liveing, the Registrar of the Royal College of Physicians, London, for his full and courteous response to their communication. A copy of the replies has been recently forwarded to all the Branches, with the request that they be laid before the Ethical