

pressure on some neighbouring part. The scoop is applicable to indolent, softening adherent glands, especially when adherent to the skin. Under similar circumstances, cautery-puncture is strongly recommended; the author is much in favour of the thermo-cautery for the opening of gland-abscesses. He refers to the opinions of hospital surgeons, obtained by the Editor of the JOURNAL in 1871 (see vol. ii, 1871, page 727), concerning the treatment of gland-abscesses. Early incision and small puncture was advocated by the majority.

This valuable work concludes with a description of Mr. William Adams's ingenious operation for the improvement of adherent strumous cicatrices.

REPORTS AND ANALYSES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF NEW INVENTIONS IN MEDICINE, SURGERY, DIETETICS, AND THE ALLIED SCIENCES.

GETTLI'S MILK FOOD.

THIS fairly deserves the name of "milk" food. It contains more than 9 per cent. of protein substances, rich in nitrogen, which must be classed as true flesh formers, combined with nearly 6 per cent. of ready-formed fat, mostly in the form of butter-fat; and therefore palatable and readily digestible. Nearly one-half of the sample is soluble in water. A portion of this solution is, of course, the sugar which has been used in the manufacture of the food, but other parts consist of soluble albuminoid matters and other easily digestible substances. Starchy matters are of necessity present, as they ought to be in a food of this kind; but care has been taken to cook them thoroughly beforehand, so that the solubility and digestibility have both increased. The food is a very good sample of its class. It is prepared by the Swiss Milk and Food Company; and the sole agents are Messrs. R. Lehmann and Co., 106, Fenchurch Street, London.

PURE ALPINE SWISS MILK.

WE have examined a sample of this product of the First Swiss Alpine Milk Exporting Company, and find that it consists of concentrated milk perfectly free from any admixture of cane sugar or glucose, so often used to increase the specific gravity and apparent consistence of condensed milk. As regards actual concentration, the sample is rather more concentrated than most of those which are now in the market. It contains rather more than three times the proportion of non-fatty milk solids which are found in ordinary good milk; but the most notable feature in connection with the analysis is that the proportion of fat (butter) is high. Generally speaking, unsweetened milk, when condensed, loses fat considerably, and the resulting product is similar to what would be obtained from skimmed milk, rather than from whole milk. In this, however, we find that the reverse is the case, and that the concentration has been conducted in such a way that the butter-fat is high in proportion, showing that the milk itself was originally rich, and that no fat has been lost nor destroyed during the process of condensation.

The sample is put up with special care in glass, so that all possible risk of contamination by metallic impurities is avoided.

In all cases where a pure unsweetened milk is required for dietetic purposes, this brand should be tried.

THE Duke of St. Albans has promised to preside at the dinner of the Samaritan Hospital to be held on Tuesday the 16th May.

SALFORD.—During the last quarter of 1881 there were 1,075 deaths registered in Salford. Of these, 547, or more than one-half, were less than five years old, and 318, or 30 per cent. were under twelve months. The death-rate was equal to 24.2 per 1,000, being the lowest death-rate for the December quarter recorded in Salford for the last ten years. Of the total deaths, 6 were from small-pox (16 cases of which were known of); 9 from measles, 24 from scarlet fever, 5 from diphtheria, 18 from whooping-cough, and 32 from diarrhoea. Thus to the seven more familiar zymotic diseases 172 deaths were referred, as compared with 167 in the previous quarter. The zymotic death-rate was equal to 3.9 per 1,000, against 6.4 in the corresponding quarter of 1880. The increased infantile death-rate is accounted for by the excessive fatality of whooping-cough, which accounted for the deaths of 77 children, while the average for the previous ten quarters was only 27.0. Seventy deaths, or 6.5 per cent. of the total mortality, were returned as uncertified.

BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1882.

SUBSCRIPTIONS to the Association for 1882 became due on January 1st. Members of Branches are requested to pay the same to their respective Secretaries. Members of the Association not belonging to Branches, are requested to forward their remittances to the General Secretary, 161A, Strand, London. Post Office Orders should be made payable at the West Central District Office, High Holborn.

The British Medical Journal.

SATURDAY, APRIL 22ND, 1882.

THE LAMSON CASE.

THE plea of insanity which has been set up on behalf of George Henry Lamson since his condemnation to death, and which has been earnestly pressed on the consideration of the Home Secretary by the President of the United States, must have caused surprise to all who had attentively followed the trial of this remarkable criminal. For amongst the painful impressions left by that trial upon the minds of those who were present, or who mastered the published reports of the evidence, was the conviction that here at least was a case in which no doubt could arise as to the mental soundness of the convict. No suggestion had been made by the defence that he was not, to the fullest extent, responsible for his actions; and nothing in his appearance or demeanour had given the most distant indication of eccentricity or disorder of mind. The motive of his crime was ostensible enough, and the manner of its execution betokened coolness and calculation. When, therefore, Mr. Justice Hawkins passed sentence of death upon Lamson, and characterised his crime as "cruel, base, and treacherous", it was believed that the case was practically at an end; and it was certainly not anticipated that Sir William Harcourt would be called on to decide on the sanity or insanity of the convict. But few persons sentenced to death in this country are left to their fate without some effort being made to obtain a commutation of the capital punishment; and it was, therefore, foreseen that the Home Secretary would be petitioned to spare Lamson's life, but it was thought that any petition presented would be founded on the alleged inconclusiveness of the scientific evidence adduced at the trial, and not, certainly, on the mental unsoundness of the convict.

All such anticipations, however, have been falsified; for, in the application made for the clemency of the Crown, it seems to be admitted that Percy Malcolm John died of a poisonous dose of aconitine administered to him by Lamson; while it is maintained that Lamson was, at the time of administering the aconitine, so disordered in intellect as to be unaccountable for what he did. A large mass of documentary evidence in support of this theory, collected in this country and in America, has been already submitted to the Home Secretary, and a further contribution of testimony to the same effect will be placed before him almost immediately. It is sincerely to be hoped that this new testimony will enable Sir William Harcourt to arrive at the conclusion that Lamson was not in the possession of a reasonable judgment and controlling will when he destroyed his brother-in-law; but, at the same time, it must be admitted that the evidence which has been published up to this time does not justify any such belief, nor apparently warrant an interference with the course of law. That evidence, accepting it fully and simply as it stands, establishes two facts: that Lamson is a member of a family in which there have been several instances of insanity; and that he was addicted to the use of narcotics, which he had at times taken so largely as to induce delusions, hallucinations, and delirium. But, as regards the first of these facts, it must be remembered that there are but few families in any civilised country in which instances of insanity might not be discovered; and that thousands of men, whose sanity is never called in question, are descended from ancestors much more deeply tainted with madness than were those of

Lamson. An inherited predisposition to insanity is not to be predicated of individuals, however mad their progenitors may have been, unless the individuals themselves show signs of defective mental equilibrium or disorder of the nervous system; and so, in connection with criminal responsibility, a proof of insanity in ancestors is only of value as corroborative or interpretative of existing indications of mental disease. These indications, it may be argued, were not wanting in Lamson, but may be recognised in the fantastic ideas and extravagances of conduct which several witnesses describe. The toxic influence, however, of the drugs of which he partook is in itself adequate to explain his preposterous statements and wild behaviour; for morphia, like alcohol, if taken in sufficient quantity, will disturb the action of any brain, whatever its hereditary tendencies may be; and the utmost that can be said of Lamson's supposed inherited taint is, that it perhaps disposed him to contract the morphia habit, and that it aggravated the effects of that habit.

As regards the second fact alleged in Lamson's favour, that he had, by the use of narcotics, weakened his intellect and paralysed his will, it must be observed that irresponsibility for criminal conduct cannot be admitted in anyone addicted to such drugs, unless a continuous state of mental disorder, abolishing the knowledge of right and wrong at the time of committing the act, has been set up by them. The delirious excitement which exists while they are still circulating in the blood and poisoning the nerve-centres, does not confer irresponsibility any more than drunkenness does. It is only when a mental state analogous to delirium tremens, or mania *a potu*, or chronic alcoholism, has been induced by narcotics—a state which will not at once terminate when their use is abandoned—that insanity of such a nature as to exempt from punishment can be said to exist. Now, did insanity of this kind exist in Lamson? We regret to say that there is, up to this time, no certain proof that it did. The delusions, restlessness, prostration, and oddities of conduct, of which his friends speak, seem to have occurred while he was actually under the influence of narcotics; and his friends, indeed, seem to have regarded him as a man abandoned to a bad habit, and not as one bereft of reason. No attempt seems to have been made to place him under restraint in a lunatic asylum; and immediately before the tragedy at Wimbledon he was living alone in London, and under no kind of supervision.

It is probable that popular notions as to the effects of the habitual use of narcotics on the human organism are greatly exaggerated. Sir George Birdwood maintains that opium in moderation is not only innocuous, but beneficial to East Indians; and instances might be quoted in which longevity and high intellectual activity have been shown to be compatible with an excessive consumption of this drug in Europeans. It cannot be questioned, however, that morphia, taken in the manner and amount in which Lamson took it, is pernicious and demoralising. Atropine, which he appears to have combined with the morphia, ought, to some extent, to have antagonised its effects; but it is quite possible that two such alkaloids, taken together for a long period, might be more injurious to health and mental integrity than either of them taken alone. We have not recorded facts sufficient to justify any authoritative statement as to the consequences of the protracted employment of a mixture of morphia and atropine, and far less are we in a position to say what might be the result of the habitual use of a mixture of these with aconitine. The Rev. Mr. McElroy says Lamson told him that he used atropine, but preferred aconitine, which, as far as we are aware, has never hitherto been taken by any one habitually in the manner of morphia, or in order to secure agreeable sensations. But without speculating on the possible effects of the continuous use of certain drugs or combinations of drugs, the important point seems to be to determine what was Lamson's mental condition at the time of committing the crime of which he has been convicted, as far as that is at present known to us. And in the evidence bearing on this point, we certainly do not recognise a description of the dreamy, retiring, contemplative mood of the habitual opium-eater on the verge of insanity, nor of the mental confusion, or weakness, or delusions of

the lunatic. Lamson was vigorous, ingenious, and astute in attempting to raise money to meet his pressing wants immediately before the murder. Mr. John Law Tulloch, medical student, testifies that on the 3rd of December, the day of the murder, Lamson acted so strangely at the Eyre Arms, that one of his friends asked him if he had just escaped from a lunatic asylum, but Lamson's condition at this time did not evidently impress Mr. Tulloch with his incapacity to transact business, for he cashed a cheque for him; nor with his inability to take care of himself, for he permitted him to start for the Continent unaccompanied. Mr. William Tulloch, an accountant, also testifies that at this time Lamson was so strange and excitable that five friends who saw him were inclined to think him mad; but he supplies perhaps the clue to Lamson's strangeness and excitability by mentioning that he saw him use the hypodermic syringe that day. As Mr. Bedbrook has not in the witness-box, nor since, alluded to any striking peculiarity in Lamson's behaviour, we may conclude that there was nothing in it to attract his attention. Nay, we may infer that he noticed nothing suggestive of insanity in his guest, from the fact that he swallowed a capsule which he handed him and permitted his pupil to swallow another. Lamson's conversation with Mr. Bedbrook bore no trace of mental bewilderment, agitation, nor of delusions, but dexterously led up to the criminal act, for which he had come prepared, to wit, the administration of the poison-charged capsule to his afflicted brother-in-law. No one reading Mr. Bedbrook's account of what took place at his house on the 3rd of December can detect in Lamson's words or acts any symptoms of mental aberration, nor of the immediate pernicious influence of narcotics. His victim certainly did not think him insane or narcotised, for, while he remarked that he was not looking well, he said nothing that pointed to the faintest suspicion of his sanity or sobriety.

It is suggested that Lamson, having an unreasonable faith in the efficacy of aconitine, had come to use it recklessly, and, that depraved and weak-minded in consequence of his indulgence in morphia, he gave a poisonous dose to his brother-in-law with culpable heedlessness, but without homicidal intention. Dr. Volkin, who was associated with Lamson in a hospital at Bucharest for six months during the Russo-Turkish war, asserts that he administered aconitine to a reckless and unwarrantable extent, and that he, Dr. Volkin, had to remonstrate with him on the subject. It would be interesting to know what is precisely meant by administering aconitine to a reckless and unwarrantable extent, and what were the results of this kind of practice; and it is impossible to avoid the criticism that something more than remonstrance was needed on the part of Dr. Volkin when he saw such a hobby or system of practice being pursued by one, whom, he now says, he knew at the time to be of unsound mind, and irresponsible for his conduct. But the answer to the suggestion that Lamson gave the aconitine to Percy Malcolm John recklessly, is that he gave it surreptitiously. If he were administering a remedy which he believed to be beneficial, what necessity was there for concealment any more than with regard to the quinine which he had openly prescribed for his brother-in-law? No one can doubt that the aconitine was lodged in the capsule, which he filled up with sugar, and induced his brother-in-law to swallow in the presence of Mr. Bedbrook, as an innocent illustration of a way of avoiding nauseous tastes; and no medical man can doubt that the quantity of aconitine found in the body of Percy Malcolm John could have been administered with only one purpose, and that a murderous one. The most rash and ignorant tyro—and Lamson was not a tyro in the use of this drug—could not have administered such a dose as a medicine. But, again, if this dose of aconitine had been recklessly or accidentally given, why was not the truth avowed at once, why was the attempt made to conceal its administration, at the risk of such an inevitably disastrous misinterpretation of the act, in the event of its being proved and brought home to its performer?

Poisoning is by no means a common form of homicide amongst the insane, and is, indeed, almost inconceivable as a lunatic crime, except as the result of a delusion. But when poisoning was resorted to by a deluded lunatic, there would assuredly be other evidences of the exist-

ence of the delusion, either before or after the act. The poisoning would not stand alone as the expression of the delusion. Prior to it morbid suspicions would betray themselves, or after it there would come a justification of it, or unmistakable tokens of mental perversion. But in Lamson's case there has not been adduced any evidence of delusions involving Percy Malcolm John, or of permanent delusions of any kind; nor have indications been afforded of an insane attitude towards the crime since its perpetration. When found guilty, the prisoner merely protested his innocence before God, and it is not understood that he has made any further statement since. Dr. Coghill hints that he may have given way to morbid impulses; but, surely, any theory of morbid impulse is untenable, in view of the elaborate preparations made for the crime, and for flight after its commission.

We should rejoice should Sir William Harcourt, guided by the new evidence which is to be laid before him, see his way to extend the prerogative of mercy to this unhappy man, concluding that his powers of self-control, perhaps congenitally feeble, had been sapped by the exposure and privations which he underwent when serving in the East, and by the drugs to which he has addicted himself; but the plea of insanity in cases of murder requires to be jealously guarded, in order that it may be respected when righteously urged in opposition to the hasty conclusions of scientific ignorance and legal prepossession; and we have thought it our duty, therefore, to point out that, as yet, no convincing evidence of Lamson's mental unsoundness has been brought forward.

ON THE MANAGEMENT OF INHALATION OF CHLOROFORM.

IN recent communications to the Academy of Medicine in Paris, M. Gosselin has asserted his opinion that chloroform, even if slightly impure, has no serious drawbacks; and that it does not cause death when it is properly administered. In his last communication, he pointed out what is, in his opinion, a proper method of administering chloroform.

There are, he said, three principal methods. The first is, to cause it to be inhaled in very small quantities at a time, but continuously. This is the plan employed especially for parturient women; sensibility is blunted without agitation, but sleep is not complete, and there is not true anaesthesia. Secondly, chloroform may be administered from the first in great abundance, and continued without interruption. When this method is tried experimentally on animals, the subject first moves about in an agitated manner, then falls asleep, and at the end of ten or twelve minutes falls inert, without pulse or respiration. This condition is often only one of apparent death; but sometimes death is real. What has happened is this; the blood of the animal has received too much chloroform at one time; the anaesthetic vapours have excited, and then paralysed, first the brain, then the spinal cord, and finally the medulla oblongata; the real or apparent death results from the suppression of the influence of the last-named organ on the movement of the heart or on respiration. Thirdly, chloroform can also be given in progressive or intermittent doses. This is the method which M. Gosselin has studied and perfected during the last twenty years. It consists in causing a certain number of inspirations of chloroform mixed with air to be taken, followed by two of pure air; and this is repeated according to the following formula:—

Chloroform with Air	6	7	8	8	8	10	10	10	10	10	10	4	4
Pure Air	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

It is generally sufficient to give 113 inhalations of chloroformed air and 28 of pure air, as above, to produce complete and safe anaesthesia. Administered in this way, the chloroform is partly eliminated by the respiratory passages. On the other hand, while alternate inspirations of anaesthetic air and pure air are taken, the nervous centres gradually become accustomed to the chloroform, and are enabled to receive a somewhat larger dose without inconvenience. There is no agitation; vomiting is very rare; and anaesthesia is produced without trouble. By proceeding in this way, and at the same time properly observing

all contraindications, it may become possible to see no more deaths from chloroform.

In the discussion which followed, M. Labbé said that for nearly a year he had modified his method of giving chloroform in a manner different from that of M. Gosselin, and had obtained nearly similar results. The agitation at the outset had been diminished; vomiting and consecutive disturbance had become less frequent; and yet, instead of progressively increasing the quantity of chloroform, and causing frequent inspirations of pure air, he gave chloroform in very small doses, but continuously, so as to avoid the reduction at each moment of the quantity of chloroform mixed with the air. He poured from ten to twelve drops of chloroform at the time on to the cloth, and renewed this dose as soon as the linen dried. He never voluntarily interrupted the inhalations of chloroform, only taking away the cloth to again pour on it ten or twelve drops of the anaesthetic. He believed that he was thus able to make use of all the chloroform employed, without ever subjecting the patient to those large doses which endanger life. He had thus been enabled to perform operations lasting from twelve to fifteen minutes, only using from a drachm to a drachm and a half of chloroform. He had even succeeded in keeping the patient more than an hour in a state of complete anaesthesia during ovariectomy, by the use of only six drachms of chloroform. M. Labbé stated that he found support for this view in the researches of M. Paul Bert on the working dose of chloroform. As M. Bert has demonstrated, chloroform does not act by the quantity of it respired, but by the proportion of it in the air inspired. There is, he said, more chance of keeping up the proper dose (which is not yet determined for the human subject) by employing very small quantities continuously. Consequently, there is less danger of overstepping the boundary between the anaesthetic dose and the fatal dose.

M. Verneuil said that, at the outset of the discussion, when the impurities only of chloroform were in question, he affirmed that the chloroform obtained in Paris was generally pure; and that the defects in anaesthesia were, as a rule, not due to the chloroform, but to a bad method of administering it. M. Gosselin had but, as it were, reasserted M. Sédillot's aphorism, that chloroform, if properly administered, never causes any accidents. M. Verneuil considered M. Gosselin's opinion to be dangerous. Even the purest chloroform might cause death. M. Verneuil went on to say that he had administered chloroform for the last thirty years. During twenty-nine and a half years, he was successful with the ordinary methods; but some months since he lost a patient. He conscientiously believed that in this case the death was not to be attributed to a method which he would use on the person who was dearest in the world to him. M. Gosselin's theory on intermittences in the administration of chloroform he held to be acceptable in some points; but this theory would tend to formulate a simple algebraic equation: anaesthetic chloroformisation = 113 respirations of chloroform + 28 respirations of pure air. It was difficult, M. Verneuil thought, to introduce mathematical calculations on a matter of which so little was known as the proper dose of chloroform to be given to the human subject. M. Gosselin was of opinion that chloroform was constantly eliminated by the kidney, by respiration, and by the skin; but nothing was known of its elimination by the kidney and the skin. He was well aware that death might happen at the outset of the administration of the anaesthetic, when the blood was not yet saturated with the chloroform; and he also knew that patients might die whilst in a condition of complete chloroformisation, or ten or twelve minutes afterwards. It was impossible to make a comparison of chloroformisation according to the operation, and according to the region in which it is performed. Therefore M. Verneuil thought that chloroformisation should not be considered a simple matter, within the comprehension of everyone, and capable of being expressed in an algebraic formula. The saying of Robert was always true: Whenever any anaesthetic agent whatsoever was introduced into the animal economy, so as to rapidly decrease the motility and sensibility of the patient, the person operated on ran the greatest risks. It was true, concluded M. Verneuil, that

the manner of administration had reached perfection; but the chloroform and the patient himself must always be taken into account, and this element was left out of sight in M. Gosselin's formula.

We are desirous to invite discussion rather than to offer criticism of these views of our eminent French colleagues, and therefore for the moment abstain from any comment.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRISON SURGEONS.

WE note, with pain and regret, that an attack—and as it appears to us on the face of the published facts, and the result of the inquiries which we have made on the subject, a most unjustifiable attack—has been made upon the medical officer of Her Majesty's prison at Chester, in respect of the death of a prisoner who had recently been confined in the gaol, under a magistrate's sentence, for a short term of imprisonment. We gather, from the evidence, that this man had been sentenced to a month's imprisonment with hard labour; on being examined, however, by the medical officer, this gentleman observed symptoms which indicated irritability of the heart, and spasmodic distressed respiration coincident with it. Knowing these symptoms, and having examined the man, the medical officer at once reported that he was not, in his opinion, a fit subject for hard labour, and recommended that this part of his sentence should, on medical grounds, not be carried out. The hard labour was therefore, in virtue of the report of the medical man, not enforced; and the fact that it was not imposed was entirely due to the diagnostic skill and the intelligent humanity of the medical officer. There was nothing in the prisoner's condition, during the remainder of his stay in the prison, to indicate any further aggravation of his symptoms, nor any condition calling for active medical treatment. Accidentally, however, it happened that it was desirable to remove one or two of the prisoners from the cells to the infirmary, in order to make room for others. Having regard to the condition of the man in question and to the fact that hard labour had not been enforced in virtue of the medical report, he was selected, with the medical officer's approval, with two others, and sent to the infirmary; the reason being, not that there was any change in his symptoms or condition which required hospital treatment, but that, as three persons had to be removed from the cells, he was thought to be one of those who might with the least inconvenience be so removed. He had no attack of illness while in the infirmary, and his condition did not then call for any medical treatment; but he had the advantage of rest and quiet, so far as his irritable disposition allowed him to avail himself of such an opportunity. He left the prison apparently no worse than when he came in, but, on the contrary, probably rather better, but still very subject to the cardiac attacks incidental to the condition of the heart, which make any man's life under such circumstances (as it is quite unnecessary to state to our medical readers) a matter of most uncertain tenure, and liable at any moment to sudden termination. He was seen at 12 o'clock on the day of his discharge from the prison by the medical officer, who found him in his usual condition, but having a somewhat irregular pulse. He moved about very freely all the morning, and his condition was not one to inspire any special uneasiness or alarm at the time; and, on inspection, there was nothing in his state to suggest any immediate cause for anxiety, or any reason for exceptional measures. This man had the power and the habit of rapidly accelerating at will the heart's action, and inducing a condition of great cardiac irritability and excitement, with coincident faintness; and the evidence goes to the effect that he was in the habit of doing this, either to excite pity and obtain stimulants, or as a means of displaying personal irritation. These attacks of sudden faintness, which, as we have said, he seemed to have the power of bringing on at will, were no doubt extremely injurious to himself, and might obviously at any moment end in death. On leaving the infirmary, he was assisted down the steps, which were somewhat slippery; and, when being put into the conveyance to be taken to the workhouse, he brought on one of these attacks of excitement and faintness, and asked for brandy, which was given him in consequence. He arrived at the

workhouse in a state of considerable exhaustion, and shortly afterwards he died.

It is not a little surprising that any sort of charge should be founded upon such circumstances; and it is certainly in the highest degree discouraging to medical officers, who perform very difficult duties under circumstances requiring the exercise of discretion tempered with humanity, and often making serious calls on the one hand on their judgment, and on the other hand, on their kindness, that in such a case as this the action of the medical officer, which was obviously dictated by a combination of sound judgment and humanity, should not only be called in question, but that it should be attacked in language which would be unfitted almost for any occasion, and has certainly no justification whatever in the circumstances stated. Medical officers of prisons have much responsibility, and important powers. In this case the responsibility was accepted, and the power was exercised in the modification of the sentence which the magistrate had imposed. The man was freed from hard labour, which, in his condition, might prove highly injurious to him, and he was allowed rest throughout the whole term of his imprisonment. This would certainly, under the circumstances, be the most judicious form of treatment. To make the medical officer responsible for the fact that in one of the attacks of angina, to which he was subject, the man died shortly after removal from the prison, would be inexcusable in a layman; but it is still more so where those who exercise judgment in the matter have preliminary medical knowledge. It is really an abuse of language of the most grave kind to refer to such a death as being "brought about by unnatural means;" and we can only conclude that those who have used such language in the case have either not investigated it at all, or have been misled by partial and incorrect statements and imperfect knowledge of the facts.

It is an odd way of supporting the medical officer in the discharge of his duties, to suggest that in such a case it is not he who is to blame, but some occult personages who may be supposed to have fettered his judgment, and who have impeded his action. This is only a thin veil for disguising an altogether undeserved censure. As a matter of fact, after carefully examining the whole of the details, we can see nothing else in this case but an ordinary death from angina pectoris, occurring in a man who had evidently, for a long time, held life by a slender thread, and had put himself several times in the way of that sudden termination to his career which always threatens a man suffering from this insidious and formidable disease.

THE WORK OF THE METROPOLITAN ASYLUMS BOARD.

A RECENT speech of Dr. Fowler, at a meeting of the City of London Union Guardians, is a valuable contribution to the discussion on the action of the Metropolitan Asylums Board. He points out what everybody appears to have forgotten, that, if the sick poor are to be more kindly treated than they were under the old régime, their treatment must necessarily be more costly, especially if the medical superintendents of the sick asylums are liberal in the use of iced champagne, a luxury which probably a small proportion of those who pay the rates could procure for themselves and their children. Although this, however, explains some part of the expense, that part is but a comparatively small part. The main portion of the expense complained of arises from the fact that the Asylums Board hospitals have been used, not only as hospitals for paupers, but as sanitary hospitals. The responsibility for this, moreover, does not rest with the Asylums Board, who are by law compelled to take whomsoever the boards of guardians may choose to send. The Asylums Board, having no power of refusal, are entirely at the mercy of the guardians, who, notwithstanding, complain loudly of the expenditure of which they themselves are the cause.

Let the guardians confine their orders of admission to the Asylums Board hospitals to the actual pauper, and the expenditure will diminish. Had they done this in 1871, there would have been no need for the Hampstead site as a small-pox hospital; and, consequently, all the litigation and expense which has followed would have been saved.

Had they done the same thing last year, there would have been no need for Darenth, and no need for the ships about which there has been so much foolish criticism. In the general *mêlée*, miscalled government, carried on in the metropolis by guardians, vestries, and boards of works, it was not perceived that, although there are scores of sanitary authorities within the metropolitan area, not one of them had made any provision for epidemic disease. When, therefore, in 1871, the general epidemic of small-pox appeared in the metropolis, concurrently with its existence in England and the continent, as one of the minor results of the Franco-German war, London was wholly unprepared. What was the duty of scores of sanitary authorities proved to be, as is very often the case, the duty of no one. At this time, the pauper small-pox hospitals were approaching completion, and the vestries, having made no provision for small-pox, left the work to the guardians, and the guardians unfortunately did it. Their duty was with paupers, and they might, and we think should, have refused to have anything to do with any person not receiving relief from the rates. Moved by whatever cause, they did not only their own work, but the work of the vestries; or, to put it more correctly, they took advantage of the law to compel the Asylums Board to do this work, thus practically making the Asylums Board, as regards epidemic disease, the pauper authority and the sanitary authority. Having done this, they turn round and cry out about the expense which their own action has necessitated. What sort or kind of reason is there in this? The truth of the matter is in a nutshell. Just before the completion of the Asylums Board Small-Pox Hospitals at Homerton and Stockwell, commenced the severest small-pox epidemic of the last fifty years; since that time there have been two other severe epidemics, and the Asylums Board did their best to deal with them. The consequence was, a larger bill than the public had been accustomed to, slightly increased, no doubt, by the kindly medical superintendents, who more or less freely ordered iced champagne. Hence the expenditure; *hinc ille lachrymæ*.

The way to get rid of the small-pox expenditure is to get rid of the small-pox. To do this is the work of the sanitary authorities and the guardians, not the work of the Asylums Board. All that the latter board can do is to admit the cases sent to their hospitals. It is needless to say that, if the metropolitan population had been efficiently vaccinated, there would not have been any small-pox epidemic. The guardians, then, who are responsible for the efficiency of the vaccination, are responsible for the results of its inefficiency. From all which it appears that the cause of the much complained of expenditure of the Asylums Board lies with the persons who complain.

It is worthy of record that, during the month of March last, only one death was registered in the whole of the township of Pontefract, which, according to the recent census, possesses a population of 6,335 persons.

DR. E. SYMES THOMPSON will deliver a course of lectures at the Gresham College, Basinghall Street, on the subject of "The Liver and its Difficulties", on April 25th, 26th, 27th, and 28th. These lectures, which are free to the public, commence at six o'clock each evening.

WE are pleased to hear that Sir Erasmus Wilson maintains the improvement of which we were able to report the commencement last week; and it may now be hoped that, in a short time, he will be able to resume his more active duties.

IN the last report on Brixton prison the medical officer states that diarrhoea, which had for many years assumed a chronic form, has now virtually disappeared, there being only 52 cases recorded during the year, the lowest number for the past twenty-seven years.

A BILL has been introduced into the New York State Assembly, ordering all persons selling poisons of any nature to put up the same in a corrugated bottle or box, with a printed label giving the antidote in English and German. In case of failure to comply, the wholesale or retail dealer is declared guilty of misdemeanour.

THE memory of a remarkable and devoted woman will be perpetuated in the manner she herself would certainly have approved, by the "Sister Dora" Convalescent Home, of which the foundation stone was laid on Saturday at Milford, near Stafford, by two of the grandchildren of the late Bishop Selwyn.

A noticeable feature in the mortality statistics of the Middlesex and Hertfordshire combined districts, recently reported on by Dr. C. E. Saunders, is the large number of deaths from cancer. During the past year no fewer than 68 fatal cases were attributed to this disease, against 44, the mean of the preceding six years.

DR. BARCLAY, Senior Physician of St. George's Hospital, retires this week, by lapse of time, from the office which he has long held. For the office of Assistant-Physician, which will thus be rendered vacant by promotion, Dr. Ewart, whose Gulstonian Lectures are now appearing in our pages, and Dr. Isambard Owen, are candidates.

AT the meeting of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society on the 28th ult., Mr. Bryant described a new operation for excision of a stricture of the descending colon. This operation, which Mr. Bryant had only once performed, was, we learn, repeated on the 15th instant by Mr. John Marshall at University College Hospital. The operation itself was successful, but the patient subsequently succumbed.

IN accordance with M. de Lesseps's proposition, the Paris Academy of Sciences has appointed a commission to examine the system of quarantine practised in the Suez Canal. The members of the commission are MM. Wurtz, Pasteur, Bouley, Baron Larrey, and M. de Lesseps. It is reported that M. Bouley will energetically oppose the views of M. de Lesseps, and that he will be supported by MM. Wurtz and Pasteur.

ON Tuesday, the 11th instant, the external iliac artery was ligatured at the Queen's Hospital, Birmingham, by Mr. Bennett May. The case was one of aneurysm of the common femoral, extending above Poupart's ligament; and the ligature used was a piece of common catgut, tied as tightly as possible. The operation was done antiseptically; and, within a week, the wound was well healed, and the aneurysm had become solid and much contracted.

AT the consultation at St. Bartholomew's Hospital on Thursday last, Mr. Savory showed a man, about eighty years old, who had a small epithelioma of the lower lip. A tumour had been removed from this situation twenty-six years ago, and no recurrence took place for twenty-four years. As Mr. Savory observed, though epithelioma of the lip is the least malignant form of that disease, yet it is rare to have an opportunity of seeing a case in which operation has procured so long an immunity.

M. PASTEUR has presented to the Paris Academy of Sciences an instrument invented by M. Burq, which he calls the "Vaccinator". It can be used without causing either pain or loss of blood. It collects and preserves, in a dry form, vaccine, especially human vaccine, on small metallic needles; sixty at a time receive the vaccine, which suffices to vaccinate fifty people. The Medical and Surgical Section of the Academy is commissioned to make a report on M. Burq's instrument.

THE Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh this week visited the British Hospital in Paris founded by Sir Richard Wallace. They were received by the doctors, the Honourable Alan Herbert, M.D., and Dr. Pratt, who took them through the sick and convalescent wards, the infirmary, kitchens, and a large sitting-room, where patients who are not confined to bed can read books and journals. Sir Richard Wallace wishes this establishment to be known as the British, and not the English Hospital. It is one of the most charmingly and scientifically constructed hospitals in Europe, and is conducted with admirable care, kindness, and skill.

THE QUEEN AT MENTONE.

WE understand that Her Majesty, on leaving Mentone, sent a sum of 4,500 francs to the local charities, and many presents were distributed by her command among those who had contributed to her comfort. Dr. Henry Bennet received, through Sir Henry Ponsonby, a valuable gold medallion signet, with the royal initials and arms, and a gracious letter, expressing Her Majesty's thanks. Since the Queen's departure, telegrams have been received at Mentone, sent from Windsor at Her Majesty's command, which signally indicate her continued interest in her late abode—inasmuch as they contain a request to be daily informed of the state of the weather at Mentone. Her Majesty's departure from Mentone has been the signal for a break up of the season. Most of the visitors not occupying houses are leaving: some to return home, and some, the more prudent ones, to explore other health-stations on the coast, or to travel in Italy. After spending the winter on the Mediterranean shores, it is imprudent to return to our climate before the middle of May.

DEATH OF CHARLES DARWIN.

THE eminent biologist, Charles Robert Darwin, LL.D., F.R.S., died in the 74th year of his age, at his residence Down House, Down near Orpington, Kent, on Wednesday, April 19th. His celebrated work on Evolution was published in 1859. The deceased received many honorary titles from British and Foreign Universities and learned societies, but will be remembered for generations as the chief expositor of that most important theory which traces the origin and development of species to pre-existing forms. He was a grandson of the celebrated naturalist Dr. Erasmus Darwin.

THE SUPPOSED POISONOUS EFFECTS OF BORAX.

MR. W. R. GADE writes to the *Times*, to warn people against the use of boracic acid as an antiseptic with articles of food, such as milk. With reference to Professor Barff's proposed boroglyceride, Mr. Gade relates his experience in Sweden, where he applied boracic acid to milk during warm weather, and succeeded perfectly in keeping it sweet. After using this milk for a short time in hot weather, two of his young children became languid and drowsy, with a failing appetite. Although this was at first attributed to the weather, they did not improve; a doctor was therefore called in, who, on learning the circumstances, pronounced them being slowly poisoned with boracic acid, which, he stated, was "anodynous". The action of boracic acid has not been much investigated; but its effects have been stated to be diuretic, antilithic, emmenagogue, and mildly anodyne. It has hardly ever been used internally in this country; its use having been chiefly directed to external applications, especially to aphthous ulceration of the mouth in young children, in which case it acts probably as a destroyer of minute organisms. Considering how freely it has been used for such a purpose without any bad effects being noted, it cannot be a poison of much strength. At the same time, the fact of its being a germicide is undeniable, and it may therefore not be entirely inert in man; while the case above-mentioned seems to point out the advisability for caution in its use, until further inquiry shall prove it to be innocuous.

ROYAL MEDICAL BENEVOLENT COLLEGE.

THE twenty-first festival dinner of the above named institution was held on Wednesday evening at the Langham Hotel; Mr. Marshall, of University College Hospital, presiding in the regretted absence, through illness, of Sir Erasmus Wilson. In proposing "Success to the Royal Medical Benevolent College", he said, since its opening by the Prince Consort, the institution had been again and again extended. A chapel had been built; and, owing to the munificent generosity of Sir Erasmus Wilson, the benefits of the charity had been greatly augmented. During its existence, fifty-six aged pensioners, most of them females, had been received into the asylum; and 1,380 boys had passed through the school. There were now twenty-four pensioners, formerly members of the medical profession, or dependent thereon; fifty founda-

tion scholars, orphans of medical men; and 150 boys who were receiving an admirable education for a smaller sum than they would have to pay elsewhere. Examinations were held by the Oxford and Cambridge Board, and scholarships and free admissions to medical schools were offered. One of the former pupils had won the Victoria Cross. Attention had been paid to sanitary improvements and the erection of various buildings for the treatment of boys when sick, and the strain on the funds had been great. A list of subscriptions and donations was announced.

DEATHS UNDER ANÆSTHETICS.

WE have to record this week the occurrence of two deaths during the use of anæsthetics, both of which occurred at Guy's Hospital. The first of the deaths occurred under chloroform. The patient was a woman aged 38, who had sustained a fracture of the leg. Some little difficulty was encountered in reducing the fracture; and, at the woman's earnest request, chloroform was administered, the heart having been examined, and no indication of disease having been found. It was given on an ordinary open flannel inhaler, a few drops at a time; and the patient had inhaled it for about two minutes, when both pulse and respiration ceased. Every effort to restore the patient was made, but without success. At the *post mortem* examination, the lungs were found healthy and free from congestion; but the heart was surrounded by a quantity of adipose tissue, which intruded into the muscular substance of the organ in places. The liver was very fatty; the kidneys slightly. The brain was remarkably wasted, so that the sulci between the convolutions were unusually wide, and the membranes were much thickened. This condition of brain resembles very closely the atrophy so commonly met with in chronic alcoholism; and, if this conjecture be correct, it may serve also in some degree to explain the sudden death, for patients who have been accustomed to large quantities of alcoholic stimulants are always bad subjects for the anæsthesia of chloroform. An inquest was held on the case, and a verdict was returned that the deceased expired under chloroform properly administered.—The other death occurred during the administration of ether. The patient was a young man, who was about to be operated on for empyema. When he had been brought under the influence of the anæsthetic, he was rolled over on to the sound side. Almost immediately, great difficulty in breathing set in, pus began to well out of the mouth, and he rapidly died—suffocated, apparently, by the accumulation of pus in the air-passages. At the *post mortem* examination, in addition to the pus in the pleura, numerous fistulous communications were found between the bronchi and the pleural cavity. This case seems to us to furnish a needed warning in relation to the use of ether during operations for empyema. Ether, as was shown by the Committee of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society, exerts its lethal action first on the respiration; and it also, as is well known, causes a greatly increased accumulation of mucus in the throat. Both of these conditions must operate most unfavourably on a patient already deprived of all use of one lung; and, when such a patient is turned on to the healthy side, not only is the action of the lung on that side still further embarrassed, but there is a great probability that pus will find its way, by fistulous openings, as happened in this case, from the pleural cavity into the trachea; and there, partly by its mechanical action, and partly by exciting spasm of the glottis, determine a fatal asphyxia.

SMALL-POX IN SUFFOLK.

A SOMEWHAT serious outbreak of small-pox has occurred at Barrow, a village in West Suffolk. The disease appears to have been imported from Essex by a son of the publican of the village; and, as the nature of the illness of the persons who caught the infection from this youth was not at first recognised, the disease got a firm hold before any precautions were taken to prevent its spread. Under the direction, however, of the health-officer, Dr. Scott Kilner, a system of domestic quarantine has been adopted, thorough disinfection practised, a temporary hospital fitted up for the reception of the patients, and a

special nurse sent down from London. The disease unfortunately still continues, eight fresh cases being reported last week, and two deaths. Altogether, upwards of thirty cases have occurred, and three deaths. It is hoped that the disease has now been mastered.

MILD SCARLATINA.

In his last report on the health of Hastings, Mr. Knox Shaw mentions as a fact worthy of remark that, out of 77 cases of scarlet fever which came to his notice last year, there was not a single death. As Mr. Shaw observes, the majority of epidemics lately described have shown a mortality of from 5 to 10, or even 15 per cent.; but the mortality from scarlet fever, calculated upon the number of cases during the whole year in Hastings, would reach the extraordinary low rate of 1.93 per cent.; and as, probably, there were some cases existing, but not reported, the real rate of mortality would be lower still. A somewhat similar experience is reported by Mr. Fowler in his report on the Epping Rural District. He states that upwards of 70 cases of scarlatina occurred during 1881, but that the disease must have been of an exceptionally mild type, since no precautions whatever appear to have been taken; the children were allowed to mix together, and, in some cases, even allowed to attend school in an infectious state.

EPIDEMIC OF SCARLET FEVER AT BINGLEY.

A SPECIAL meeting of the Bingley Improvement Commissioners was recently held for the purpose of taking into consideration what steps should be taken to abate the severe epidemic of scarlet fever which has existed for some time in the neighbourhood. In his report on the outbreak, the health-officer stated that, though for the last four years there have been at times cases of scarlet fever, it was not until November last that it assumed an epidemic form. This it did quite suddenly, cases occurring in every part of the town. The reason of its rapid spread was not at first apparent; but some clue was discovered in November, when it was found that a child, in a family of which two members were suffering from scarlatina, was attending school, and that about ten days previously he had a rash covering his body. The boy had been kept at home for a day or two; but, as he seemed quite well, and the rash began to die away, he was again sent to school. This, the health-officer thinks, accounted for the rapid spread of disease throughout the district. The epidemic was of a wide-spread character, no part of the town being free from it, and scarcely a single street escaping entirely. It attacked all classes alike, and fatal cases occurred among the more wealthy as well as among the poor. The total number of cases is estimated from two to three hundred, and thirty-six deaths have been registered from January 1st to the present time. Since January, however, the epidemic has been gradually subsiding, and only three cases have come under notice during the past fortnight, so that it may now be considered to be virtually over. The propriety of closing the schools was discussed by the authority; but it was decided that, as the mischief had been done, and care was being taken to prevent children who were recovering from attending school, no good would result from their being closed. The health-officer is of opinion that, to enable the sanitary authority to cope with an epidemic of this character, there should be a system for the compulsory notification of infectious diseases, and that there should be also a hospital for the reception of such cases, together with power to remove patients to it.

INTEMPERANCE IN FEMALES.

THE Committee of the Spelthorne Sanatorium for the reformation of women who have fallen into habits of intemperance, have issued their third annual report, which shows that, during the year 1881, there were over 100 applications for admittance; of these, 20 were for men, 20 were penitentiary cases, 10 were more or less insane, 4 were clergymen's wives, 10 aged women, and the others ineligible from various causes. Of those who had passed their full time in the home, and might be spoken of as doing well, there were 14; but it

must be remembered, said the report, that the inmates of Spelthorne were really dipsomaniacs, probably had been drinking for years; and it was further to be noted that one year was too short a time to effect the radical constitutional change which was the best foundation on which a more moral and religious habit of mind could be formed. The cases were generally of long standing, and deep-rooted. The report closes with an earnest appeal for help. Formerly, the proportion of the sexes in the criminal classes was seven men to one woman; now, taking all crime, it was three men to one woman; and this increase, it observes, "is chiefly due to the growth of female intemperance; for in the classification of 'drunk' and 'drunk and disorderly', the proportion is only two to one; and, in Liverpool and London, the women had sometimes exceeded the men. In 1878, 15,357 women were committed for drunkenness. One woman had paid upwards of £200 in fines; and two hundred certainly could not represent the number of times she had been admitted to Clerkenwell." "Surely these facts", says the report, "are sufficient to rouse the apathetic to do what they can for prevention and for cure." This appeal we fully endorse. This sanatorium is situated within one mile of the Feltham station of the London and South-Western Railway. The Honorary Secretary is Miss Robin, 47, St. George's Road, S.W.

THE POLLUTION OF THE THAMES BY SEWAGE.

THE medical officer of health to the Erith Local Board, in his annual report just published, complained of the "vile stench" emitted from the shores of the river at low tide during the excessive heat of last summer. He says that the sewage pumped into the river at Crossness and Barking, if poured in at ebb tide, cannot get any lower than Gravesend; whilst that pumped in later can get no further than Erith before it is met by the flood tide, and carried back to Blackwall, or even lower. The solid suspended parts of the sewage are therefore deposited on the river banks, and evolve most offensive effluvia. It does not appear from his report that fever has been rife amongst those residing near the river, or those living in ships and yachts; but the complaint was general, and disease, especially diarrhoea, was much dreaded. The evidence given by engineers and chemists at the late inquiry was most conflicting; but all who used the river last year as a highway, know that smells in certain parts of the Thames, such as would not be tolerated on land, were constantly present, and destroyed the pleasure which would otherwise have been derived from an excursion on the river. There is no doubt that if any other river or watercourse were fouled to so great an extent by anybody except the Metropolitan Board of Works, an injunction would have speedily been asked for and granted against the offending parties. It is clear that when Parliament gave powers to the Metropolitan Board of Works to carry out the main drainage of London, it was for the purpose of removing, and not of creating, an abominable nuisance. They have removed the accumulations of filth from the land, where it might have been utilised, and cast it into the water, where it is not only useless, but noxious. The fouling of the river off Barking is so great, that instead of, say, forty grains of total solids per gallon, the total solid residue was, in one sample, no less than 831 grains per gallon, of which 260 grains consisted of chlorine, chiefly from urine, and as much as 375 grains of organic matter. The gross amount of liquid poured into the river from the Crossness outfall was about 17½ million gallons in 1868, and above 27 millions in 1878; whilst at Barking the increase was greater still, having been less than 13 millions of gallons in 1868, whilst it was more than 30 millions in 1878. If something more than an enlargement, as proposed, of the chambers at the outfall be not carried out speedily, the consequences to those using the river or living on its banks may become very serious.

CONVICTION OF A LIVERPOOL QUACK.

AT the Liverpool City Sessions held last week before the Recorder the quack, named Ethens de Tomanzie, whose case was mentioned in the JOURNAL of April 1, p. 484, was sentenced to two months' imprisonment.

prisonment for having unlawfully and wilfully given false certificates in the case of three persons who had died under his treatment. The prosecution was instituted by the Medical Defence Association, who are to be congratulated on the result. The *Liverpool Mercury*, in commenting on the case, points out that, were it not for such organisations as the Defence Association, there would be practically no means of detecting the spurious medical practitioner where the deception is carried to such a length as in the present case. It points out, too, the danger to the health of the poorer classes, which we have often insisted on, of ignorant and unscrupulous practitioners being allowed to prey upon them; and trusts this conviction will serve to set the public on their guard against such malpractices. In these sentiments, we need hardly say, we fully agree. We regret to see that several qualified practitioners appear to have countenanced the defendant in his quackery.

SMALL-POX AT SYDNEY.

THE epidemic of small-pox at Sydney seems now to be virtually at an end. Writing under date of the 28th February last, the Sydney correspondent of the *Times* states: "We have succeeded at last, after a hard fight, in getting small-pox under, and have not now a single case in Sydney, and only two at the hospital, which is about nine miles from Sydney. Many of our recent English visitors, coming from where small-pox is chronic, have laughed at the idea of stamping it out; but we have succeeded at considerable expense and with some interference with individual liberty, and the result is considered to be worth the sacrifice."

AMBULANCE WORK IN RUSSIA.

IN Russia, as well as in Germany, "Lectures for First Aid to the Injured" have been given recently on our English model. Like Professor Esmarch of Kiel, Dr. Charles Reyher of St. Petersburg had occasion, during the International Medical Congress in London, to become acquainted with the institutions existing for such purposes under the control of the St. John's Ambulance Association. Immediately after Dr. Reyher's return, he succeeded in inducing the direction of the Russian Red Cross Society to institute similar lectures in St. Petersburg. The first course of these lectures was given in January and February last, on five Sunday evenings, partly in the apartments of the Red Cross Society, partly in the surgical wards of Dr. Reyher. The examination of pupils took place on the Sunday before Easter, in the presence of the Committee of the Red Cross Society. Care was taken to avoid all specially medical terms and details. A picture of the human organism was drawn in general outlines, and directions were given how to assist the injured before the surgeon's arrival without doing harm; and, as briefly as possible, a series of conditions was demonstrated, in which a non-medical man could help provisionally before the surgeon's arrival, such as rendering a fracture immovable; first dressing of wounds as a defence against infection from outside; compression of the principal vessels during severe bleeding; the management of Esmarch's India-rubber tube; artificial respiration, etc. It was impressed on the pupils that, for all bandages and manipulations, the simplest objects should be used, such as are to be found anywhere (for instance, splints made from newspapers, waistbelts and revolver-strings in cases of bleeding, instead of Esmarch's India-rubber tube, etc.). The pupils were practically exercised on living models. The pupils of the first course were policemen, who proved to be very skilful in the improvisation of all possible bandages. For the next courses, applications are received from all classes of society. The Society of the Red Cross desires to admit to these lectures and exercises not only policemen, but railway officers, tramway-conductors, workmen in factories, and the pupils of seminaries who serve afterwards as clergymen in the villages all over the country. So far as may be foreseen, this beneficent institution of courses will not only be adopted by all classes of the population of St. Petersburg, but will spread itself quickly over the whole country. The Society of the Red Cross is under the patronage of Her Imperial Majesty the Empress, and has district administrations in every govern-

ment of the Empire. To these will be sent, for imitation and further distribution, the programme of the lectures delivered lately, the physiological diagrams and cards, the *aides-memoires*, and text-books of aid in cases of injuries or sudden illness, on the plan of that compiled by the late Surgeon-Major Shepherd, and made accessible to the Russian Red Cross Society through the kindness and courtesy of Captain Herbert C. Perrot, Chief Secretary to the St. John's Ambulance Association.

THE STRUGGLE OF RACES.

IN his annual report for the past year, the Mayor of Savannah draws attention to the great disparity in the percentage of mortality among the white and coloured races. The annual rate for one thousand whites for the year 1880 was 19.85, and for one thousand coloured 45.47, these rates being calculated on the United States census tables during the same year. In the struggle for existence carried on between the white and coloured races in many parts of the globe, it is always "colour loses".

ASEPTIC VACCINE LYMPH.

MUCH practical interest attaches to the subject treated in the *Jahrbuch für Kinderheilkunde*, Neue Folge, Band xvii, p. 172, by Dr. R. Pott, who gives the results obtained by him in experimenting with vaccine lymph modified by combination with salicylic, boracic, and carbolic acids. The mixtures employed consisted of salicylic solution (1 to 300), boracic acid solution (3.5 per cent.), and carbolic acid solution (1 to 5 per cent.), each of these being combined with an equal part of humanised lymph. All proved active except the 5 per cent. carbolic acid solution. This result corresponds with that obtained by Dr. Braidwood and Mr. Vacher in their more extensive and carefully prosecuted experiments detailed in their second and third reports to the Scientific Grants Committee of the British Medical Association. We do not learn from Dr. Pott his method of procedure, the amount of care he bestowed on testing the inoculative efficacy of the vaccine he used, his manner of mixing it with the antiseptic solution, the length of time during which the vaccine was exposed to the antiseptic influences before inoculation, the cleanliness of the instruments he used, and other such details. On the other hand, Dr. Braidwood and Mr. Vacher have insisted on the great importance of using special instruments for each set of experiments; on the necessity of testing the efficacy of the vaccine itself before drawing inferences from its action when mixed with antiseptic solutions; on the influence of lengthened contact with the antiseptic, especially in the case of carbolic acid; and on the falsity connected with the ordinary manner of conducting such experiments by inoculating a subject on the one arm with vaccine, and on the other with the experimental fluid. In their second report, they state "that a saturated solution of salicylic acid does not impair the efficacy of the vaccine contagium"; and that a saturated solution of boracic acid "impairs the vitality of vaccine contagium little if at all, even after having been kept some days in contact with the contagium-particles." On the other hand (in their first report), their conclusions in regard to the influence of carbolic acid on the vitality of vaccine were "(a) that the immediate inoculation of a mixture of vaccine and a moderately strong solution (1 to 20 aq.) of carbolic acid succeeds in a certain number of instances; (b) that such a mixture, preserved for some time, seventeen days to six weeks, fails to produce vesicles"; and that the mixture of vaccine with stronger solutions of the acid, and likewise with carbonate of glycerine, "destroys the efficacy of vaccine". They have further distinctly proven that antiseptics in the gaseous state are much more potent destroyers of the vitality of vaccine than are such in solution or in fluid form. Dr. R. Pott claims the following advantages for these aseptic lymphs: 1. The "erysipelatous poison" contained in the lymph is probably destroyed, and the early vaccinal erysipelas in this way prevented; 2. Such lymph may be kept for years without spoiling; 3. The lymph is thinner, and contains no fibrinous coagula. To us, these inferences appear strange and illogical. We are not aware that the "erysipelatous poison" has yet been demonstrated; but we know that Jenner laid down the axiom (and the every-day experi-

ence of public vaccinators in England has proven its correctness) that *no* areola should surround the vesicles on the eighth day, and that the redness which appears on the ninth to the eleventh days after vaccination should be evanescent. When postvaccinal erysipelas occurs, this is not to be ascribed to the vaccine, but to its admixture with blood, epithelium, or impurities from the skin; or to the employment of uncleaned instruments for the operation; occasionally to defective sanitary arrangements. That vaccine may, by the aid of these antiseptics, retain its vitality "for years" we very much doubt. On the other hand, Dr. W. Husband (in his essay on the subject) states that vaccine, properly secured in his capillary tubes, has been known to retain its efficacy for "seven years". Lastly, if a vaccinator desire to render his lymph thinner, and to free it from fibrinous coagula, he has merely to dilute it with glycerine, or with a mixture of glycerine and water, in order to obtain his desire. This last form of commixture, we are informed, is frequently carried out by the public vaccinator in Berlin, who considers that by this means he renders his vaccine lymph more pure.

SCOTLAND.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN.

THE professional examinations for degrees in Medicine have taken place during the last fortnight, when a comparatively large number of candidates presented themselves for examination. The summer session commences on Monday, May 1st. The Shepherd Memorial Gold Medal has been gained by Mr. C. J. Sarkies, and the Keith Gold Medal—both for surgery—by Mr. Arthur Greatorex Smith. We are glad to be able to state that Professor Pirrie's health is considerably improved.

THE CHAIR OF NATURAL HISTORY AT EDINBURGH.

MR. RAY LANKESTER, who was recently nominated by the Crown to the Chair of Natural History in the University of Edinburgh, has intimated to the Home Secretary that it is not his intention to present himself for induction by the Senatus. Mr. Lankester explains in detail, in his letter of resignation, the circumstances which have led him to decline entering on the duties of the office. Briefly, they are, that certain previously unknown contingent and existing conditions have been disclosed which would seriously impede practical teaching, materially protract his professorial duties, and imperil the permanence of the classes. Mr. Lankester finds that there is not a reasonable prospect of adequate provision of practical laboratories and teaching-rooms; that the zoological collections have been permanently severed from the control of the professor; and that it is probable that at no distant period the course of zoology, now compulsory, may cease to be so. Under the circumstances and contingencies now made clear to him, Mr. Lankester feels unable to undertake the duties of the office to which he was appointed.

THE GLASGOW PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

AT the meeting of this Society, held on the 12th instant, a paper was read by Dr. H. Muirhead, of Cambuslang, on "A Mode of Mental Intercommunication in Thought-Willing and Thought-Reading." In this communication, the author put forward the theory that the only scientific explanation of these states consisted in assuming that the molecularly-induced vibrations, which must undoubtedly accompany brain-action in the mind of one person, are communicated by it to the ether pervading its substance, are propagated to an unknown distance, doubtless to the ether pervading neighbouring brains, and then are able to set up in the brain of another person similar molecular vibrations. Just as in the case of the telephone, unbroken metallic communication is not at all necessary for the production of idea-inducing vibrations, so brain may communicate with brain by means of ethereal induction across air-occupied space. At some length, Dr. Muirhead illustrated his theory, which he regarded as at least a probable explanation of the phenomena of mind-reading; and, though his views were

vigorously called in question by some members, he received a very cordial vote of thanks from the Society for his paper. A communication was also made at this meeting by Dr. John Dougall on the Salmon Disease, which has of late been so fatal to the fish of Scotch rivers; while Professor McKendrick furnished several interesting experiments, with tuning-forks and other materials, illustrating both optically and audibly, the action of the drum of the ear in the transmission of musical sounds.

THE NOTIFICATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

AT a meeting of the Public Health Committee of the Edinburgh Town Council, special attention was given to the outbreak of measles in Edinburgh which commenced in February, soon attained considerable dimensions, and as yet shows no tendency to abatement. No fewer than 2,065 cases have been notified to the medical officer of health. A much greater number has probably occurred, as many parents do not send for a medical man in mild cases. Of the 2,065 cases notified, 713 were in the district of the New Town, 1,002 in the Old Town, and 350 in the southern suburbs. A very small percentage of the cases has proved fatal, only 18 deaths being registered as due to measles since the commencement of the outbreak. For the first two months, the average daily number of notifications was 34; during the last two weeks, it has been 43. Sixteen cases are at present under treatment in public institutions; 11 being in the Infirmary, and 5 in the Sick Children's Hospital. In Shotts, the outbreak of measles still prevails, there being about 150 cases. Twenty-eight new cases occurred in two days. No fatal cases have occurred.

ROYAL MATERNITY AND SIMPSON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL.

DURING the last three months, owing to the regretted absence of Dr. Angus Macdonald, Professor Simpson has continued on duty in the Royal Maternity Hospital. He will be succeeded next month by Dr. Keiller for duty during the summer session. Messrs. George M. Johnston, M.B., and Mr. Bernard Langley Mills, M.B., have been appointed resident physicians for the same period. The directors of the hospital have received a legacy of £50 from the trustees of the late Mr. William Fraser, of Kinross-shire.

REGISTRAR-GENERAL'S RETURNS.

FROM the returns of the Registrar-General for the week ending April 8th, it appears that the death-rate in the eight principal towns was 22.1 per 1,000 of estimated population. This rate is 1.4 below that for the corresponding week of last year, but 0.1 above that for the previous week of the present year. The lowest mortality was recorded in Greenock, viz., 14.8 per 1,000; and the highest in Paisley, viz., 31.2 per 1,000. The mortality from the seven most familiar zymotic diseases was at the rate of 4.0 per 1,000, or 0.9 above the rate for last week. Whooping-cough was the most fatal epidemic, and the mortality from it was greatest in Glasgow. There was a slight increase in the number of deaths from bowel-complaints. Acute diseases of the chest caused 116 deaths, or 1 more than the number registered last week. The mean temperature was 44.1, being 0.3 below that of the week immediately preceding, but 7.1 above that of the corresponding week of last year.

SANITARY PROTECTION ASSOCIATIONS.

AT the recently held meeting of the Edinburgh Sanitary Protection Association, reports concerning the work done by the Society and its officials were submitted. Professor Douglas MacLagan was unanimously elected President of the Association, in place of Sir Robert Christison, Bart., deceased. The first public steps towards the formation of a Sanitary Protection Association for Glasgow were taken on the 13th instant, when a meeting was held to consider the question. There was a very good attendance of both the general public and the medical profession; and it was decided to proceed forthwith to the formation of the Association, its leading objects being: 1. To provide

members with advice and supervision, so as to secure the sanitary conditions of their dwellings; 2. To enable members to procure practical advice on moderate terms as to the best means of remedying defects in houses of the poorer classes; 3. To aid in improving the sanitary condition of the city by the use of such means as may, in the opinion of the Council, be calculated to promote that object. It will thus be seen that the Association is to be on the same lines as the Edinburgh one, which has worked so well. Dr. Russell, Medical Officer of Health for Glasgow, was present, and stated that the officials of the city viewed the movement with cordial sympathy.

IRELAND.

THE proposed new scheme of education and examination adopted by the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, and which has been referred to on several occasions in the JOURNAL, has now received the approval of the Home Secretary.

THE annual fancy dress ball, in aid of the funds of the North and South Charitable Infirmarys, Cork, will be held in the Assembly Rooms on the 21st inst.; and from the influential committee who are organising it, a very substantial addition to the funds of those institutions may be confidently expected.

IN the Castlebar District Lunatic Asylum, last year, 351 patients were under treatment, 61 having been admitted during the year. The percentage of recoveries on admissions was 50.81, and on total number in asylum, 8.85. There was no death recorded during 1881.

MERCY HOSPITAL, CORK.

THE twenty-fifth annual meeting of the friends and supporters of this hospital was held last week, and although its financial condition is not so satisfactory at the commencement of this year as in 1881, yet there is a balance to credit of £150. On the motion of the High Sheriff, a vote of condolence was passed to the family of the late Dr. Holmes on their bereavement.

AN ABATTOIR FOR DUBLIN.

A PUBLIC abattoir, the first building of the kind in Ireland, was formally opened in Dublin last week by the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor of the City and the civic authorities. In no other large city, perhaps, was there greater need for such an establishment, as owing to the large number of ninety-seven of the licensed slaughter-houses in existence, it is almost impossible for the sanitary authorities to put a stop to the notorious trade in diseased and unsound meat. Not less than a quarter of million of pounds of diseased meat was seized and confiscated in Dublin last year; but this probably represents only a portion of that consumed by the public. To Dr. Cameron, Superintendent Medical Officer of Health, and to Mr. E. Dwyer Gray, M.P., High Sheriff of the City and late chairman of the Public Health Committee of the Corporation, belong the credit of carrying out this important work. The abattoir is a model one. It is in the immediate vicinity of the cattle market, with which it is connected by a subway. The buildings include thirteen rooms for slaughtering animals; a like number of lairs; a hall 133½ feet long by 49 feet wide, for the reception of dead meat, triperies, and rooms for the storage of blood and offal until they are removed. Great attention has been paid to the paving, lighting, and sewerage of all the departments of the abattoir. The buildings are well ventilated, and its walls tiled wherever animal matter is likely to come into contact with them. The advantages which may fairly be expected to result from the use of the abattoir are, that animals will be slaughtered therein in the most humane way that can be devised; their carcasses will be dressed in a cleanly manner; due precautions will be taken to prevent any diseased carcasses from being used as food for man; the flesh and offal, incidental to a slaughter-house, will

be disposed of in a manner least likely to be prejudicial to health; lastly, and most important of all, the use of the abattoir will gradually, it is hoped, lead to the disuse of those of the slaughter-houses which, being situated in the oldest and most crowded parts of the city, are not capable of improvement. The works cost £16,000.

THE ROYAL UNIVERSITY.

A MEETING of the senate of this university was held on Tuesday last for the election of its first fellows and examiners. The senate resolved to allocate for the present twenty-four of the thirty-two fellowships they are empowered to create, and they elected twenty-one of them. They allocated six fellowships to classics; four to mental and moral philosophy; four to natural philosophy; and two to chemistry. They also decided to postpone until the return of his Eminence Cardinal M'Cabe from Rome the appointment to one of the fellowships allocated to English, mental and moral philosophy, and natural philosophy respectively. They further resolved to postpone the election of Fellows in the natural and medical sciences. Of the twenty-one gentlemen elected Fellows, two, viz., those fellowships allocated to chemistry, are members of the profession. They are Professor John Campbell, M.B. of the Catholic University, and Professor Maxwell Simpson, LL.D., M.D. of Queen's College, Cork. The following examiners were appointed;—*In Surgery*: A. H. Corley, M.D.; P. J. Hayes, F.R.C.S.E. *In Medicine*: B. G. M'Dowell, M.D.; S. M. MacSwiney, M.D. *In Midwifery*: John A. Byrne, M.B.; H. Macnaughton Jones, B.A., M.D. *In Materia Medica*: F. J. B. Quinlan, M.D.; J. S. Reid, M.D. *In Medical Jurisprudence*: E. W. Davy, M.A., M.D.; M. O'Keefe, M.A., M.D. *In Anatomy*: C. J. Nixon, M.B., LL.D.; J. P. Pye, M.D.; Peter Redfern, M.D. *In Physiology*: J. J. Charles, M.A., M.D.; C. Coppinger, F.R.C.S.I. *In Botany and Zoology*: A. G. Melville, M.D.; G. Sigerson, M.D. The fellowships are tenable for seven years. The emolument of the office is £400 per annum; but, in the case of Fellows holding other professional appointments, only an annual sum sufficient to make their total emolument from all such sources equivalent to £400.

BELFAST ROYAL HOSPITAL.

A SPECIAL meeting of the General Committee was held, on the 17th instant, in order to appoint a house-surgeon, in the vacancy caused by the retirement of Dr. James Smyth, from ill-health. The Committee of Management unanimously recommended Dr. James Barrow, a former student of the hospital, and, there being no opposition, he was elected. The hospital has usually been in a chronic condition of impecuniosity; but latterly, its prospects appear to be improving, as we learn that all the accounts have been paid to the 1st of the month, and the committee have a balance in hand of £600 to defray the necessary expenses for April. The desirability of establishing a Saturday hospital collection among the working classes has long been under consideration; and, if sufficient encouragement is obtained from the leading manufacturing firms in Belfast, it is probable that a trial of the scheme may be made during next winter.

It is stated that Dr. Duncan Mackay, Medical Officer of Health for Inverness, though not officially employed to analyse the materials of which the "hot cross buns" were made which occasioned so much sickness on Good Friday, has examined the buns, and discovered a salt which exhibits all the appearance of arsenic.

CONVALESCENT HOME AT FOLKESTONE.—The foundation stone of the new St. Andrew's Convalescent Home, Folkestone, was laid by the Duchess of Edinburgh on Wednesday, the 18th instant. The work of the home has hitherto been carried on in two rented houses imperfectly adapted to the purpose. During this period, the institution has been enabled to admit 2,717 patients, but the demands made upon it have been continually increasing. By the kind consideration of the lord of the manor, the Earl of Radnor, who is one of the patrons of the charity, an excellent site in a healthy situation on high ground overlooking the sea, has been secured on easy terms, with sufficient land around it to serve as a pleasant garden for the use of the patients. The sum required to complete the building is about £9,000, in addition to £7,000 already given.

THE TREATMENT OF INEBRIATES IN ENGLAND UNDER THE HABITUAL DRUNKARDS ACT, 1879.

REPORT OF THE HABITUAL DRUNKARDS COMMITTEE ON THE DALRYMPLE HOME ASSOCIATION.

THE British Medical Association, through its committee for promoting legislation for the control and cure of habitual drunkards, has made several attempts to carry out the provisions of the Act of 1879, but hitherto, in a great measure, without practical success. The provisions of that Act, whilst admitting the principle that the habitual drunkard may be cured by restraint, so fence the ability to place a person under restraint, that the establishment of "Maisons de Santé" by private individuals has been made so unlikely to succeed financially, that persons having capital have not ventured to provide such institutions. A considerable number of houses have been licensed under the Act in different parts of the country, but the expenses which the Act compels, and the small number of persons who have availed themselves of the provisions of the Act, have caused several of them to be closed within a year or so of their opening. The Act is framed in such a way that the voluntary entry of patients is made as difficult as possible, and inducements are held out to cause them to change their minds before they finally commit themselves to confinement; so that it is found in practice impossible to continue a person who is an inebriate long enough in the same mind to ensure his detention. Capital has not been freely invested, therefore, in the formation of fitting houses, under the management of responsible and satisfactory managers.

A considerable number of houses are advertised in the medical and other journals as (according to their owners) adapted for the purpose; but, with some exceptions in the case of females, whose managers are assisted by committees, they are unsatisfactory. Patients admitted to some of these places obtain liquor with the connivance of the attendants, and the benefit expected from the principle of seclusion does not arise.

The committee appointed at the annual meeting of the British Medical Association have been aware of the difficulties and the results. They have proceeded on the principle that institutions established for the purpose of treating inebriates should not be promoted for individual gain; that the managers should have no pecuniary interest in the detention of any individual case. To effect this object, capital is required before a house can be opened. The Committee therefore, with the assistance of the Social Science Association and the Habitual Drunkards Legislation Society organised a public meeting at the Mansion House, which was held in May last under the presidency of the then Lord Mayor. At that meeting, a society was inaugurated for the special purpose of obtaining funds and providing such a house by means of voluntary contributions in the first instance, but with the ultimate intention of making the establishment self-supporting. A committee of management was appointed, who were instructed to draw up the requisite regulations, and were empowered to do all such acts as might give effect to the resolutions. This committee have had many anxious meetings, and the result of their deliberations has been that, being a trading corporation, they have thought it best to avail themselves of the provisions of the Limited Liability Act, and have become incorporated under that Act. With the consent of the Board of Trade they are enabled to omit the word (limited) from their prospectus, because the Directors of the Company declare that they have no pecuniary interest in anything they may undertake in connection with the management. There are neither shares nor dividends, and no person, except the paid officers, can profit pecuniarily by the work which is proposed to be done. It was only on March 7th that the authority of the Board of Trade was obtained, to enable them to take this step. The Association is called the Association of the Dalrymple Home for Inebriates. The name is given as recognising the association with the late Mr. Dalrymple, who, when Member of Parliament for Bath, was instrumental in obtaining Parliamentary inquiry upon the subject of habitual drinking, and introduced a Bill into the House of Commons, the passing of which was ultimately frustrated by his death; but upon that Bill were framed some of the provisions contained in the Habitual Drunkards' Act of 1879.

The object is stated in the memorandum of the Association—viz., the establishment of retreats under the Act. The income and property of the Association are to be applied solely towards the objects set forth in the memorandum. The first directors consist, among others, of Dr. Cameron, M.P., who was instrumental in obtaining the Act, Dr. Norman Kerr, who acts as Honorary Secretary, and Dr. Alfred Carpenter, who is Chairman of the Committee appointed by the British Medical Association. Canon Duckworth, one of the Queen's chaplains, has been appointed Chairman of the Committee of

Management; and they have already advertised for sites upon which a proper home may be erected, or for a house which is capable of being adapted to become such a home.

The steps which have been taken are decided, but the business is not satisfactory, by reason of the impediments which are placed on the working of the Act, and which requires that the machinery shall be expensive, and yet so determines that there shall be but little chance of any return upon capital invested in the scheme. The majority of inebriates who would place themselves under restraint are those who have dissipated their fortune, who have destroyed their annual income and all their prospects for future advancement and restoration to wealth, and are dependent upon their friends for maintenance. It is not from such a class that capital can be recouped for the venture. It is to be hoped that the action of the Committee of Management for the Dalrymple Home may be more successful than some others have been; and your Committee recommend the Dalrymple Home to the favourable consideration of the British Medical Association, and to the benevolent public for countenance and support.

COLLECTIVE INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE.

[It is particularly requested that all communications relating to the investigations conducted by this Committee may be sent to the Secretary, Dr. F. A. MAHOMED, 12, St. Thomas's Street, London, S.E.]

MEMORANDUM ON ACUTE RHEUMATISM.

By J. F. GOODHART, M.D., and THOMAS BARLOW, M.D.

On behalf of the Committee.

THE common diseases are those which repay study the best; and, in a general survey of systematic medicine, it is wonderful to note how many of what are regarded as fundamental facts in such diseases rest on an insecure basis of observation and experience. There is no country in Europe which affords better opportunities for studying acute rheumatism than Great Britain; but we are still ignorant as to its etiology. We have no accurate data in regard to the influence of food; and, beyond the curious but well established observation of Dr. Balthazar Foster, on the appearance of a quasi-rheumatic affection of joints, etc., under the administration of large doses of lactic acid, physiological chemistry has, as yet, given us no help. Apart altogether from chemical questions and speculative views as to its bacterial origin, how little we know about the immediate antecedents or determining causes of acute rheumatism! We are in the habit of accepting the conventional lay explanation, that the patient was exposed to cold whilst he was sweating, that thereupon he developed rheumatism; and over and above this we have nothing to say, except that "certain people are more liable to such illnesses than others." But we are bound to take note of cases occurring occasionally in hospital, where patients in bed, suffering or convalescing from some other complaint, develop undoubted rheumatic fever, and where it seems difficult to suppose that the factor of exposure has played any part. The subject of the relation of chorea to rheumatism is to be separately discussed in another inquiry; but, by way of illustration, we may here refer to cases which first come under notice as typical chorea, and then develop unquestionable acute rheumatism. And this leads us to remark that severe nervous shock, induced by accident and other causes, appears now and then to be an immediate antecedent of acute rheumatism. Without attempting any explanation of the connection, it is most important to "keep our minds open" to the nervous relationships or antecedents of the disease, because some of the clinical features of the hyperpyrexial attacks point strongly towards a nervous origin; and, further, the association of some forms of joint-affection with certain diseases of the spinal cord is also suggestive. Amongst other antecedents of rheumatism concerning which careful records are needed, is scarlatina. It is a common enough fallacy to call every affection of a joint which suppurates either strumous or pyæmic, and one which does not suppurate rheumatic; and again and again we are baffled by being unable to give a true definition of rheumatism. But with regard to the joint-affection of scarlatina, it is clear that at least three views may be taken. 1. We may hold that it is one of the manifestations proper to the disease itself—a scarlatinal arthritis. For want of better terms, we may say that the scarlatinal poison affects the joints just as it may affect other parts. According to this view, it would be a mistake to identify the scarlatinal joint-affection with acute rheumatism, although in many respects running parallel to it—notably, in the frequent contemporaneous affection of heart and serous membranes. 2. We may consider it an epiphenomenon, depending on some auto-infection, and therefore septicæmic in character. Although it by no means conclusively proves the septicæmic nature of the affection, it is