

## ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS.

ON Monday, April 12th, in accordance with the Statutes, an extraordinary Comitia of the College was held for the election of President. Dr. SAMUEL WILKS, President, was in the chair.

The PRESIDENT delivered the annual address, in the course of which he took occasion to refer to the matter of professional secrecy. He expressed an opinion adverse to the enactment of any special by-laws or regulations dealing with the subject, mentioning among other reasons the impossibility of drafting any law which would cover every case. The sister professions of the Church and of the Law had no such written regulations. He enumerated then the Fellows who had died during the year, and paid a special tribute to Sir Russell Reynolds, his immediate predecessor in the presidency of the College. He spoke next in appreciative terms of the honesty of purpose and the enthusiasm displayed by Sir George Johnson during the course of his long and distinguished career. Dr. Wilks then gave brief biographical notes of the lives of Dr. Langdon-Down, Dr. George Harley, Dr. Cholmeley, and Sir B. W. Richardson. Of Dr. Edward Ballard's industry, ability, and scientific ardour he spoke in terms of warm praise, and he mentioned briefly Dr. Ralfe, Dr. Child of Oxford, Dr. Wilson of Florence, Dr. J. F. Parry McConnell of Calcutta, Sir Thomas Logan, K.C.B. (formerly Director-General A.M.D.), Dr. Charles Blake, R.N., and Dr. Fearnside of Bournemouth, under whose will the Royal Medical Benevolent College would benefit so largely.

On the motion of Dr. DICKINSON, Dr. Wilks was requested to print his address.

Dr. WILKS then vacated the chair, and the election of President by ballot was held. The Senior Censor, Dr. W. S. CHURCH, having counted the votes, declared that as 79 out of 87 Fellows present had voted for Dr. Wilks, being more than two-thirds of those present, Dr. Wilks was duly re-elected.

Dr. WILKS having resumed the chair and expressed his acknowledgments, moved:

That a loyal address of congratulation be presented to the Queen on the completion of the sixtieth year of Her Majesty's reign in June next.

This was carried by acclamation, and the officers of the College were requested to prepare such an address.

The PRESIDENT stated that Dr. Hale White desired to have permission to deliver his Croonian Lectures on the means by which the temperature of the body is maintained in health and disease in the Examination Hall on the Embankment.

This was agreed to.

Sir Dyce Duckworth and Dr. Lauder Brunton were appointed delegates to the International Medical Congress at Moscow.

The PRESIDENT announced that the College had received from the executors of the late Sir Henry Halford a portrait of his grandfather Sir Henry Halford, G.C.H., President of the College 1820-44, bequeathed to the College. The portrait, which is a half length, is a fine example of the art of Sir Thomas Lawrence. It will be hung in the lower library.

## THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.

A MEETING of the Council was held on April 8th, at the College, Sir WILLIAM MAC CORMAC in the chair.

The minutes of the ordinary Council on March 11th were read and confirmed.

Messrs. Bennett and Walsham were introduced and admitted members of the Court of Examiners.

The Jacksonian Prize was awarded to Mr. Robert Cozens Bailey for his essay on The Pathology, Diagnosis, and Treatment of Diseases of the Prostate Gland. The selection of a subject for the Jacksonian Prize Essay for 1898 was postponed.

On the recommendation of the special Committee the prize founded by the dental profession in honour of the late Sir John Tomes, F.R.S., was awarded to Mr. Charles Lissmore Tomes, F.R.S., Member and Licentiate in Dental Surgery, for his original and other scientific work in relation to dental surgery, dental anatomy, and histology.

A report was received from the Committee of Management, and the following recommendations were adopted:

The Committee have made inquiries of the teachers of the medical schools, both metropolitan and provincial, and have obtained from them their views on the recommendation of the General Medical Council, in regard to practical midwifery. It appears that though, in a certain number of schools, the teachers are of opinion that the suggested alteration in the certificate is desirable, and can be carried out satisfactorily, in others the teachers consider that the proposed attendance can only be fulfilled in a perfunctory manner; and in a majority of the schools the teachers are of opinion that it would be impracticable to carry out the proposed arrangements. The Committee, therefore, now report to the two Royal Colleges that in their opinion it is not desirable to adopt the alteration in the regulations suggested by the General Medical Council, and they recommend that a reply to this effect be sent to the Registrar of the General Medical Council.

The Committee further recommended that, with regard to certain alterations in the certificates of practical midwifery required for the Final Conjoint Examination, which had been suggested by the General Medical Council, no change in the present regulations of the Conjoint Board be made, and that a reply to this effect be sent to the Registrar of the General Medical Council. The Committee had made inquiries of the teachers of the metropolitan and provincial medical schools, and in a majority of the schools the teachers were of opinion that it would be impracticable to carry out the proposed arrangements.

The following report was received from the Laboratories Committee on the preparation of antitoxic serum, and on the researches in connection with the grant from the Goldsmiths' Company.

1. *The Work on Diphtheria for the Metropolitan Asylums Board.*

Since December 4th the Director has supplied 3,000 doses of antitoxic serum containing 4,000 units each, 125 doses containing 3,000 units each, 350 doses containing 2,000 units each, 300 doses containing 1,500 units each, and 409 doses containing 1,000 units, for the treatment of diphtheria in the hospitals of the Metropolitan Asylums Board, and all the demands have been fully met. During this period 14,028,000 units have been supplied, against 10,074,000 units last quarter, being an increase of 354,000 units.

2. *Researches in connection with the Grant from the Goldsmiths' Company.*

The Director has made the following report on the recent work done under the Goldsmiths' Research Grant, namely:

"Since my last report on the work done in connection with the Honourable Goldsmiths' Company Grant, Dr. Wood has continued his investigations on the production of potent diphtheria antitoxins, and has succeeded by his new method (already reported) in obtaining large quantities of strong antitoxic serums.

"The highest of these serums (800 units c.cm.) is much more potent than any that has yet been placed on the market, even in Germany, where the only one that approaches it in strength is that manufactured by Professor Behring, which contains 600 normal units per c.cm.

"The strongest of these serums prepared by Dr. Wood has been supplied to Dr. Sidney Martin at University College Hospital, who reported to the *Lancet*, October 17th, 1896, that he had obtained most remarkable results by its use. In 1894 the percentage death-rate from diphtheria in that hospital was 39. In 1895, the first year in which antitoxin was used, the death-rate had fallen to 28, and in 1896 (September 22nd), when the strong serum was used, to 20.5.

"In Dr. Martin's figures we have additional evidence of the importance of the treatment of diphtheria by antitoxic serum at as early a stage of the disease as possible.

"Dr. Martin also notes that the number of cases of post-diphtheritic paralysis was very small—only three in the whole of the cases that recovered—that not a single case of abscess occurred, and that rashes on the skin and pains in the joints were of very rare occurrence.

"He further notes that no cases proved fatal unless they were severe on admission, and states that the more potent the serum the better will be the results obtained by its use, both as regards immediate effect and as preventing injurious after-effects.

"Dr. T. G. Brodie continues his investigations on the separation of antitoxin from the serum in which it is contained, but as yet has nothing further to report.

"Whilst these investigations have been in progress I have consulted with the various workers, and have inspected and controlled many of the experiments, especially those connected with the determination of the strength of the antitoxin produced. Along with Dr. Wood I have made a large series of experiments on the standardising of test toxin and antitoxin, which, however, are not as yet completed. In addition I have, with the help of the laboratory staff and the gentlemen above mentioned, been able to make numerous improvements in the methods of injecting the horses, of collecting blood, and separating the active serum; of keeping it aseptic; of clearing it by sedimentation; of storing it in bulk and of decanting and distributing it in convenient form for use. Concerning these and other improvements in methods and detail I hope to give a fuller report at a future date. I cannot speak too highly of the fashion in which the investigators under the grant have carried out the work assigned to them."

In fulfilment of one of the conditions of the grant, antitoxin has been supplied to various hospitals in London, as well as to certain medical practitioners.

A grant of £100 was made to the Director of the Laboratories for his valuable services in connection with these researches.

The PRESIDENT stated on behalf of himself and the Vice-Presidents that they recommended the presentation of an address of congratulation to Her Majesty on the celebration of the 60th year of her reign.