

ronchi almost instantaneously. Dr. Truck, a pupil of M. Lépine's, has obtained important results by locally treating cases of tuberculous phthisis according to this method.

M. Ch. Girard has made a biological examination of water at the Paris Municipal Laboratory. He dissolved forty grammes of white gelatine, and two centigrammes of sodium phosphate, in 1,000 grammes of water. The mixture was then clarified with white of egg, and boiled, filtered, and sterilised at 115° Cent. When used, a definite quantity of the water under examination is then added, and the germs that develop are examined as to nature and quantity.

M. Trasbot, at a recent meeting of the Société de Médecine Publique, stated that the well organised system of inspecting the slaughterhouses and markets of Paris prevents unhealthy meat from being introduced into them; but, in the suburbs of Paris, the butchers have private slaughterhouses, where animals dead from any kind of disease can be slaughtered. Some butchers have carts, with a sort of crane in front, in order to remove dead or dying animals to the slaughterhouse. M. Vallin, in his yearly report to the Minister of Commerce, always dwells on the danger to public health attending private slaughterhouses. M. Napias reminded the meeting that, according to royal decree of April 15th, 1838, the fact of a public slaughterhouse existing in a locality rendered the suppression of private slaughterhouses legal. M. Ulysse Trélat, the President of the Society, appointed a commission, composed of MM. du Mesnil, Gunier, and Trasbot to study the question.

M. Ch. Herscher, in a paper read before the Société de Médecine et d'Hygiène Professionnelle, classified workshops and workrooms in the following manner: those that may be overcrowded, those in which the atmosphere becomes vitiated from the nature of the work done, and those in which the substances prepared on the premises required a special hygrometric or thermometric condition of the atmosphere. These may be again subdivided. A commission, composed of MM. Blaise, Gariel, Ch. Herscher, Hudelot Livache, and Pouchet, has been appointed by the Société de Médecine Publique to collect information concerning the ventilation of workshops and workrooms.

The body of Louis Thuillier was a few days ago publicly interred at Amiens. The Minister of Instruction was present at the ceremony, as well as the Prefect of the Somme, the Mayor of Amiens, and M. Dastein, who made a touching and suitable address. The Minister of Instruction also delivered an eulogistic oration.

CORRESPONDENCE.

OVERCROWDING OF THE PROFESSION.

SIR,—A great many statements have of late been made as to the crowded state of the medical profession. It has also been asserted that the number of students entering the medical schools of recent years far exceeds the legitimate measure of supply and demand. Sir Lyon Playfair, in his place in Parliament, made a distinct statement as to the annual diminution in the ranks of the profession which has to be filled up with new recruits. That statement has been criticised and discussed, one writer agreeing with him, and quoting his figures in support of one aspect of medical reform; another alleging that the figures are quite fallacious, and taking a wholly opposite view of the question.

The truth is, it is exceedingly difficult to obtain correct arithmetical statistics, even when limited to a very narrow inquiry. I know that there is a very general impression among young practitioners that the number of medical men practising in a district is much greater than it was some years ago, in proportion to the population. But I question if this will bear inquiry. I am aware that that is the idea in Glasgow; and I have always given rise to great surprise when I have, in conversation, quoted the figures to be obtained from the Post-office directory of different years.

As the subject is interesting to others than those in this locality, I shall conclude by giving the figures relating to the number of medical practitioners in Glasgow in proportion to the population.

Year.	Population.	Number of Practitioners.
1851	255,000	231
1861	329,000	226
1871	477,000	231
1881	511,000	294
1885	543,000 (estimate)	312

G. BUCHANAN, Glasgow.

OPERATIVE TREATMENT OF UTERINE MYOMA.

SIR,—I can only reply very briefly to Dr. Malins' second letter, because the really important points upon which he touches are being dealt with in a series of papers, which will appear as soon as the enormous mass of evidence now at my disposal can be properly sifted and arranged. I am glad, however, to see, on comparing his letter of August 22nd with that in the JOURNAL of September 19th, that he holds very different opinions concerning the inclusion of the uterine arteries, the possibility of doing this, and the results to be derived from it, even if it were possible, than he did a fortnight ago. I think probably enough has been said on this point to render further discussion of it wholly unnecessary. I may also just say that I do not regard pregnancy as an uterine tumour, as Dr. Malins seems to do. The only other point requiring allusion is the statistics. What Dr. Malins says is perfectly true. I did say, at the conclusion of my "One Thousand cases of Abdominal Section," that I had removed the appendages for myoma in 99 cases, with 7 deaths. But surely that is not to be regarded as final. After nearly a year's more work, I could say that I had removed the appendages for uterine myoma 129 times, with still the same 7 deaths, showing conclusively that experience helps me greatly in diminished mortality. Dr. Malins is rude enough to say that, "with regard to my figures, he has no confidence in statistics which can be evolved at will to prove any statements made on different occasions." Dr. Malins will shortly have an opportunity of defending his own statistics; and, until he has done that satisfactorily, it probably may be advantageous that he should refrain from any such improper criticisms on the statistics of other people.

It is also true that I knew, at the time I spoke before the British Gynaecological Society, of thirteen women who were dying from uterine myoma. I am very glad to be able to say that that list is now materially diminished, and I hope shortly to publish a striking illustration of the advances we are making—an illustration which will also afford a fairly strong proof of some of the positions which I have taken up concerning these operations.—I am, Sir,

Birmingham, September 19th, 1885.

LAWSON TAIT.

COMPETITIVE EXAMINATIONS IN THE CIVIL SERVICE.

SIR,—In 1884, I published a pamphlet on the "Poor-law Medical Service: its Past, Present, and Future." Apropos the letter of Surgeon-Major Evatt, A.M.S., in the JOURNAL of September 19th, the following extract proves how the same idea may occur to different minds.

"The competitive examinations for the army have proved a success. They have opened out a field for work to men who had no interest or relations in high position; to men whose only passports have been brains and education. If a civil medical service could be established on the following lines, then the competitive system might be applied.

"1. The civil service should embrace the sanitary service, Poor-law service, lunacy service, factory service, education service, police service, and prison service. 2. The officers of these branches should be divided into grades, the same as in the army. 3. All grades should be filled up by a mixed method of competition and selection; thus, for instance, promotion might proceed by selection and by competition. 4. The country would have to be mapped into districts not according to rateable value or parish boundaries, but according to situation, density of population, number of institutions, etc. 5. The first appointments should be filled up by competition, the tests being physical and educational, the same as in the army. The candidates would select which branch they wished to enter. The number of vacancies should be announced by advertisement in our medical journals, just as is now done for army and navy. 6. In certain cases, combined appointments might be held. For instance, if the district had a small prison, a few police, and a moderate number of sick poor, one medical officer could fill all the offices, his total emoluments would compensate him, where, if divided amongst several men, the emoluments would be insignificant to each. Chadwick says in his Report (On the Condition of the Working Classes, 1844): 'The multiplication or the maintenance of such fragmentitious professional service is injurious to the public and the profession; it is injurious to the profession by multiplying poor, ill paid, and ill conditioned medical men.' 7. The large sanitary districts and the lunacy appointments at the present time are filled by local authorities. The emoluments of these offices are sufficiently attractive to draw able men, but there are certain disadvantages under the present method. The medical officer has too many masters; he is to a certain extent influenced by his boards. In a certain case, well known, where the medical officer spoke openly his mind on the insupportable state of his district, his resignation soon followed his impolitic avowal. The competitive system under a central authority would remedy this evil; the officer would be unfettered by fear or favour; the class of inspection would be improved. 8. A stimulus would be given to scientific medical work by such a civil service. Those who belonged to it would have an incentive to work, and they would be kept well up to their work. Let us confess it: we all want a little stimulating and a little supervision. The present Poor-law system, says Chadwick, 'only suffices to sustain needy competition for practice in narrow fields. Out of such competition, the public derive no improvements in medical science, for science comes out of wide opportunities of knowledge and study.'

"Such a civil service would be worthy of this great country. I have here only sketched an outline of my plan, but hope shortly to more fully develop it. Its applicability to the conditions of our English institutions I have no doubt of."

—Yours truly,

TH. M. DOLAN.

Horton House, September 19th, 1885.