

has again raised the hopes of the civilised world, but the data which has come to hand is still very meagre. It would seem that the celebrated French savant has, at any rate, advanced our knowledge of the disease—an important step. Metchnikoff, the Director of the Pasteur Institute, who was appointed to examine into Doyen's method of working, has put on record the fact that the *Micrococcus neoformans* described by Dr. Doyen as the causative agent of cancer is an entity hitherto unknown to the scientific world. We all most earnestly wish that the good things hoped for may be realised; meanwhile the more natural life which is to be found in our open-air sanatoria must make largely as a preventative.

In the report issued by the society established in London for the investigation of this disease special mention is made of Mr. Gilruth's work among fishes. It was found that a large number of the trout reared in captivity suffer from a form of this disease, which attacks the gills. The interdependence of the whole animal world is again illustrated, and the unwisdom of attempting to differentiate between diseases of the so-called lower animals and that of man is demonstrated.

The inclusion of the following tables will greatly enhance the value of my report, and I again express my thanks to the Registrar-General.

BIRTHS.

The number of births registered in the colony during 1904 was 22,766, or 26.94 in every 1,000 persons living. The rate is the highest reached since the year 1894, the number of births being 937 in excess of that for the year 1903, an increase of 4.3 per cent. From 1882 until the year 1899 there was a regular fall in the birth-rate. The number of births registered in a year reached 19,846 in 1884, and, after falling to 17,876 in 1892, has risen to 22,766 in 1904 as stated above.

The figures for each year from 1882 are worthy of notice, especially in connection with the subsequent particulars given to marriages solemnised and the growth of population:—

Year.	Number of Births.	Rate per 1,000 of Population.	Year.	Number of Births.	Rate per 1,000 of Population.
1882	19,009	37.32	1894	18,528	27.28
1883	19,202	36.28	1895	18,546	26.78
1884	19,846	35.91	1896	18,612	26.33
1885	19,693	34.35	1897	18,737	25.96
1886	19,299	33.15	1898	18,955	25.74
1887	19,135	32.09	1899	18,835	25.12
1888	18,902	31.22	1900	19,546	25.60
1889	18,457	30.07	1901	20,491	26.34
1890	18,278	29.44	1902	20,655	25.89
1891	18,273	29.01	1903	21,829	26.61
1892	17,876	27.83	1904	22,766	26.94
1893	18,187	27.50			

The marriages have increased numerically, and the population of the colony also.

Year.	Number of Marriages.	Mean Population (excluding Maoris).	Year.	Number of Marriages.	Mean Population (excluding Maoris).
1882	3,600	509,309	1894	4,178	679,196
1883	3,612	529,292	1895	4,110	692,417
1884	3,800	552,590	1896	4,843	706,846
1885	3,813	573,362	1897	4,928	721,609
1886	3,488	582,117	1898	5,091	736,260
1887	3,563	596,374	1899	5,461	749,984
1888	3,617	605,371	1900	5,860	763,594
1889	3,632	612,716	1901	6,095	777,968
1890	3,797	620,780	1902	6,394	797,793
1891	3,805	629,783	1903	6,748	820,217
1892	4,002	642,245	1904	6,983	845,022
1893	4,115	661,349			

The average number of children to a marriage may be ascertained by comparing the number of legitimate births for a series of years with the marriages, but commencing with the marriages in the year preceding that for which the first number of births is taken.

The figures for the twenty-year period 1885-1904 show a decline in the proportion of births to every marriage in the preceding year from 5.01 to 4.87, as below:—

Year.	Marriages.	Legitimate Births.	Proportion of Births to every Marriage solemnised in the Preceding Year.
1884	3,802
1885	3,815	19,063	5.01
1886	3,489	18,697	4.90
1887	3,565	18,518	5.31
1888	3,617	18,352	5.14
1889	3,632	17,845	4.93
1890	3,797	17,675	4.87