

LIVERPOOL.

[FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.]

Opening of New Chemical Laboratories at University College.—High Death-rates.—The Distress in Liverpool.—Annual Report of Port Sanitary Authority.—Consumption Hospital.

LAST Saturday, the new chemical laboratories in connection with University College were formally opened by Sir Lyon Playfair, M.P., in the absence of the Earl of Derby, the President of the College, through indisposition. Mr. Christopher Bushell, vice-chairman of the College Council, presided at the opening ceremony, which was preceded by a luncheon and followed by a reception. Sir Lyon Playfair delivered an admirable address on the scientific aspect of the education question. Amongst those present were the Principal of University College (Professor Rendall), and the Professors and Governors: Principal Greenwood (Vice-Chancellor of Victoria University), and Professors Sir Henry Roscoe, M.P., Bedson, Schorlemmer, Balfour, Stewart, etc. These new laboratories, designed by Mr. Alfred Waterhouse, R.A., have been erected at a cost of over £15,000, the greater part of which has already been subscribed. They are thoroughly well adapted for all the various branches of chemical study. There is a large theatre for practical work, a lecture-theatre, with seat-room for 260 students, a chemical museum, a balance-room, and rooms for gas and water analysis, and for distillations requiring steam, etc. The buildings occupy the western end of the college site, and are in immediate connection with the Medical School block. The west front, in which is the principal entrance, faces Brownlow Street, the eastern elevation looking out on the college grounds. The interior arrangements, as regards heating and ventilation, are most complete, special attention having been directed to these points. The building generally is supplied with warmed fresh air, heated by hot water in large channels beneath the ground-floor, and rising through vertical flues in the walls to the various rooms. The fresh air is cleansed by passing through a sheet of water as it enters the building, and its entrance is accelerated by a fan driven by a gas engine. A large shaft, connected with extraction-flues, carries off the vitiated air and the chemical fumes. The Bower light has been supplied. The entire design will ultimately be completed by the erection of two large laboratories for qualitative and quantitative analysis, placed side by side, and extending from the north end of the present building as far as Dover Street. Each of these will measure 60 feet by 30 feet. The old laboratories in the Medical School were on a small scale, and latterly have been found most inconvenient and altogether inadequate. The new chemical department, when fully completed, will be second to none in the kingdom.

The cold was extreme here during the first two weeks of March. The mean average temperature of the first week of the month was 31.6°, and that of the second week was 32.2°, the latter being 9.7° below the mean average temperature of the corresponding week for the last twenty years. Owing, doubtless, in a great measure to the very severe weather, the death-rate of the city has been unusually high. For the week ending March 6th, the rate was 29.5 per 1,000; for the week ending March 13th, it was 33.7 per 1,000. During this second week, there were 94 deaths of persons above 60 years of age, and 147 deaths of children under 5 years of age; and phthisis and lung-diseases accounted for no fewer than 171 deaths, or 45 per cent. of the total number of deaths.

The distress among the working classes and the very poor has been, and is, simply appalling. Public attention has been specially directed to the matter by a striking series of articles in the *Daily Post*, entitled "Toiling Liverpool," and strenuous efforts are being made to alleviate the all-prevailing misery.

In the recently published Annual Report for 1885 of the Port Sanitary Authority, mention is made of the fact that many vessels arrived in the Mersey from Montreal with cases of small-pox on board, which, in some instances, led to the spread of the disease in the town. The medical officer of health has called the attention of the Customs authorities to the matter, pointing out that steps should be taken to try to prevent such importation of disease for the future. Small-pox was epidemic in Montreal during the year, and was prevalent here in 1884, and the early part of last year. In the summer of 1885, it declined, only two cases coming under notice in August. In September, it increased again to seven cases, in October to fifteen, in November to seventy-three, and in December to fifty-six cases. At the present time, there are forty-eight cases in the special hospital. Owing to the prevalence of cholera in France and Spain, the United States Government appointed medical inspectors here, last year, to examine emigrants going to that country, and to ascertain if any of them had

come from, or passed through, Spain and France; and, if so, to have their effects and clothing disinfected. This was found necessary in over 600 cases. The emigration returns for 1885 show that the reduction in the number of emigrants passing through Liverpool, which commenced in 1882, is continuing, the total decrease last year being 18,132.

Some interesting statements were made at the annual meeting of the supporters of the Consumption Hospital. At this institution, some of the in-patients pay half their expenses. During 1885, there were 185 in-patients, of whom 30 were "half-pay" cases. The amount contributed by the patients towards the support of the charity exceeded that given by the public in subscriptions, the former being over £800, whilst the latter was only £700.

CORRESPONDENCE.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

OUR correspondents are reminded that prolixity is a great bar to publication; and, with the constant pressure upon every department of the JOURNAL, brevity of style and conciseness of statement greatly facilitate early publication. We are compelled to return and hold over a great number of communications, chiefly by reason of their unnecessary length.

EMMET'S OPERATION.

SIR,—Dr. Barnes is somewhat difficult to satisfy. He accuses me of stating that I was the first person in England to perform tracheloraphy. I reply that I never said anything of the kind. This he calls "discursive." I should have supposed that a point-blank denial is as little "discursive" as anything can be. Should any of your readers be disposed to follow this trivial matter further, they need only look through my paper, published in the 24th volume of the *Obstetrical Transactions*, and in it they will not find a single word as to myself, or anyone else, being the first to perform the operation in England. In fact, I specially provided for the operation having been done without my knowledge, by saying, "in Great Britain it has scarcely been practised," an expression I could not have used if I had intended to claim that no one had done it before myself.

My object was to direct attention to the merits of the operation, not to the merits of the individual who chanced to perform it first on this side of the Atlantic. That I willingly leave to Dr. Barnes. If now Dr. Barnes still maintains that I made the statement that he attributes to me, I have a right to call on him to quote my *ipsissima verba*, on which he founds his assertion.—I am, etc., W. S. PLAYFAIR.

31, George Street, Hanover Square, W., March 12th.

THE LUNACY BILL.

SIR,—Allow me to point out that, though Section 26 of the new Lunacy Bill distinctly forbids "single case," this mode of treatment is clearly recognised in the marginal note to Form 3, as the magistrate can authorise the admission of a patient into an "asylum, hospital, home, or as a single patient."

Similarly, though the memorandum of the new Bill, Article 2, limits the licensed home question to the prevention of the establishment of fresh asylums, Section 43 as it now stands most certainly might be construed to go much farther. The fact is that, though the Bill is understood to be substantially the same as that brought in last year by Lord Selborne, it is not the same. In the two most important questions touching the treatment of the insane of the upper classes, a complete revolution is intended. This change of front has been hastily decided upon, and, in consequence, the new provisions clash with the old. There is much reason, therefore, for every medical man to exert what influence he can in preventing the Bill from being carried hastily through Parliament. It is much to be feared that, unless due caution be used, some day we shall find that, though the number of rich patients demanding admission into asylums will be increased by the suppression of "single case," there will be no places, public or private, ready for them, and no medical men to certify them.—I am, yours faithfully,

PRIVATE ASYLUM.

** There is no doubt that new provisions have been hastily introduced into the Lunacy Bill, and that, in some respects, they clash with the older ones as the latter stood in the Bill last year. Not only does Form 3, to which our correspondent refers, recognise the justices as having power to sign the order for reception of a "single patient," but also the wording of Section 3 of the Bill distinctly does the same; so that this also is contradictory to Section 26.