

THE SPECIAL QUESTIONS which have been arranged for discussion in the Health Section at the next Social Science Congress, which is to be held at Birmingham on September 17-24, are: (1) What is the best method of dealing with (a) town sewage, (b) the products of house and street scavenging, and (c) the products of combustion? (2) What are the best means, legislative or other, of securing those improvements in the dwellings of the poor which are essential to the welfare of the community? (3) How far may the average death-rate of a population be considered an efficient test of its sanitary condition; and by what means can the high death-rate of children be reduced?

MEDICO-LEGAL.—SEWER GAS.—That prolific cause of disease, sewer-gas, is one of the hardest things to discover in a house by a superficial examination, and the cases are increasing where a tenant tries to escape payment of rent because of this defect. The law, however, is usually on the side of the landlord, to the extent that he is under no obligation in the matter, except where he makes representations that are false. According to the *Philadelphia Medical Times*, however, a recent case in a New York court establishes the rule that, if the tenant says he does not care to examine the house, but will rely upon the landlord's statement that it is in good order, and sewer-gas is subsequently discovered, the house can be abandoned and rent cannot be collected.

IN THE MORTALITY STATISTICS of the large cities in Great Britain the Registrar General has initiated a great improvement. Hitherto only the death-rate for the last week was given, but henceforward the death-rate in each of the three preceding weeks will be added, so that by a simple calculation the average for the month may be obtained. This will lessen the liability to error from causes interfering with the registration of deaths, which are much more likely to make themselves felt in a small population than in a large one. A single week's mortality return gives little real information as to the health of a town.

FIRST AID TO THE INJURED.—In many cities there are societies for giving early aid to persons who are accidentally or suddenly injured. One has long been in existence in London, Eng., and one was formed in New York two or three years ago. It is said that in many other cities people are following the good example and organizing such societies. They teach "what should be done in emergencies when there is no physician at hand, when we must ourselves either do something instantly or stand helplessly by and see a man suffer the agony of a broken limb or suffocate, or bleed to death, simply because we do not know how to help him." In New York the society's instruction is of the most practical character. It is given by means of lectures, accompanied by illustrations, a "subject" being present at each lecture, the pupils being furnished with the *Hand-book of First Aid to the Injured*, published by the society. More than one thousand lectures have been delivered in New York city alone by well known physicians.

AT THE HEALTH EXHIBITION in London last week was given a *conversazione*, which it is said the many thousands who were present will not readily forget. The scene in the gardens with the myriad many coloured lights, the splash and glitter of the fountains, the strains of the bands, and the crowds moving about under the trees, was as exceptional a one in this country as the evening was exceptional. Everyone was there, though not perhaps in the sense in which that phrase is used in the Society journals. There was genius somewhere at work in the organisation of the *fête*, which has distinctly given Hygeia a lift up in the estimation of many. Next month we shall give a description of things in the exhibition.

THE LATEST NOVELTY in New York City is paper soap, for travelers. Sheets of paper, coated with soap, are put up in the form of a small book of about three inches square. There are fifty soap sheets in each book, costing in the aggregate about as much as an ordinary cake of soap.