

and why should men of our profession think they are lowering their dignity by engaging in the excellent work of instilling truth and wisdom, as evinced in the physical world, into the minds of the hard-fisted mechanic or the half-educated higher classes? Few men of our generation have probably diffused more general good in this way than our associate Dr. Lankester. We offer his doings in this direction as an example of what may be effected to a good purpose by general diffusion of knowledge. "A professor of one of our ancient universities," as Sir B. Brodie told the Royal Society, "and a distinguished Fellow of the Linnæan Society, does not consider it to be incompatible with his duties as a parish priest, nor beneath his dignity as a philosopher, to give such simple instructions in botany to the girls of the village in which he resides as may enable them to understand the flora of the neighbouring district."

A GREAT SOCIETY: ITS DEFECTIVE ORGANISATION.

A FEW weeks ago we commented on the pitiable want of attention which was shown by our great Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society to medical questions of high national importance. We must again repeat, that this chartered seat of science does not perform its proper functions. It is over lucky, and lazy, as from plethora. Instead of being, as it ought, a kind of assay-office, where the real value of the facts brought before it may be tested and elicited; instead of stamping with its mark and authority the various vital questions of the sort referred to, it has become little more than a scientific register-office, where opinions and facts are entered, duly endorsed, red-taped, and put in a pigeon-hole. To us, it seems as clear as the day, that this embodiment of the professional voice, if it fulfilled its functions rightfully, would be an apparatus for definitively settling, as far as human science can settle, all the fluctuating medical questions of the day. It has funds abundant at its service. It has men of the highest mental calibre in every department of our art, in physiology, in medicine, in surgery, in chemistry, at its beck—men ready and willing to throw their energies into the investigation of any disputed or ill-ventilated subject. But of all this fine material it makes no use; and simply because of its defective organisation, so often and so well pointed out by Mr. Charles Hawkins.

We have already referred to the miserable state of obscurity in which the Society has left the question of suspended animation from drowning. Here, again, is another topic urgently requiring authoritative supervision—the Hot-air Bath—an instrument evidently of the highest powers for effecting good or evil, or both—and our Society lets the thing go its way in the world unguided and unchecked. The

public and the profession want to know how they are to deal with this new instrument, and our authority is dumb! The injury which this neglect of its duties inflicts on the profession is incalculable. It encourages quackery; and give us no just excuse to exclaim against the appropriation of these neglected things by quacks. In this very case, the Society, while calmly looking on, will probably witness the elevation (by some glorious Oriental quack) of a magnificent establishment—the Turkish Calido-Frigidarium—where the cure of every disease that afflicts the human body will be taken into consideration. Ours is indeed a country of free trade and *laissez faire*. Surely, in these sceptical days, when drugs are so scurvily treated, and the most divine of remedies (as Guy Patin called it) treated as the worst of enemies, an energetic sudatorial appliance, like this Turkish Bath, is worthy of having its *status* properly fixed in our chapter of therapeutics. And we let the quacks and thermaturgists take possession of it! *Et sic omnia!*

THE WEEK.

THE Lord Chancellor's Bill affecting lunatics under Chancery supervision has passed a second reading in the House of Lords. The Bill, as we understand, provides, among other things, for the creating of visiting Commissioners, and also for the granting of pensions to two of the present Commissioners, who are on the point of retiring from office, after having performed their duties for about thirty years. Three new Commissioners are, we believe, to be appointed—two medical, and one legal. The salary attached to each office is £500 per annum, and travelling expenses. The Commissioners are not obliged to give up their professional pursuits, but may, when not engaged in the special visitation of lunatics, exercise their faculties as they please. Lord Shaftesbury, as we think, very wisely took exception to this part of the scheme. A medical man who gives up, say, four months of the year to the visiting of lunatics scattered anywhere between the Land's-end in Cornwall and John o'Groat's House, virtually gives up his private practice—at least, we may very safely assume that his patients will, at all events, give him up. If so, then it is scarcely to be expected that my Lord Chancellor can buy first-rate medical services at the price he tenders for them. The General Commissioners of Lunacy have adopted a much wiser course. They make their Commissioners give up all other pursuits from which profit is derived, and pay them handsomely as a compensation. In this way, they secure the entire services and undivided attention of each one of their Commissioners, to the manifest advantage of the Commission.

THE London College of Physicians considers itself bound, in the interests of its members, to explain to the governors of the medical charities of the country the chops and changes which have been, during these latter days, introduced into its regulations. The licentiate of other days (it points out to the aforesaid authorities) corresponds to the member of this day; and the idea involved in the licentiate of modern date differs from that which hung around his predecessor, the college license holder. Whether the governors of our hospitals, etc., will go to school again on these complicated topics, we cannot tell; but at any event, the College has certainly only acted with its usual honesty and straightforwardness in openly declaring the relative positions of the tripartite practitioners of medicine who are now gathered together under the shadow of its remarkably gloomy portals in Pall Mall.

WE are very pleased to register facts of the following nature. This is the way to put down quackery in its multiform guises. Quackeries, whether mesmeric or homœopathic, thrive through the ignorance of mankind. Therefore, *sublatâ causâ, tollitur effectus*.

"At a meeting held in the public hall, Leamington, on Tuesday evening, resolutions were passed approving of the conditions of aid given by the Department of Science and Art, in assisting science instruction through the means of evening classes. The meeting was addressed by Dr. Jeaffreson, Mr. Buckmaster (of the Science and Art Department), Dr. Hitchman, Mr. Hawley, and other gentlemen; and classes will be established in connection with the Young Men's Association."

REFERRING to a note in this JOURNAL, which stated that the London College of Physicians exacted a curriculum of four years from candidates, instead of three, as required by the College of Surgeons and Apothecaries' Hall, the *Dublin Medical Press* writes:—

"The London College deserves credit for this attempt to improve the general practitioner, and we hope it may counteract the speculations of dealers in qualifications, who would 'lower the standard,' and 'curtail the curriculum,' of medical education."

THE following communication illustrates some of the points concerning the transmission of secondary syphilis, to which we have recently alluded. It shews, in particular, that a chancre once healed may, nevertheless, during the progress of the constitutional disease yield a secretion which (although not capable of being again inoculated upon the same patient) may infect others, and produce in them a disease having all the characters of the primary indurated chancre:—

"Two years ago a lady consulted me for what she described as a complete break up in her health, and as I had known her before, the change in her appearance was certainly very remarkable. She had been a widow, but had married some months before a gentleman much younger than herself, and, after some questioning, I dis-

covered, at last, something that excited my suspicions. On making an examination, I found inside the labia two indurated chancres immediately behind the fourchette. They were too well marked to allow the slightest doubt to exist about their nature; and, on inquiry, I found she had first noticed them about six or seven weeks before; one of the glands in the groin was likewise materially enlarged. Before putting her under treatment, I saw her husband, and he at once informed me that nearly a year before his marriage he had contracted a sore, had been treated by an apothecary, and had been pronounced *quite well*. He had never any eruption on his skin, but had since laboured under ulcerated sore-throat and pains in his joints, which he attributed to rheumatism. I examined his penis, and between the prepuce and the glands on one side of the mesial line was the remains of a large ulcer, hard and irregular; but apparently quite healed, though I thought I could detect a slight watery exudation from its surface. Perfectly satisfied now in my own mind as to the nature of the affection his wife was labouring under, I put her at once under the influence of mercury, and with the usual local treatment the sores on the genitals healed, and the tumour in the groin disappeared. Some months afterwards, however, her chest and back were covered with a copper coloured eruption; the glands in her neck likewise became engaged, and a deep ulcer appeared on one of her tonsils. Under suitable treatment, she has perfectly recovered, and her health has continued good up to the present time. Her husband, who, I think, was not at first thoroughly satisfied as to the fact that he was the cause of his wife's illness, was shortly afterwards made painfully aware of its truth. He was attacked with syphilitic laryngitis, and his life was saved almost by a miracle. A large venereal bubo likewise formed in his groin, involving a degree of suffering that was absolutely pitiable."

WE are glad to recognise the unanimity of consent with which our remarks on Sir B. Brodie and the peerage have been received by the public press—from the great *Jupiter Tonans* downwards. It would be a grand thing for science, if the mooted point should lead to the consideration of an important item, which we consider would necessarily be involved in the elevation of Sir B. Brodie to the Peerage; namely, the question of life-peerages. We readily admit that, unless life-peerages become a fact, it is not desirable that men of science should find their way into that august assembly, and for two reasons: in the first place, they have not (with the rarest exceptions) the wealth required for the respectable transmission of the honour to their offspring; and in the second place, it is very undesirable, for the honour and credit of science, that a dignified title should descend to a son, who might render the name ridiculous. Such distinctive honours appertain to the individual, are incarnated in him, and should, therefore, cease with his life.

THE love of the French—male and female—for the canine species is well known. M. Boudin tells us, the municipal taxes showed that in 1856 there were 75,400 dogs in the department of the Seine. M. Block puts the number of dogs in France at two millions; and, reckoning their keep at two centimes a head, he finds that they cost 200,000 francs a day

—nearly £3,000,000 sterling per annum. At this pace of calculation the dogs in Europe (Christian and Turk) annually consume victuals to the value of about £14,000,000.—A Russian physician, Dr. Arendt, has sent a memoir to the French Academy of Sciences, which informs the world that he has obtained happy results from the employment of arsenic in hydrophobia.—M. Giraud Teulon, in a communication to the Academy of Sciences, indicates the movements which the lens undergoes through the contraction of the ciliary muscles; the movements serving the purpose of adapting the eye to distant objects.—The *Gazette de Breslau* says that “in the village of Lassen, near Brieg, in Silesia, there is at present raging a tetanic affection causing firm closure of the mouth, and death in three or four days. The inhabitants, instead of calling in the doctor, apply in another direction; viz., they attempt to open the closed mouth of the patient by means of a church key dipped in holy water.”—Another journal announces that, according to the researches of an English doctor, eighty young girls have lost their lives in England through burns in consequence of wearing crinoline.—We learn from a correspondence in the *Semaphore* of Marseilles, that Dr. Bell, who long ago settled in Abyssinia, where he exercised the functions of general-in-chief and minister of the Emperor Theodorus, has been killed in battle at Dezai-Garad. Theodorus, notwithstanding, was victorious, and ordered one hundred and fifty prisoners to be killed to make up for the loss of his minister.—In the *Constitutionnel* we read that, under the powerful patronage of the emperor and the empress, there has been established at Fablaine (an agreeable spot in the valley of the Marne) an asylum for young girls discharged as convalescents from the Hôpital Eugénie. The house is already able to receive two hundred and fifty girls.—M. Trousseau has again hold of the Academy of Medicine by the ears. The eloquent professor is now explaining this novelty to them: that in most cases, what is usually considered as an apoplectic cerebral congestion, and is treated (in France, it must be understood) by bleeding, is in reality an attack of epilepsy. “I do not deny,” says M. Trousseau, “the existence of cerebral congestion, in fact, I consider it as common enough; but what I doubt the existence of is the apoplectic form of congestion, the form in which the patient falls as if struck with apoplexy, and remains for a greater or less period deprived of sense.”—The rage for new scientific societies is great. The formation of a new one at Lyons is announced.—M. Tigri renews his assertion to the Academy, that the foetus swallows the amniotic fluid. The deglutition of it begins about the seventh or eighth month, and furnishes the elements of nutrition.—The Belgian Academy of Sciences having determined to offer to M. Quételet a

medal as a memorial of the services rendered by him to science, the Belgian Government has requested permission to join in the proposed honour. “It is not”, says the *Moniteur des Sciences*, “the first time that the Belgian Government has shown by its acts the value with which it regards the progress of science.”—A. M. Jacquet, in the commune of Rians, by will leaves to a Parisian dame the whole of his property. She, reciprocally, does the same to him. By a singular coincidence, Madame dies on the same day and almost at the same hour as Monsieur; and hence there arises a question of much interest to the heirs of the parties. The journal which tells the tale says that if, after investigation, there be any doubt as to who is the survivor, the survivorship will be given in favour of the younger of the two; and if their ages are alike, then, according to presumption, the decree goes in favour of the male.—Our learned confrère, Dr. Parigot, writes *La Presse Médicale*, is on the point of starting for America, whither he is invited to occupy a brilliant position. He has resigned his office of physician to the Hospice of Orphans.

Association Intelligence.

REPORT OF MEETING OF COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL:

Held in Birmingham, on Monday, March 18th.

PRESENT:—Sir C. Hastings (in the Chair); Mr. Bartleet; Mr. Cartwright; Mr. Hurst; Dr. Lankester; Mr. G. May; Mr. Pemberton; Dr. Richardson; Dr. Stewart; Dr. Styrup; Dr. Houghton Waters; Mr. Watkin Williams; and Dr. P. H. Williams.

It was the unanimous wish of the Committee that Sir Charles Hastings should be requested to forward to the family of the late Mr. Norman, of Bath, the following resolution:—

“That this Committee cannot resume its business without first recording its sincere sympathy with the relatives of the late Mr. Norman, and the deep regret which the members individually feel for the loss of their able, indefatigable, and highly esteemed colleague.”

The Financial Report for the year 1860, having been read by the Treasurer, was received, and directed to be published.

The following resolutions were adopted:

1. That the Secretary be requested to prepare, at every March meeting of the Committee of Council, a detailed list of members whose subscriptions are in arrear for one, two, three, or more years respectively.

2. That the price of the JOURNAL be in future five-pence and sixpence instead of sixpence and sevenpence; and that the prices marked on the JOURNAL, be a guinea for members, and one pound six shillings for those who are not members of the Association.

3. That Dr. Markham be requested to deliver the Address in Medicine, and Mr. Hoffman (of Margate) the Address in Surgery, at the next annual meeting.

CHARLES HASTINGS,
PHILIP H. WILLIAMS, M.D., *Gen. Sec.*

Worcester, March 19th, 1861.