

BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION:
SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1877.

SUBSCRIPTIONS to the Association for 1877 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 Mr. FRANCIS FOWKE, General Secretary, 36, Great Queen Street, London, W.C.

BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10TH, 1877.

THE RELATION OF ALCOHOL TO MEDICINE.

THE meeting lately held by the Church of England Temperance Society in the Sheldonian Theatre at Oxford, under the presidency of Dr. Acland, has a good deal of interest for members of the profession. The meeting was one of a series which are still being held throughout the country for the purpose of considering what means can be adopted to check the spread of intemperance; and was attended by a large number of men eminent both in divinity and in medicine. Naturally, on the question of the usefulness or otherwise of alcohol, different views were to be expected from different speakers, especially when it is considered that the platform contained men of all opinions, the sole uniting bond being that all are anxious, by some means or other, to see intemperance checked. With that aim we have, of course, the fullest sympathy; and, were this the proper occasion, we should be prepared to offer an opinion as to whether the Permissive Bill or some modification of it does or does not offer the best means of effecting the object. Here, however, we do not propose to enter into a consideration of the moral or social effects of the use of alcohol, important as these are, but shall attempt rather, confining ourselves entirely to the scientific aspects of the question, to consider the conclusions to which on the whole, in our opinion, science is tending. Since the celebrated declaration, more or less against the use of alcohol, was delivered some time ago by a large number of the leading medical men of the metropolis, professional attention has been more particularly directed to the question; and there can be no doubt that, on the whole, opinion is tending both to condemn the frequent use of alcohol by persons in health, and to hold that its usefulness in disease has been somewhat overestimated. Granting this, and even granting further, for the sake of argument (though this is a hypothetical concession), that much more alcohol has been ordered in the past than was good for the sick, what ought to be our behaviour now in regard to the question? Are we to give up entirely the use of a remedy merely because our predecessors, or we ourselves at a former time, have recommended its too free administration? Certainly not, if it can be shown that certain principles can be laid down regarding its administration, which principles will obviate former errors, and yet enable us to benefit our patients. What, then, are the teachings of science on this subject?

With the opinions of Dr. Richardson we are all now acquainted. The brilliant experiments, the careful chemical and physiological research of Anstie, De Chaumont, Parkes, and Richardson in this country, and of many eminent foreign observers, by means of which existing conclusions have been reached and demonstrated, are now settling down into the every day knowledge, not only of the profession but of the general public. We know that alcohol belongs to that group of bodies whose action is to paralyse the vaso-motor nerves, and so to congest the parts with blood. We know, further, that if this action be continued and increased, the question becomes greater, the blood moves less rapidly, and, soon parting with its nutritive material, acts, in fact, as a poison to the tissues and especially to the nervous tissues. We know, from the examinations which are now common in lunatic asylums, what changes take place in the brains of persons who are the subjects of chronic alcoholism; and from other sources we have

become acquainted with the effects of the habitual and excessive use of alcohol in the other organs of the body. And we know that, speaking generally, the effect of the consumption of considerable quantities of alcohol is to increase the fibrous tissue in the interior of organs; and that this increase of fibrous tissue, sooner or later, has the effect, by pressure on the secreting cells, of deteriorating their function and of diminishing their power. It may also now be taken for proved, that the hardest work, physical and intellectual, in the most depressing cold, and in the most intense and enervating heat, has been performed, not only without the use of alcohol, but has been performed better without it than with its use. And, lastly, there can be no doubt that, in many cases, diseases have been aggravated by the unwise and injudicious, as well as by the excessive administration of alcohol. Especially is this so in the first stages of fevers or inflammations, where, the whole body or the affected part being already in a state of over-congestion, the administration of alcohol can only do harm theoretically, and is in fact found to do so in practice, by still further aggravating the previous congestion. All these things we know, but we were not quite prepared for, nor do we think the evidence substantiates, some of the statements which Dr. Richardson made concerning the use of alcohol. Surely, he was going beyond his data when he asserted that there "was no evidence whatever of any useful service being rendered by the agent". What are the grounds for so sweeping a statement? To quote Dr. Cheyne, and to say that nothing more hinders digestion than alcohol, is beside the question. The statement is at once admitted, since Dr. Cheyne's words are "after debauch in wine", and he evidently refers to the abuse of alcohol, and not to its use. It may be further true that those who abstain from alcohol have the best digestion, but their good digestion may be due rather to their good stomachs than to their abstinence from alcohol. It might as reasonably be argued that no man should consult a doctor, since those who do not do so enjoy the best health. Much wiser, we take it, is the cautious position occupied by the late lamented Dr. Parkes, who, though himself for many years an abstainer, was not prepared to say that small quantities of alcohol did any real harm. For our own part, while we heartily agree with the statements as to the very deleterious effects of over indulgence in alcohol, and while we think with Dr. Richardson that persons in health do not need it, we are by no means satisfied that no advantages are to be gained from the administration of it at the right time, and in judicious quantities. And we think, further, that it is not very difficult to say what in general the right time is, nor to find out what are the proper quantities. Evidently alcohol causes congestion, and it should, therefore, not be given in the inflammatory or febrile stages of the pyretic disorders—not as a rule then, that is, since there are exceptions even here. But after pyrexia and its congestion, there succeeds depression of pulse and temperature with anæmia; and then we believe the skilful use of stimulants will sometimes prevent patients from dying, will obviate the tendency to suppuration by increasing the blood supply, or will hasten recovery if they do not save life. If care were taken to impress on patients the advice that the proper use of stimulants is a temporary one, and if they were used as medicines ought to be, to render their further use unnecessary, then all would be done that is required, while we should not be going to the extreme of altogether disusing a powerful remedy merely because it has been grossly abused. Other speakers, we are glad to observe, took this ground almost precisely, Dr. Giles pointing out that in the advanced stages of typhus fever alcohol was one of the most useful of remedies. That is, as we take it, in the spanæmic stage of fever, alcohol, by removing the spanæmia through its action on the vaso-motor system, does good. None the less is it hurtful in the early or congestive stages. Dr. Acland's remarks are very cautious, and carefully worded, and illustrated that objection to hasty conclusions which characterises, and ought to characterise, the true scientific mind. If we were asked to summarise the results of this conference—and we believe there may be gathered from it almost all that can be said on the subject—we should say that the evidence justifies the following conclusions.

1. Alcohol acts by paralysing the vaso-motor system of nerves. This paralysis is directly proportional to the quantity administered, and inversely as the stability of the nervous equilibrium of the individual. Stability of nervous equilibrium, or, more shortly, *resistance*, resolves itself into the individual and family history, and might be precisely stable if we had any means of measuring the quantity of the *neurility* in any portion of the nervous system.

2. Alcohol exhibits a phenomenal contrariety as regards the action of small and large doses; small doses exciting, while large ones depress. In this respect, alcohol only conforms to the general law followed by stimulants and narcotics.

3. Alcohol is not necessary for persons in health, and, in fact, the hardest work possible has been done by human beings without its use.

4. Alcohol lowers the temperature, probably not directly, but by exposing a larger quantity of blood than natural to the action of the heat-abstracting outer air.

5. From the foregoing it follows that, in disease, alcohol will do harm in the early febrile stages of the pyretic disorders, but it will prove useful in the subsequent *spanæmic* and depressed stages; and, in fact, this appears to be the case.

6. It follows, therefore, that the wise physician, while he will dissuade his patients from having recourse to the use of alcohol in health, and from habitually using it in any circumstances, will still employ, so far as he can for good, one of the most powerful remedies with whose properties modern science has made him acquainted.

INFANT MORTALITY.

THE distressing mortality at the Carlisle Place Orphanage has lately directed public attention to the subject of infant feeding. Few subjects are of greater consequence in a sanitary sense. The number of mothers who are able to nurse their babies seems to be diminishing every day, and the feeding-bottle has become a familiar object in almost every household. It is, then, of great importance to keep before the mind the principles upon which the hand-feeding of infants is conducted, and the rules in which those principles are embodied.

To be successful, there are two points which should be kept constantly in view. In the first place, we must select a diet which combines in itself all the elements of nutrition in a form in which an infant is capable of digesting them. Secondly, we must remember that the digestive organs in early life are delicate and easily deranged. The child's digestive power, therefore, is subject to frequent variations, requiring his diet to be modified from time to time, in accordance with his state of health.

Taking human milk as the natural and most perfect food for a young child, our object must be to make as near an approach as possible to this standard in the substitute we propose to adopt. The milk of some animals, notably that of the ass, resembles woman's milk very closely; but cow's milk, which is plentiful and cheap, is usually chosen, and, when properly prepared, answers the purpose admirably. Cow's milk contains proportionately more curds and cream, but less sugar, than human milk, and these differences can be easily remedied. A more important distinction between the two fluids consists in the much firmer clot produced by the coagulated casein of cow's milk. It congeals into a dense lump, which contrasts remarkably with the light loose flocculent clot of human milk. It is for this reason that the milk of the cow, simply sweetened and diluted with water, can seldom be digested by infants in large towns. Therefore, to make such a substitute for the mother's breast a satisfactory one, further preparation is required. Our object may be attained by adding an alkali, as lime-water, to the milk. The lime, no doubt, acts by preventing the coagulation of the milk and allowing it to pass out of the stomach little changed, to be fully digested by the intestinal secretions in the bowels. To be efficient, the quantity of lime-water should be considerable, forming at least a third part of the mixture. This, with the addition of milk-sugar, and, if the milk be poor, a little cream, is a very useful food.

Another plan for increasing the digestibility of the casein is to add some thickening material, which, by its mechanical action, may separate the particles of curd and prevent them from running together into a large clot. Any thickening material will do this, but it is not unimportant what substance is chosen. The ordinary farinaceous preparations which, under the name of "infants' foods", are commonly resorted to, can only be given during the first months of life at considerable risk. According to the experiments of Korowin of St. Petersburg, it is not until the end of the third month that the salivary and pancreatic fluids are secreted in sufficient quantities to have any decided action upon starch. Therefore, before that age, if we give farinaceous food at all, we must give it with such an addition as will supply the place of the absent secretions and effect the necessary conversion of the starch into dextrine and grape-sugar. Mialhe, more than thirty years ago, suggested the employment of malt for this purpose, and, fifteen years later, Liebig put the idea into practice. "Liebig's Food for Infants", which consists of wheaten flour, malt, and a little carbonate of potash, is a very valuable improvement upon the older foods, and, if carefully manufactured, is rarely found to disagree. It is greatly to be regretted that the various preparations of this food are all sold at a price which practically limits their use to the well-to-do. A manufacturer who would place this boon within reach of the poor would be a real public benefactor.

Other useful thickening materials are gelatine and barley-water. The latter, in which the starch is limited in amount and held in a state of fine division, differs from ordinary farinaceous foods in being well digested by the youngest infants. A mixture of thin barley-water and milk in equal proportions may be given to a child without danger from the birth. In practice, it is found to be useful to vary the food of the child, according to some of the plans suggested above, as judicious variety appears to act a certain stimulus upon the digestive organs.

One word may be said upon the subject of condensed milk. This is a food which is often well digested by infants immediately after birth, although later it is apt to disagree. Owing to the large quantity of sugar it contains, this food is very fattening, and on this account often gives a deceptive appearance of strength. Children fed for too long a time upon this milk generally become rickety.

If the dietary of a child be regulated upon the principles above sketched out; if he be fed regularly from a perfectly clean feeding-bottle, kept clean, warmly clothed, and taken out frequently into the open air, he will almost invariably be found to do well. Exceptional cases are sometimes met with, but these are rare. The real difficulties connected with the hand-feeding of children arise from temporary derangements, often the result of chills, which for the time impair the digestive power. Children are very subject to attacks of gastric catarrh, during which the food taken is apt to undergo fermentation. If a change be not made at once in the diet, the fermenting process continues, vomiting or diarrhoea occurs, the strength of the child is reduced, and his nutrition is for the time in abeyance. In the treatment of such a condition, the quantity of fermentable matter taken must be diminished, and it may be necessary for a day or two entirely to exclude milk from the diet.

The hand-feeding of infants, then, requires intelligence and tact and a vigilant attention to small points of detail. With these, in ordinary cases, success is certain. There is no reason why a healthy child fed artificially, with judgment, should not thrive as well as one suckled naturally at his mother's breast.

CONCEALMENT OF THE DEAD BODIES OF INFANTS.

TWO very remarkable cases have recently occurred to which it appears desirable to draw attention. The first occurred in the localities of Longwathly, a village near Penrith, and Tue Brook, a suburb of Liverpool, respectively; and, as it involves a serious charge against a woman now in custody, it will suffice to give briefly the facts as stated before the coroner and magistrates.

Recently, the body of an infant was found in a box at an inn in Penrith. The box was stated to have been left in June last by a Mrs. Kirkbride; who never returning to claim it, it was stowed away in a lumber-room. After it had been there for many months, a peculiar odour was observed to emanate from it; it was accordingly opened, and was found to contain the remains of a child in a very decomposed state wrapped in several coverings. An inquest was held on the remains, and, as the medical evidence could not prove that death had resulted from violence, an open verdict of "Found dead" was returned. A warrant was issued for the apprehension of Mrs. Kirkbride; and, subsequently, a further and more careful examination of the box revealed the fact of the remains of another child being contained in it; these latter having, apparently, been in the box a much longer time than the other. As it was ascertained that Mrs. Kirkbride had gone to the neighbourhood of Liverpool, the police were communicated with, and she was taken into custody on the evening of Sunday, the 28th ult. After her removal to prison, which at her own request was done quietly, without the knowledge of her landlady and the other inmates of the house, certain articles were missed, which led to her boxes being searched, when, among other articles, a round tin box was found which, when opened, emitted a most offensive odour. It was examined by the police, and removed by them to the mortuary, where Mr. Henry Yate Pitts carefully examined the contents. These he found to consist of the remains of three newly-born infants in different stages of decay, one being tolerably perfect, but the sex not distinguishable, the remains being in a state of dry decay; the next was the trunk of a newly-born full-grown child without a head, in a more advanced state of decay than the first. While searching for the bones of the child's head, Mr. Pitts found other loose bones which had evidently belonged to a third child; also the bones of the missing head of the second child. Round the neck of one child was a piece of rag, which, making allowances for the difference in size between the neck as it was and as it had been, seemed to have been originally tightly tied. No opinion could be given as to the cause of death, nor as to the children having been born alive. There were appearances indicating that the third child had been in the box many years, the others at different but more recent periods.

After the inquest, the police received information which induced them to search the garden of a house at Hetton near Penrith, where the prisoner formerly resided some time. The result was the discovery of the remains of a sixth infant buried beneath a pear-tree. Mrs. Kirkbride has been remitted to the Penrith police, and will be brought before the local magistrates.

In the second case, the scene is the Regent's Park Road, where are the premises of an undertaker named Harvey. For some time past, complaints have been made of unpleasant odours in the neighbourhood of these premises, which were at first attributed to the establishment of a fishmonger who, in consequence, has suffered great diminution in his business. Closely adjacent, also, was a large infant-school, connected with the church of St. Mary the Virgin, Primrose Hill, several of the pupils of which had been obliged to go home from illness and nausea. At the rear of Harvey's premises, was a stable in which Mr. Leggatt, a cab-proprietor, had been in the habit of putting one or two horses. The man employed at these stables at last discovered at the end of the stable in a hollow a box, which, on being opened, was found to contain the body of a child supposed to be between two and three years old. Further search in the loft and other places led to the discovery of no fewer than seven bodies of various ages. They are in a decomposed state, and beyond identification. Dr. Hardwicke has decided to hold an inquest on one of the bodies, when no doubt all the facts in connection with the affair will transpire. It may, however, be well to point out that this is the third case of a similar kind which has come to light within the past eighteen months, and there is too much reason to fear that this practice of retaining the bodies of infants for an indefinite time is a common one with undertakers of a certain class.

It is quite useless to surround the burial of infants with all kinds of safeguards if such practices are to be permitted, for they seldom come to light until some considerable time has elapsed, by which period the body has become much decomposed, or even reduced to a skeleton, when all attempts at identification and efforts to unravel the mystery are unavailing. There could be no hardship in an enactment which should make it penal for any undertaker to retain any corpse on his premises for a longer period than forty-eight hours; and we trust that his subject will receive the attention of Mr. Secretary Cross, who has repeatedly shown his willingness to do all that lies in his power to promote the social and sanitary well-being of the lower classes.

WE deeply regret to learn that Sir William Fergusson has, during the last few days, shown signs of increasing weakness, with delirium. His condition at the present moment is very critical.

It is announced that Mr. Erasmus Wilson, F.R.S., proposes to bear the expense of transporting Cleopatra's Needle from its Egyptian domicile to the site on the Thames Embankment. He has, we hear, entered into a contract with a firm of engineers, who undertake the task for a sum of £10,000, which is not to be paid unless and until the work is accomplished.

THE Duke of Westminster presided on February 2nd at the annual meeting of the Rhyl Children's Home and Hospital. His Grace said that the home was of national interest, as the children came as inmates from all parts of the kingdom. During the year, the ladies managing the home had become total abstainers, and alcoholic drinks were only given to the children when specially ordered.

THE Local Board of Wimbledon, which is supplied by the Southwark and Vauxhall Water Company, is taking steps to secure a water-supply of its own from artesian wells. Mr. Homersham, C.E., has been consulted, and has given an opinion that a pure and ample supply could be obtained for about £55,000 from wells to be sunk at Wallington.

AT a recent meeting of the Society of Surgery at Paris, Messrs. Ciniselli of Cremona, Longmore of Netley, and Michaux of Louvain, were elected Associates of the Society. Messrs. Bryant of London, Lister of Edinburgh, Albert of Innsbruck, Amabile of Naples, Saxtorph of Copenhagen, and Symboulidès of St. Petersburg, were elected corresponding members of the Society at the same meeting.

DR. JACCOUD, who was recently named Professor of Pathology in the Faculty of Medicine in Paris, began his course on Wednesday, January 31st, at three o'clock. More than two thousand of the students, says the *Revue Scientifique*, filled the great theatre, the passages, and even the courts of the school, and loudly applauded the popular professor. A great number accompanied him to the gates with enthusiastic acclamations.

WE are requested to state that neither the library nor museum of the College of Surgeons will be open on Tuesday next, the 13th instant, when the Hunterian Oration will be delivered. The doors of the College will be open at two o'clock, when all members will be freely admitted on giving their cards to the porter; no others on any consideration whatever will be admitted. The Oration will be delivered at three o'clock precisely.

AN inquest was held at Manchester on Wednesday on the body of John M'Guinness, aged five years. The boy took a powder bought from a druggist for worms, and died in half an hour. The powder was taken from a bottle which had not been touched for nine years, and, on examination, it was found to be strychnine. The jury returned a verdict of accidental death, and the druggist was absolved from blame, the jury believing that the wholesale dealer from whom he bought the drug had made the fatal mistake.

LECTURES AT THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.

PROFESSOR WILSON, F.R.S., will bring his course of lectures on Dermatology to a close on Monday next, and will be succeeded by Professor W. K. Parker, F.R.S., who will deliver nine lectures on the Osteology of Birds. The following is his programme:—Introductory. Remarks on the Morphology of the Vertebrata, and the place of the Bird in the Subkingdom; the main Groups of the Class, and their Geographical Distribution.—The Development of the Chick in the Egg.—The Morphology of the Vertebrate Skull.—The Morphology of the Fowl's Skull.—The main varieties of the Skull seen in the Bird-Class.—The Spinal Column of Birds.—The Shoulder-Girdle and Wing of Birds; with comparisons.—The Hip-Girdle and Leg of Birds; with comparisons.—Recapitulation; with general remarks upon the Vertebrate Form; and Conclusion.

THE QUEEN'S SPEECH.

THE Queen's speech is chiefly noticeable for an entire absence of all reference to any measure of sanitary reform, or indeed anything which tends in that direction. This entirely accords with Mr. Sclater-Booth's recent intimation to the Association of Medical Officers of Health that so much had been done in the way of sanitary reform, that little more could be expected at present. It is, however, a bitter satire on the original programme of a Government which started with a device of *Sanitas saniatum*.

MR. DELANE.

THERE are few men who, by their life and work, have had a greater influence on the world's history for the last thirty-five years than the editor of the *Times*. Nor has any one, perhaps, filled uninterruptedly for so long a series of years a post entailing on the person who holds it equal responsibilities, powers, and anxieties. It is hardly possible that services involving such continuous mental and physical labour by night and day should be so long performed, without telling upon the health and strength. A good deal of public concern has been manifested at the reports which have lately been circulated, that Mr. Delane's health was failing. We are happy to be able to say that, although he has not escaped altogether the almost necessary consequences of so many years of severe exertion, his health has allowed him to continue his editorial labours during the past year without interruption except for a brief autumnal holiday, and that he is now as actively and zealously as ever engaged in the functions in which the country so greatly values his services.

DR. ROBERT LEE, F.R.S.

WE regret to hear of the sudden death, after a few hours' illness, of Dr. Robert Lee, F.R.S., formerly Physician-Accoucheur to St. George's Hospital. Dr. Lee was well known for his researches on the anatomical structure and development of the nerves of the heart and of the uterus. He has not long survived his chief opponent, Dr. Snow Beck, with whom he carried on an active warfare for some years. Dr. Lee will be well remembered by many students and practitioners as an energetic and impetuous teacher, with strong prejudices and much given to denunciation of those from whom he differed. He was an especially warm opponent of ovariectomy and of perineoraphy, but he lived to see both establish themselves in the first rank of useful surgical operations. With many of the faults of a bitter conservative, Dr. Lee had also the merits of honesty, hard work, and original research. We shall next week publish a notice of his life.

TWO RICHMONDS IN THE FIELD.

WE may call attention to the notice which appears in our diary that the Hunterian Oration of the Hunterian Society will be delivered on the 13th instant, the same day, as it happens, as that which is fixed for the Hunterian Oration at the College of Surgeons by Sir James Paget. The greater does not always include the less; and although the presence of the Prince of Wales may possibly lend peculiar attractions to the College oration, which is not likely to need any other

than intrinsic recommendation, those who reserve their energies for the oration of Dr. Moxon will not go without the reward of hearing an address which comes from one of the most original and fanciful of medical orators. The memory of Hunter will be doubly honoured on that day, and we hope that the members of the Hunterian Society will not stray from their allegiance.

THE ARMY AND NAVY MEDICAL SERVICES.

WE publish to-day the results of the final examination at Netley for commissions in the medical departments of the British and Indian armies and the Royal Navy. We respectfully invite the attention of the Secretary for War, and his advisers in matters medical, to the fact disclosed by these truth-telling figures. It is this. England, or those who in this matter represent England, deem it wise to send the best educated and most competent men they can obtain in the open market of the universities and schools of this kingdom, not, as we might expect, to take care of the health of the British army and navy of England, but of the native army of India. In the list for the British army, numbering thirty-three young medical officers, one, and one only, has 5,000 marks and upwards; the Royal Navy, out of thirty, not having one who attains this number; while the candidates for the army of India, out of the small number of twelve, have four who have scored 5,000 marks and upwards; the first on the list, Dr. Moorhead, having 5,638 marks, while the fifth and sixth on the same list have close upon 5,000. It will be seen elsewhere that Dr. Moorhead is the winner of the Herbert Prize and Martin Memorial Gold Medal. Will any Member of Parliament in the present session have the courage to ask the Secretary of State for War why all this should be?

THE PUBLIC HEALTH.

THE following is the return of births and deaths in London and in twenty-two other large towns of the United Kingdom for the week ending Saturday, February 3rd. During last week, 5,857 births and 3,697 deaths were registered in London and twenty-two other large towns of the United Kingdom. The natural increase of population was 2,160. The mortality from all causes was at the average rate of 24 deaths annually in every 1,000 persons living. The annual death-rate was 21 per 1,000 in Edinburgh, 25 in Glasgow, and 26 in Dublin. The annual rates of mortality per 1,000 last week in the twenty English towns, ranged in order from the lowest, were as follow: Portsmouth, 12; Brighton, 16; Leeds, 19; Plymouth, 19; Birmingham, 19; Leicester, 20; Sheffield, 21; Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 22; Bradford, 22; London, 23; Norwich, 23; Nottingham, 23; Hull, 23; Wolverhampton, 23; Oldham, 25; Sunderland, 28; Manchester, 31; Bristol, 31; Liverpool, 32; and Salford, 34. The annual death-rate from the seven principal zymotic diseases averaged 3.3 per 1,000 in the twenty towns, and ranged from 0 and 0.5 in Nottingham and Brighton, to 5.5 and 6.6 in Liverpool, Manchester, and Sunderland. Scarlet fever showed an increased fatality in Sunderland. The deaths from small-pox in the twenty towns, which had been 113 in each of the two preceding weeks, rose last week to 130; 103 occurred in London, 19 in Liverpool, 5 in Manchester (exclusive of 3 fatal municipal cases in the Monsall Hospital), 3 in Salford, and not one in any of the sixteen other towns. During the five weeks ending on Saturday last, the annual death-rate from small-pox was equal to 2.4 per 1,000 in Salford, 1.4 in London, 1.4 in Liverpool, and 0.7 in Manchester. The fatal cases, both in London and Manchester, have shown an increase in recent weeks. In London, 2,565 births and 1,528 deaths were registered. Allowing for increase of population, the births were 28 and the deaths 147 below the average numbers in the corresponding week of the last ten years. The annual death-rate from all causes, which in the two previous weeks had been equal to 22 and 21 per 1,000, rose last week to 22.6. The 1,528 deaths included 103 from small-pox, 22 from measles, 23 from scarlet fever, 4 from diphtheria, 41 from whooping-cough, 20 from different forms of fever, and 18 from diarrhoea; thus, to the seven principal diseases of the zymotic class, 231 deaths were

referred, against 210 and 204 in the two preceding weeks. These 231 deaths were 8 below the corrected average number from the same diseases in the corresponding week of the last ten years, and were equal to an annual rate of 3.4 per 1,000. The fatal cases of scarlet fever, diphtheria, whooping-cough, and fever, were considerably below the corrected average weekly numbers, whereas those of small-pox and diarrhoea showed an excess. The 103 deaths from small-pox included 53 certified as unvaccinated, and 14 as vaccinated; in the remaining 36 cases the medical certificates either did not furnish any information as to vaccination, or contained statements that the medical practitioner was unable to certify whether the deceased had or had not been vaccinated. The proportion of deaths in private dwellings shows considerable increase upon that which has prevailed in any week since the disease became severely epidemic. The fatal cases showed a marked increase in north London, and were also more numerous in the west and east districts.

POISONING FROM CARBOLIC ACID.

ANOTHER case of accidental poisoning by carbolic acid is reported in the *Liverpool Mercury* of February 1st. The man, who was an assistant at a druggist's shop, appears to have drunk the carbolic acid in mistake, thinking it was a cough mixture.

METALLOTHERAPY.

SOME years ago, a good deal was said of the theory of cure by local application of metals by M. Burq, and great attention was attracted by his persevering efforts to bring to notice alleged curious effects produced by the application of metals upon surfaces deprived of sensation. Trousseau, among others, observed that when a metal was applied for a certain time upon the insensible surface of a limb, at the end of about a quarter of an hour an incomplete sensibility returned on a restricted zone of skin; and from that point spread gradually during the twenty-four hours over the whole limb. Sensibility returned, and at the same time the skin reddened, the temperature rose, and even the muscular force seemed increased. Strange to say, all metals did not act in the same way with the same patients; on some it was gold which acted, on others copper or zinc, but the same metal always acted on the same patient. These observations have been renewed by Drs. Charcot and Dumontpallier; but their explanation is still quite unknown. At the instigation of M. Charcot, who has brought these facts once more before the Society of Biology in Paris, physicists, chemists, and physiologists are studying the question actively, and possibly some useful result may follow either in information as to electrical relations of the body, or in respect to the therapeutical applications of the observation.

THE NATIONAL HEALTH SOCIETY.

THE general annual meeting of the National Health Society was held in the rooms of the Society, 44, Berners Street, on January 29th; Mr. Ernest Hart in the Chair. The report of the year's proceedings stated that courses of lectures had been given at mothers' meetings, working men's clubs, and at evening meetings of national schools, with the co-operation of the clergy and other local authorities. Lectures on special subjects of personal hygiene and laws of health had been delivered to the educated classes by Dr. Wilks, F.R.S., Mr. W. Eassie, C.E., Miss F. Lees, Miss Miranda Hill, and other well-known persons, who had freely given their services. The report expressed a hope that the large deputation to the Home Secretary, organised last April, and attended by Dr. Lyon Playfair, Cardinal Manning, and other gentlemen interested in the improvement of the London water-supply, would very speedily see its wishes and the promises of Mr. Cross realised. A hope was expressed that the trustees of Lincoln's Inn Fields would not much longer exclude the public from that fine, but little used, open space. The Society is about to make an effort to procure the use of the School Board school-playgrounds in London for poor children in their neighbourhood on Saturdays and Sundays, when these playgrounds are now closed. Large numbers of sanitary tracts, handbills, and posters had been sold and distributed, and a course of lectures

on health is now being delivered by Dr. Corfield in the rooms of the Society of Arts. A vote of thanks was passed to the Committee for its services during the past year, and some influential names were added to the list. The auditor, Mr. Frederick Pope, and the secretary, Miss Lankester, also received a vote of thanks for their valuable services.

THE NORWICH HOSPITAL.

AT the special meeting of the governors and subscribers of the Norwich Hospital, our eminent associate Mr. Cadge, who at present fills the high office of sheriff, was able to produce evidence that the cost of rebuilding the hospital altogether would not exceed that of improving the existing hospital by more than about £5,000. He added strong testimony from Captain Galton and Professor Humphry in favour of that course, which he himself very strongly advocated. Moreover, the Chairman, Lord Leicester, the Prince of Wales, and a number of other influential and wealthy persons had promised large additions to their already munificent donations if this course were adopted. These combined considerations left the subject hardly open to debate, and it has accordingly been resolved to build a new hospital. Mr. Cadge estimates that an excellent new hospital of two hundred beds can be built for £30,000, to cover site, building, and fittings. This is at the rate of £150 a bed. St. Thomas's Hospital cost about £1,000 a bed, we believe, and the new Hôtel Dieu will have cost about £2,000 a bed before it is completed, and with that it is a bad hospital. It will be seen, therefore, that Mr. Cadge has chosen a moderate estimate; but the example of the metropolitan asylums proves that, with judgment and economy, his expectations may be easily realised. We do not, however, profess to be convinced of the necessity of building a new hospital: we believe that the cry for rebuilding old hospitals should be met by the requirement to carry out first all that can be effected by the modern knowledge as to the sanitary results of surgical cleanliness in the dressings of the patients, minute care in the hygiene of nursing, and reforms in the management of the wards. The examples of the Edinburgh Infirmary, the Glasgow Infirmary, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and Norwich Hospital itself will show how much may thus be effected in reducing mortality; while St. Thomas's Hospital and the Lariboisière, and other Paris hospitals, will show that modern buildings do not confer health upon the patients, or an immunity from the cause of excessive mortality which is now misnamed "hospitalism".

COLOUR OF SPECTACLES.

M. JAVAL has reported to the Biological Society of Paris a means by which spectacles can be lined with blue. He remarked upon the general preference now existing for blue glasses over green glasses as protectives; and, discussing the use of coloured glasses, observed that it was not at all certain whether particular colours are deleterious, and whether there is any advantage in extinguishing certain coloured rays. The arguments on which the use of blue glasses are founded are, he says, valueless, and the whole question needs to be reconsidered.

SALICYLIC ACID.

M. A. ROBIN asserts, in a communication to the Biological Society of Paris, that, in typhoid fever, salicylic acid almost constantly diminishes the quantity of urine excreted, and the quantity of indican increases under its use; moreover, it produces ulceration of the back of the throat, and even consecutive oedematous inflammation of the larynx. He recommends only very dilute solutions in typhoid fever, for fear of arresting the flow of urine. He had observed a buzzing in the ears as the result of the use of salicylic acid.—M. Leven is opposed to the use of this substance in typhoid fever. Powerless in small doses, it causes serious trouble in the digestive system, which are especially dangerous in that disease.—M. Lepine finds, also, that the acid is very slightly excreted in typhoid, and that it produces a buzzing in the ears, but less intensely and less constantly than with quinine. Vauable in some cases of acute rheumatism, it renders no service in typhoid fever.

MODERATE DRINKING.

SIR HENRY THOMPSON presided Wednesday night at a public meeting in Exeter Hall, called by the National Temperance League to discuss the question of moderate drinking. Sir Henry Thompson said he doubted whether in many cases, or perhaps in any case, alcohol was valuable in the dietary of healthy people. Indeed, he was not quite sure that to a great many people it was not injurious. He believed that alcohol had a certain value to the human body under very exceptional circumstances, but upon this fact he founded one of the strongest arguments for not bringing it into our daily food. Alcohol acted as a stimulant to the nervous system, and might, for instance, enable a pedestrian who had suddenly broken down to go on and win his bet, although he thus drew a bill on the future. Dr. B. W. Richardson said that his experience of moderate drinking was that it was the moral mainspring of all the drunkenness in the land, and of all the crime to which it led. The meeting was also addressed by Canon Farrar, Mr. E. Baines, Vice-Admiral Sir B. J. Sullivan, Admiral Sir W. King Hall and other speakers.

HOSPITAL TREATMENT OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

THE Registrar-General reports that, during the year 1876, in the Metropolitan Asylum Hospitals, more than 2,000 cases of small-pox, more than 800 cases of scarlet fever, nearly 300 of enteric fever, and 145 cases of typhus were under treatment. In the London Fever Hospital, 518 cases of scarlet fever, 93 of enteric fever, and 23 of typhus were admitted. No returns were sent to the Registrar-General from the Small-pox Hospital at Highgate. The number of completed cases of small-pox treated in the Asylum Hospitals during 1876 was 1,377, amongst which were 338 deaths (46 per cent. of all the small-pox deaths in London), equal to a mortality of 24.5 per cent. In 1870-1-2, the mortality amongst the 14,808 cases treated in those hospitals was 18.7 per cent. The 1,377 cases of 1876 included 1,018 vaccinated and 359 unvaccinated; the mortality was 13.2 per cent. among the vaccinated and 56.8 per cent. among the unvaccinated. The 804 completed cases of scarlet fever recorded in the Metropolitan Asylum Hospitals, during 1876, showed a mortality of 10.7 per cent., being 8.1 per cent. of 321 cases treated at Homerton, and 12.4 per cent. of 283 cases treated at Stockwell. In the London Fever Hospital, during 1876, of 551 completed cases, 50 were fatal, equal to a mortality of 9.1 per cent. The completed cases of typhus in the two Asylum District Fever Hospitals were 145 last year, the mortality being 19.3 per cent. In the London Fever Hospital, 26 cases of typhus were treated; and the 7 deaths give a mortality of 26.9 per cent. Of enteric fever, 270 completed cases were reported from the Asylum Fever Hospitals, with a mortality amounting to 20.7 per cent. In the London Fever Hospital, 86 cases were fully treated, of which 13 proved fatal, equal to a mortality of 15.1 per cent. Assuming the proportion of deaths to recoveries to be the same among cases of epidemic disease, whether treated at home or in hospital, it may be estimated that, during the year 1876, the number of persons in London attacked by small-pox was 2,994; by scarlet fever, 22,886; by typhus, 796; and by enteric fever, 4,030. These numbers are more probably under rather than over-estimated.

THE DERBY ASYLUM.

WE observe from the Derby papers that the question long mooted of an union between county and borough for the purpose of providing joint accommodation for pauper lunatics is likely to be decided in the affirmative. The county asylum at Mickleover has, from the date of its opening, been under excellent management, but has laboured under some disadvantages from the small number of its inmates. Dr. Murray Lindsay has, it appears, now succeeded in persuading his Board of Visiting Justices to enlarge the asylum for the admission of the pauper lunatics from the borough of Derby. In many instances, the union of counties and boroughs for asylum purposes, contemplated by the statute, has been prevented by the susceptibilities of the county magnates, who have not been willing to accept a community of official

duties with the successful tradesmen who generally constitute the borough magistracy. But, in this instance, this class difficulty has, to the honour of the Derbyshire justices, had no existence, and the obstacle to a speedy arrangement is understood to arise from the borough side on the question of immediate expenditure. It is said that the new asylum at Leicester is too large for the present requirements of the county, and that the visiting justices have been able to offer the magistrates of the borough of Derby the use of a hundred beds at a lower rate than they could possibly be provided for at Mickleover. Borough magistrates are, no doubt, bound to make the best bargain they can in the interests of their constituents; but, in this instance, something more than the weekly money payment for these lunatics has to be considered. The Derby Asylum is within three miles of the town, while the Leicester Asylum is about thirty miles away. The travelling of patients and officials over the greater distance will swallow up some of the apparent saving of cost; but the more important consideration is, that the increased distance of the patients from their friends will entail a much greater expenditure of time and money in their visitation at the cost of a very poor and suffering class, the relatives of the pauper insane. Dr. Murray Lindsay has very conclusively proved by quite an array of authorities, that the best and most economical size of a pauper asylum is one for six or seven hundred inmates. An asylum of this size is not too large for one directing mind. A medical superintendent with two assistant medical officers can very efficiently discharge the duties of direction, care, and treatment, and the institution is not so large that other important officers need to be duplicated. The cost of a thoroughly efficient administration distributed over such a number of inmates enables an institution of this size to be worked at a lower rate than a much smaller one, or, what is still better, to be kept at a higher standard of excellence at the same rate of cost. We shall be very glad to hear that Dr. Murray Lindsay has succeeded in his praiseworthy efforts to extend the benefits of his asylum to the pauper lunatics of the neighbouring borough.

NATIVE PHYSICIANS IN ALGERIA.

Two young Algerines, educated in the French School of Medicine at Algiers, have been appointed *officiers de santé* of country districts in the extreme south of Algeria. They have already forwarded reports of the numerous diseases, which are sufficiently intelligent to be thought worthy of publication by the French authorities. The latter contemplate sending more qualified native students into the interior of Algeria, with instructions to make reports on the forms of disease indigenous to the country, so as eventually to form a complete medical geography of Algeria.

SCOTLAND.

THE first sod of the new waterworks for the supply of Burntisland was cut on January 31st.

A MAN died last week in a Govan police-cell from, it is supposed, an overdose of whiskey.

A WOMAN died at Tobermory last week at the age of 103; and another woman in the same district, who is still living, is said to have reached the age of 105.

THE rainfall at Jedburgh for the month of January has been 4.16 inches, while the average of the same month during the past thirteen years is only 1.87 inches—an increase of 2.29. The rainfall in December at the same station was 6.31.

PROSECUTIONS for adulteration of milk are still frequent in the west of Scotland. Last week, two farmers of Kilmarnock were fined £5 each for adulterating their milk with water and skim milk. In one case, 10 per cent. of water and 12 of skim milk, and in the other 14 per cent. of water, had been added.

years. Small-pox caused 9 deaths, 1 in the third quarter and 8 in the fourth; fever, 260 deaths; scarlet fever, 194; whooping-cough, 195; measles, 133; croup, 73; diphtheria, 25; erysipelas, 47; and diarrhoea, 243. Bronchitis proved fatal in 1,282 cases; pneumonia, 242; pleurisy, 22; and lung-disease unspecified, 143; the deaths resulting from diseases of the respiratory organs (excluding phthisis) amounting to 1,712, or 21 per cent. of the deaths from all causes, and equal to 54 in every 10,000 inhabitants. Convulsions caused 594 deaths; apoplexy, 101; paralysis, 154; cephalitis, 52; epilepsy, 30; and brain-disease unspecified, 129. To heart-disease, 390 deaths were referred; 34 to aneurism, 99 to liver-disease, 33 to Bright's disease, and 83 to kidney-disease not specified. Phthisis caused 931 deaths; hydrocephalus, 171; mesenteric disease, 127; cancer, 142. The "violent deaths" numbered 216; viz., 192 from accident or negligence, including 83 from fractures and contusions, 46 from drowning, and 37 from burns or scalds; 8 were homicidal, and 13 suicidal.

THE PUBLIC HEALTH ACT (IRELAND).

A DEPUTATION of the Dublin Corporation waited last week upon Sir Michael Hicks Beach to bring under his notice their views in reference to the Public Health Act. They stated that the Act which Sir M. Hicks Beach had introduced last session contained, in the opinion of the Public Health Committee, several omissions of important matters, which were of the more consequence since it was intended that this Bill, when it became law, should repeal all former Sanitary Acts and be the only sanitary statute for the future. The Corporation wished to have the Bill amended by introducing the omitted matters, and placed considerable importance upon two: firstly, a clause to enable the Corporation or urban sanitary authority to provide hospital accommodation in time of epidemics, and to make arrangements for the treatment of the sick in such cases; and, secondly, a clause for punishing the occupier of a house who should prevent the owner, when directed by the justices under proper sanitary power, from making the sanitary improvements necessary in the building. Dr. Cameron alluded to the necessity of incorporating the clauses of the Adulteration of Food and Drugs Act of 1875, especially the amendment of that part of it by which fines could not be imposed for the refusal of the servants of the shopkeeper to sell. Better provision should also be made against the sale of diseased meat. Sir Michael Hicks Beach promised to carefully attend to the amendments which had been suggested by the Public Health Committee when again introducing the Bill in the coming session; and the observations of Dr. Cameron would also be considered as to the fusion of the Adulteration Acts and the law as to sale of diseased meat, since their intention was to consolidate all the Sanitary Acts; but the Acts to which he referred were not included in the Public Health Act of England, upon which the Irish Act was principally based.

VACCINATION.

THE Council of the Irish Medical Association have prepared a Bill to consolidate the whole Vaccination Law into one comprehensive measure, with an alternative scheme which aims at enacting the necessary reforms without attempting consolidation. The Bills are to be laid before Sir Michael Hicks Beach, Chief Secretary for Ireland, by a deputation from the Association. It is suggested that the prescribed time for compulsory vaccination should be limited to three months as in England, instead of six months as at present; that the certificate of registration should be forwarded to the Registrar of the district in which the birth of the child occurred, as it frequently happens that a child born in one district is vaccinated in another; that the system of granting "awards" to public vaccinators who obtain the most satisfactory results should be extended to Ireland; and that the disparity which exists regarding the fees for vaccination in the two countries should cease, in England the minimum fee being one shilling and sixpence, and the maximum three shillings, whilst in Ireland the maximum fee for vaccination is only one shilling.

MEDICO-LEGAL CASES.

THE *Times* of Monday includes the report of several cases tried in the Law Courts of more or less medical interest.

LIBEL AGAINST A MEDICAL MAN: QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE.

In the case of *Purcell v. Sowler*, tried in the Court of Appeal on Feb. 3rd, before the Lord Chief Justice and three of the Lords Justices, Mr. Purcell, medical officer of Altrincham, brought an action against the proprietor of the *Manchester Courier* for publishing the report of a meeting of the Board of Guardians, at which certain complaints, imputing to him gross and cruel neglect in his duties as medical officer, were contained. The question raised was, whether the reports of such meetings are privileged. Judges in the Common Pleas Division—Mr. Justice Brett, Mr. Justice Archibald, and Mr. Justice Lindley—had given judgment for Mr. Purcell, the plaintiff, on the ground that the matter was not one of public interest and concern. The defendant appealed from that decision. The decision has been confirmed; but the reason on which it was founded is overruled. The Lord Chief Justice observed that it was difficult to imagine a matter of more general public interest than the proper medical treatment of the poor; and, in this case, the report only stated what others had stated at the meeting. Nevertheless, it was clear that the proceedings of Boards of Guardians are not necessarily privileged. They admit reporters on ordinary occasions; yet, when the conduct of any individual is attacked in his absence, and charges are made seriously affecting his character, it would be proper to close their doors and have their discussion *in camera*. If they do not do so, and reporters are present, they must take care not to publish what passes. The other justices concurred, Lord Justice Bramwell saying that public opinion governs the world, and is mostly guided by the press, especially the periodical press. He thought that, if this had been a discussion on the conduct of the plaintiff, the facts not being in controversy, it would have been a matter of public interest, and there would have been a right of comment upon it, and *bonâ fide* comments would have been protected. But it was not so here; for charges were made by persons upon mere hearsay, and not of their own knowledge, and such charges there was no duty to report. The judgment given for the plaintiff was affirmed, with forty shillings damages.

UNRESISTED RAPES.

In another case, tried in the Court for the consideration of Crown Cases Reserved, before the Lord Chief Baron Kelly and three other judges, the point was raised of a class of cases described as unresisted rapes. The facts were these. The prosecutrix, a girl aged 19, in ill health and subject to fits, was taken by her mother to consult the prisoner, who kept an open stall in Halifax market, at which he professed, for money consideration, to give medical and surgical advice. He desiring to examine her, they went to a public-house, where, after putting questions to the mother and examining the daughter, he stated to them, in such metaphorical language as would perhaps have suggested his meaning to less simple persons, the cause to which he ascribed the girl's illness, and he asked if he might remove it. The mother replied that she did not know what he meant, but that she did not mind if it would do her daughter any good. Thereupon, the mother and daughter both believing that a surgical operation was about to be performed, the prisoner, followed by the girl, went into an adjoining room, where the alleged offence was perpetrated, the prosecutrix making but a feeble resistance, believing, as she swore, that the prisoner was merely treating her medically and performing a surgical operation, as he had advised, to cure her of her illness and fits, and submitting to his treatment solely because she so believed, such belief having been willfully and fraudulently induced by the prisoner as aforesaid. Unless such submission in law constituted consent, there was no consent to the act. Without calling on the counsel for the Crown, the Court affirmed the conviction. The decision must be considered as a very happy one. Any other would certainly have afforded encouragement to a vile class of criminal offence.

LIE-TEA.

In the case of *Regina v. Foster*, stated by the chairman of the last Quarter Session before the same court, the question raised was, whether a hawker, who had sold as good tea sixteen pounds of "lie-tea" containing a quantity of dust, was liable to indictment for false pretences. The question was whether this was only a case of overpraising an inferior article, or fraudulent representation. The Court held that it was a case of fraudulent representation, and the conviction was affirmed.

THE TUNBRIDGE WELLS LOCAL BOARD AND MR. BISSHOPP.

On Thursday, February 1st, in the Common Pleas Division, before Justices Grove and Denman, the case was tried of the Tunbridge Wells Local Board appellants *v.* James Bisschopp, a surgeon practising in the district. This case was noticed in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL for August, 1876. The magistrates refused to convict, and the Board of Guardians appealed; and the judges now confirmed the decision of the magistrates. We have never seen a more astonishing charge than this. As Mr. Justice Denman observed, "the sufferer was driven from pillar to post, owing to a crotchet of the assistant-clerk as to the mode of filling in a certificate; and, when the poor man came to the doctor a second time for advice, the doctor walks with him himself until he secures the necessary order for admission into the hospital". The course which the Board have taken appears to us to involve, not only a scandalous injustice to Mr. Bisschopp, whose conduct throughout was most humane, thoughtful, and kind, but an abuse of authority and a waste of public money for the purpose of capricious oppression, for which they should be severely called to account by their constituents, and which cannot be too strongly condemned by the public opinion of the locality. Such a proceeding must, we think, excite the just and hot indignation of the ratepayers of Tunbridge Wells. It certainly affords but little encouragement to any medical man to put himself out of the way to endeavour to assist the machinery of the law and to protect the public health of the neighbourhood.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

PARIS.

[FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.]

M. Sée on Salicylic Acid in Rheumatism.—Repair of Divided Tendons.—Coton Hydrophile.—Effects of Fuch sine.

IN my last, I referred to Professor Sée's practical views in therapeutics, and to his readiness, though with a certain amount of circumspection, to adopt any new invention or discovery in medicine. It is thus, after having given it a fair trial, that he has come to the conclusion that the use of the cold bath in typhoid fever is not only useless, but dangerous. He has prescribed salicylic acid, in a variety of cases, in his ward at the Hôtel Dieu; and the following is the result of his experience, which he lately gave in a clinical lecture. As an antipyretic, salicylic acid has an action very inferior to that of digitalis and quinine; it produces a diminution of the temperature in a manner less marked and less constant. The only affection in which it has, up till now, given any satisfactory results is acute articular rheumatism. But, in prescribing the remedy, M. Sée experienced some difficulty in its administration, owing to its imperfect solubility. He, therefore, prescribed it in powder, in doses of half a *gramme*, or about eight grains, every hour, enveloped in wafer-paper, of which the patient took twelve doses a day. This, M. Sée considers the best mode of administering the remedy, owing to its disagreeable taste. If, however, the patient cannot swallow it in this way, the physician must have recourse to the liquid form, in which case he must remember that it is soluble in alcohol, but very slightly so in water. To obviate this difficulty, the salicylates of soda and of lime have been adopted; but their therapeutic properties are not identical with those of salicylic acid. There is scarcely any drug in the whole *Pharmacopœia* whose elimination from the system is more rapid than that of salicylic acid or its preparations; its presence may be detected in the urine within a few minutes of its ingestion, and this may be done by the addition to the latter of a few drops of a very weak solution of the perchloride of iron, which produces a precipitate of a beautiful deep violet colour. In consequence of the rapid elimination of the drug, it is necessary to administer it in small doses, and at short intervals, about every hour, for instance. The subjects experimented on were five in number, all suffering from subacute rheumatism, affecting only a few of the large joints. In all five, the pain and swelling disappeared on the second day after the administration of the drug. In one of the five, the acid was stopped on the fourth day, the patient appearing cured, but he had a relapse the next day; the treatment was renewed, which produced a complete cure. None of the patients had any cardiac complications. Two of them evinced some degree of intolerance of the drug, as indicated by continued cephalalgia, insomnia, ringing of the ears, symptoms resembling those produced by the sulphate of quinine, the best medicinal agent that has as yet been discovered to combat the various manifestations of rheumatism. Bearing in mind the intimate connection between rheumatism and chorea, Professor Sée was naturally

led to test the efficacy of salicylic acid in the latter affection. A case presented itself at his *clinique*, in a young girl aged 17, affected with chorea, which, however, was very slight. He submitted the patient to the same treatment as that for the rheumatic cases; but, on the second day, he was obliged to stop the medicine, owing to the occurrence of headache, ringing in the ears, and some fever, of which it was impossible to trace the cause. In concluding his lecture, Professor Sée observed "that the results obtained until now, from the administration of salicylic acid in rheumatism, are satisfactory; however, they must not be exaggerated. It should be remembered that the five patients referred to above were affected with rheumatism of a subacute type, and limited to a small number of joints. Before pronouncing definitely, the effects of the salicylic acid should be observed in subjects affected with acute articular rheumatism, accompanied with well marked febrile symptoms". He, therefore, withholds his judgment until he has given the new remedy a further trial.

At a recent meeting of the Société de Chirurgie, a discussion took place as to the advisability or otherwise of enlarging the wound in a limb in cases where the tendons have been severed, in order to approximate the cut ends and endeavour, by means of sutures, to obtain union by the first intention. This is the practice adopted by most surgeons in and out of France; but MM. Duplay, Tillaux, and Terrier are of opinion that it is not absolutely necessary that the cut ends of a tendon should be brought into contact; that, for all practical purposes, it is sufficient to graft them, as it were, to the neighbouring tendons having similar actions or nearly so, and thus save the patient the torture of having his limb dissected by the surgeon in search of one or other of the cut ends of a tendon. With respect to the hand, these gentlemen have been successful with this mode of treatment; but it is only the lower or peripheric portion of the tendon that could be dealt with in this way, as it is more superficial. Then the question arose as to what became of the upper retracted portion, to which MM. Tillaux and Terrier replied that, in superficial wounds, adhesion takes place between the tendon and the skin, and motion is thus restored; but, when the wounds are deep, the cut ends should be drawn as near as possible by proper manipulation and dressing, and the cure may be effected by the immediate union of the tendons without any adhesion of the skin. [Sir James Paget long ago described the process of union between the separated ends of divided tendons by the effusion and organisation of plastic matter. See his *Surgical Pathology*, third edition, pp. 197 *et seq.*—Ed. B. M. J.]

At the same meeting, a report was read on the properties of a prepared cotton, to which the name of "coton hydrophile" was given. It is intended to replace the time-honoured charpie of the French hospitals. The report states that it is simply cotton cleaned and steeped in a solution of soda, in the proportion of one to four parts; and this is allowed to dry without any twisting or pressure. In this way, the cotton becomes hydrometric, and would be preferable to the charpie, as the latter is more expensive and takes a long time to prepare; but I doubt whether the new cotton will be adopted in this country, as the French have a strong prejudice against this substance, whether for surgical purposes or for wearing apparel.

It has hitherto been supposed that the toxic effects of arsenical fuch sine was due to the presence of the arsenic, and that the fuch sine was inoffensive; but MM. Feltz and Ritter have endeavoured to prove, in a paper that was lately read before the Academy of Sciences, that fuch sine by itself possessed toxic properties. By experiments on dogs, they have shown that, by introducing into the stomach or injecting extremely small quantities of non-arsenical fuch sine into the veins, the colouring matter was principally eliminated by the kidneys; this was invariably accompanied by the presence of albumen and granulo-fatty cylinders in the urine, and, after death, the cortical substance of the kidneys was found diseased.

ASSOCIATION INTELLIGENCE

MIDLAND BRANCH.

The fourth monthly meeting of this Branch will be held at the house of the President, Joseph White, Esq., Oxford Street, Nottingham, on Friday, February 16th, 1877.

Coffee at 7.30 P.M.

A paper by G. C. Franklin, F.R.C.S., of Leicester, on the Autumn Diarrhoea of Infants, at 8.30 P.M.; to be followed by Reports of Cases by H. R. Hatherly, L.R.C.P. Edin.

L. W. MARSHALL, M.D., *Hon. Local Secretary.*
Nottingham, February 7th, 1877.