

more searching and delicate. But I do not think that Christians need be afraid to admit it. Life is really full of profound ironies, and why should we not laugh at them when they are not too tragic for laughter?

There is a very old prejudice against admitting the idea of humour into religion. Plato objected not only to stories which made the gods ridiculous, but to the notion that the gods ever laugh. It is rather sad that the laugh of derision is the only laugh attributed to Jehovah in the Old Testament.

In my forthcoming book of essays I have suggested (and doubtless I shall be well scolded for the suggestion) that as the want of a sense of humour is considered a defect in a human being, it is not unreasonable to infer that it would also be a defect in the Deity. And, if so, since we attribute to the Creator every perfection, we must suppose that he possesses a sense of humour, and laughs? Is there any reason why he should not? We are not bound to conceive of him as a sour Puritan, and surely the world is full of laughable objects. Could anyone have invented the hippopotamus, the giraffe, the mandrill and the dodo except (partly, at least) for fun?

An American Nurses' Memorial Building erected in France in connection with the Florence Nightingale School of Nursing, Maison de Sante Prot  stante Hospital, at Bordeaux, was formally dedicated on May 12.

"The new school is built on the estate known as Bagatelle, given to the board for the new hospital. It consists of sixteen acres with beautiful gardens and trees. The total of money contributed by American nurses for the erection of this memorial building was approximately 850,000 francs."

In referring to this memorial building at the Seattle Conference Miss Noyes, President of the American Nursing Association said:

"Through the representatives from the three National Nursing Associations which have been appointed to serve as an advisory committee to the board of trustees, we hope to maintain either directly, or through proxies who may be in France, a very close relationship with this school. It is our desire that this shall be maintained for ever, as a suitable and lasting memorial to those of our members who died in line of duty, and that in giving this school to France we could in no better way symbolize the spirit and service of American nurses, than by giving to the nurses of France an opportunity to prepare themselves under proper conditions and environment for the profession which our deceased sisters represented."

THE WOMAN ENGINEER.

During the war women played a great part in engineering and in many cases became extremely skilful in engineering operations. When hostilities concluded the trade unions opposed the continuance of the employment of women for skilled work and as a result, the number employed has decreased to an enormous extent.

Nevertheless it appears that there is still scope for the woman engineer and it is probably not known that there exists a Women's Engineering Society, the third annual meeting of which was held last week. Lady Parsons, the wife of Sir Charles Parsons the inventor of the turbine, was elected President.

According to the report of the Women's Engineering Society considerable progress has been made during the past year and marked success has been achieved by women engineers. They are now being admitted to the technical institutions and are doing valuable work, especially in regard to research and invention. It is the only society of its kind in the world but it will probably soon be the parent society to others of a similar nature. In France, Holland and Scandinavia, women engineers are showing the greatest interest in the British Society and it is hoped later on that a closer co-operation will be effected. Active interest is also being taken in the Society's work in India and America, where the practical help of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers has been obtained.—From "The Times" (Engineering Supplement).

MEDICAL MAGAZINE PAGE.

From "The British Medical Journal."

THE eighty-third annual report of the Registrar-General of Births, Deaths and Marriages in England and Wales for the year 1920 has just been published and the figures in each respect are remarkable.

The marriage rate was 20.2 per 1,000, which is the highest recorded. The birth rate is the highest recorded since 1909, the death rate is the lowest on record. The excess in the birth rate, the largest in the history of the country was due to a temporary rebound following demobilization, in conjunction with the exceptionally low death rate. The proportion of males to females born was 1,052 per 1,000 and so it continued much above pre-war experience. Another big step forward is shown in the figures relating to infant mortality. The rate fell from 89 (the lowest rate) to 80 per 1,000 births. This improvement however is partly due to the large increase of the birth rate during the year.

The year 1920 shows a rise in deaths from most forms of epidemic disease as compared with the rate for 1919, which was unprecedentedly low. The increase in respect of measles and whooping cough is considerable, the only decrease is for enteric fever.

With regard to tuberculosis it is satisfactory to learn that the death rate was considerably lower than in any previous year.

The Gold Medal for Distinguished Merit of the British Medical Association has been presented to the Right Hon. Sir T. Clifford Allbutt and to Lt.-Col. Arthur Martin Leake, V.C., F.R.C.S.