

EDITORIAL NOTES.

FAILURES OF PROHIBITION.—Dr. William A. Hammond, in the *Popular Science Monthly* for May, says: Nowhere has the inefficacy of sumptuary laws been more thoroughly demonstrated than in Rome. There the dress, the food, the furniture of the houses, were attempted to be regulated by law after law, which were either openly or secretly disobeyed, and which eventually disappeared from the statute-books. The cost of entertainments was limited: the number of guests a person might have at his house was restricted. No woman was allowed to have more than half an ounce of gold, or to wear a dress of more than one color, or to ride in a carriage. In France, during the Celtic period, a law was passed that women should drink water only. In 1188 or thereabout no person was allowed to wear garments of vair, gray, zibeline, or scarlet color. No laced or slashed garments were allowed, and no one could have more than two courses at meals. In 1328 scarlet was only permitted to be worn by princes, knights, and women of high rank. The use of silver plate was prohibited except to certain high dignitaries: and women were frequently sent to prison in forties, fifties, and sixties at a time for wearing clothes above their rank. Even as late as the seventeenth century gold, as an ornament was prohibited.

BACTERIUM.—According to the Sanitary Record, Prof De Bary, of Strasburg, an authority in these matters, considers that amongst human diseases we are now pretty certain about the exact microbes which are the cause of anthrax, of relapsing fever, of tuberculosis, of gonorrhoea, and of Asiatic cholera. We know also something of the particular bacteria concerned in the infection of wounds, or pyæmia, as it was formerly called. There is one variety of erysipelas which has been definitely traced to a bacterium, one of the chain forming *Streptococci*. About Friedländer's micrococcus of pneumonia, as also about Lustgarten's bacillus of syphilis, there is still room for investigation; but the bacillus of leprosy has been definitely ascertained, as have also several bacteria causing diseases in the lower animals. The word bacterium, it may perhaps be well to state here, is used for the whole tribe of these minute organisms. A bacillus, a spirillum, or a streptococcus is still a bacterium, and the particular germ is distinguished by the second or specific name, as *Bacillus anthracis*, *Streptococcus albus*, &c.

THAT CLEANLINESS is a virtue next to that of Godliness science is constantly making clearer and clearer. The improved health, vigor and intellectuality and the reduced mortality among soldiers and pupils in the public schools in Europe from the system introduced for frequent and regular bathing by all the soldiers and pupils is now a fact well known. Since the use of the machinery for cheap washing with tepid water the death rate of the German army has been brought down to 5 per 1,000, and it is proved that they have been largely exempted from the recent epidemic, whilst the death-rate in the home army of Great Britain is about 8 in a 1,000. The cost of washing 100 men with tepid water, in Germany, is about 6d.; an advance has been made in England by Mr. W. Bartholomew, who with his improved jets, up as well as down, can more effectually wash the same number of men for probably not more than 4½d. In France they are beginning to try this washing with tepid water on soldiers, and it is shown that it may be done in 5 minutes of time as against 20 in the bath, and with 5 gallons of water as against 60 and 70 gallons in the bath. This is accomplished at the cost of a centime per head, soap and towel included.

FURTHER EVIDENCE of the value of cleanliness. In the twentieth and last annual report of the Massachusetts State Board of Health is given the results of some investigations into "The Number and Distribution of Micro-organisms in the Air of the Boston City Hospital, with some Carbonic Acid Determinations," by Mr. G. R. Tucker. He found that the air of the officers' rooms yielded an average of 2 bacteria in every 10 litres of air; of the nurses' rooms, 9.4: of the domestics' bedrooms, 20.3; of the laundry women's (the lowest class of domestics) bedrooms, 36.7. The number of bacteria present in the air of any apartment was apparently dependent upon the personal cleanliness of its occupants.

IN THE INVESTIGATIONS referred to above Mr. Tucker found, as was to be anticipated, that the prime factor in determining the number of micro-organisms in any given quantity of air was the degree of commotion, vibration, or stirring up of the dust, in progress at any given time; although, curiously enough, this appeared to have little effect in determining the number