

highest registered in the fourth quarter of any year since registration of deaths commenced in Ireland the year 1864. As some explanation of this latter fact, it has to be considered that although the weather during the first two months of the quarter was comparatively much more favourable than it had been during the preceding portion of the year, During September it became unusually severe, and contributed much to increase the mortality amongst the very young and very old. The suffering caused by the extremely bad harvest, and through the depression of trade, is also, no doubt, responsible to some extent for the excessive death-rate of the quarter under notice ; but it is stated that during that period none of the registrars return any deaths as attributable to starvation, although some of them admit that want may have led to increased sickness and liability to disease. The deaths from the seven principal zymotic diseases were slightly under the corresponding quarter of 1878, but above the average mortality for the fourth quarter of the three years 1876 to 1878. Scarlet fever has been steadily increasing throughout the whole of last year, and after the three months ending December, was credited with having caused 589 deaths. Measles and whooping-cough were the next most fatal, the former with a mortality of 319 and the latter with 459. Of the 24,497 deaths registered during the quarter, 3968, or 16.2 per cent, occurred in public institutions.

VITAL STATISTICS OF THE PAST YEAR IN GREAT BRITAIN.—Accompanying the return of the Registrar-General for the last quarter of the year 1879, (*Med. Times and Gazette*) will be found a brief summary for the whole of that year. From this we gather that in the United Kingdom 1,144,571 births and 707,379 deaths were registered during the period—equal to rates of 33.5 and 20.7 per 1000 respectively of the population estimated to be living in the middle of the year. The *natural* increase of population, by excess of births over deaths, was 437,192, against 436,360 in 1878. In England and Wales during the past year the birth-rate was equal to 35.1, and the death-rate to 21 per 1000 persons living. The birth-rate was 0.6, and the death-rate 0.8 below the average rate in the ten preceding years. The death-rate in 1879 was also 0.7 below that which prevailed in 1878, but somewhat exceeded the rate in 1877, which was the lowest on record. The annual death-rate in England and Wales