

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

## PARIS.

*The Influence of Roentgen's Rays on Tuberculosis.—Therapeutic Effect of Frequent Currents.—Pfeiffer's Test on the Diagnosis of Typhoid Fever.—A Statue for Dr. Roux.—General News.*

MM. LORTET AND GENOUD have made experiments to ascertain the therapeutic influence of Roentgen's rays on tuberculosis. Professor Arloing's and Professor Duclaux's researches have shown that solar rays destroy bacteria. The result of M. Lortet's and M. Genoud's researches are as follows: Three guinea-pigs inoculated with tuberculosis in the left inguinal region with all antiseptic precautions were taken at haphazard from eight others inoculated in the same manner. During an hour every day from April 25th to June 18th the three guinea-pigs were submitted to the influence of Roentgen's rays. On June 9th the controls had abscesses in the glands of the groin inoculated. The three animals treated by the rays increased in weight, the glands became smaller and smaller, and remained hard and well defined. MM. Lortet and Genoud carried their experiments further, and ascertained that with suitable instruments the thorax and lungs are traversed by the rays.

At a recent meeting of the Academy of Sciences Professor d'Arsonval read a paper on the therapeutical influence of frequently repeated currents. After having ascertained by experiments on the lower animals that these currents stimulate to an intense degree oxidation in the animal economy, M. d'Arsonval conceived the idea of applying them as a cure in diseases characterised by slow nutrition, which have been so thoroughly studied by Professor Bouchard, such as rheumatism, gout, obesity, and certain forms of diabetes mellitus. Two diabetic patients in Dr. Charrin's wards, and another under treatment for obesity, were, under the directions of Professor d'Arsonval, submitted to the influence of frequently repeated electric currents. After six weeks' treatment the daily amount of urine passed was reduced to less than 6 litres; formerly it amounted to 12 litres. The daily amount of sugar was reduced from 620 to 182 grammes; arterial pressure was increased; the toxic properties of the urine returned; 64 c.cm. killed a rabbit. Similar results were obtained in treating a female patient by the currents, a daily excretion of 138 grammes of sugar being reduced to 38.

M. Rendu has in his hospital practice at the Necker Hospital confirmed the utility of the Pfeiffer test in the diagnosis of typhoid fever. A patient in his wards presented all the symptoms of the typhoid fever except diarrhoea and petechiæ. M. Rendu, admitting the possibility of typhoid fever, treated the patient with cold baths. Some serum from the patient, obtained by an incision, was introduced into two tubes; one contained a cultivation of Eberth's bacillus, the other a cultivation of the bacillus coli. The result was negative. Both cultivations continued to develop. Thus it was demonstrated that the patient was not suffering from typhoid fever, and she was not refused the food she wished for. M. Widal has collected several similar cases in M. Debove's service. In one case all the symptoms were present, with a loud cardiac murmur suggesting infectious endocarditis. The Pfeiffer reagent demonstrated the existence of typhoid fever, which was soon after confirmed by the appearance of the rash. M. Dieulafoy has also read before the Académie de Médecine notes confirming the utility of this means of diagnosis.

A statue and a bust of Dr. Roux of the Pasteur Institute are to be erected. The charming poet, Armand Silvestre, in the pages of the *Journal*, has opened a subscription, and *La Presse* calls upon French mothers to subscribe for a bust. This testimony to Dr. Roux is a happy thought, but it is to be regretted that it is not expressed by a "diphtheria fund" for succouring patients convalescent from diphtheria, all of whom require pure country air. Busts and statues may be agreeable tonics to personal vanity, but have no humanitarian benefit.

The Versailles District Council has opened a subscription for the erection of a statue to Pasteur; the minimum received is one sou, the maximum one franc.

The law concerning accidents befalling factory hands and other workers, just passed by the Senate, decrees that the

employer pays the doctor's fees, costs of medicine, and burial. In the case of the sufferers choosing their own medical man the employer pays only the sum fixed by a competent judge.

A kindred society to the Red Cross Society has been quite recently formed at Vienna by the Austrian Alpine Club, named the Green Cross Society, intended to succour the Alpinists and climbing tourists. Little buildings are constructed on different mountain heights furnished with dressing materials. Practical and theoretical lessons are given by the medical men attached to the Society to the mountain guides in order to render them capable of fixing splints and preparing antiseptic dressings.

The Medical Cycling Club has commenced its excursions.

The Minister of the Interior has inaugurated the anatomical instruction of the Nancy Faculty; also a serotherapeutic institution which will furnish the departments of the east with antidiaphtheria serum.

Dr. Sarrazin, Mayor of Sarlat, in the Dordogne Department, and Dr. Berthet at Albertville, in Savoy, have been elected members of the Chamber of Deputies.

## ST. PETERSBURG.

*The Koumiss Treatment in the East of Russia.—The Russian Red Cross Expedition to Abyssinia.—Vaccination among School Children.—A Liberal Bequest.*

An instructive series of articles on the subject of the koumiss, or fermented mare's milk, treatment in Eastern Russia, has just been completed in the *Vratch*. The articles are by Dr. N. N. Mikhailof, who writes from personal knowledge of the treatment and of many of the koumiss establishments which he passes in review. Of such establishments there are an immense number in the governments of Ufa, Samara, and Orenburg. They vary greatly in size. The treatment in its simplest form can be obtained at many a Russian village or Bashkir settlement in the governments named, where koumiss is obtainable as an ordinary dairy product. The largest number of these villages or settlements appear to be in the steppe near the town of Ufa—the very centre of what may be called Old Bashkiria. Of course it would be impossible to send patients who require medical attendance to such places; but for such as only require rest and nourishment, Dr. Mikhailof recommends, from personal experience, a trial of the treatment in a Bashkir or Kirghiz camp. The splendid air and ideal quietude of the steppe, and the friendly character of the Bashkirs themselves are dwelt upon. He says that a more kindly, honourable, and good-natured people it would be impossible to find, provided they have not been spoiled by contact with western civilisation. The cheapness of life among them is a point worth noting. A hut or tent, wood for fires, koumiss *ad libitum*, and a saddlehorse can be obtained at an inclusive cost of from 16s. to 24s. (8 to 12 roubles) per month. The hire of a horse and chaise costs 5d. a day. Fish is  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. a pound, mutton  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. to 1d. a pound, eggs 10 for a 1d., chickens 3d. a piece, and so on. The patient is advised to take a few articles of food with him, such as flour, rice, and salt, to supplement those just named. He should drink unlimited draughts of koumiss, and is strongly advised to sleep in the open air. Of the larger establishments a long list is given, and most of them are criticised more or less fully. Summing up his opinion of them, Dr. Mikhailof states that the majority are in the hands of persons who are not medical men, and who pay more attention to the mere housing of the patient and the settlement of his account than to the koumiss he drinks or the sanitary conditions under which he lives. There are some admirable exceptions, two mentioned being those of Dr. Jdanof in the government of Ufa, and of Dr. Caarick in the government of Orenburg, which are described as almost ideal. These are expensive, but not without reason, considering the provision made. The majority of the other establishments should be avoided, it being far preferable to send a patient to drink his koumiss in a Bashkir village.

Letters have been received from the ambulance corps sent by the Russian Red Cross Society to Abyssinia to nurse the sick and wounded in the Italian campaign. The corps reached Harar on May 15th (27th), having crossed a desert 200 versts broad in seventeen days. In Harar they were met by the

Viceroy, priests of the Coptic Church, and crowds of people, who are said to have been enthusiastic. They intended to remain there about a fortnight and then to proceed to Antotto, a distance of 600 versts (400 miles), which they expected to traverse in thirty days. Of this period ten days will be taken up in crossing another waterless desert. It is only in Antotto that they will be able to begin their work of nursing. The majority of wounded and prisoners are said to be in that town.

It is announced that from the beginning of next educational year, all children entering village public schools in Russia will be obliged to produce a certificate of successful vaccination.

Mme. Bazanova, a Moscow lady well known for her philanthropy and generosity, has recently given 515,000 roubles (nearly £55,000) to the University of Moscow, to found a clinic with twenty-five free beds for diseases of the ear, throat, and nose.

### HONG KONG.

#### *The Plague.—Death of a Prisoner from Septicæmia after Flogging.*

THE plague report a fortnight ago told of a steady increase throughout April and May, until during the last week of May the numbers stood at new cases reported, 100; deaths, 81. The maximum, however, seems then to have been reached, for the past two weeks show a very marked improvement. Week ending June 6th, cases, 44; deaths, 48. Week ending June 13th, cases, 25; deaths, 25. On Sunday morning, June 14th, Inspector Mofat, one of the most energetic and experienced officers of the Sanitary Board, fell a victim to the plague, having contracted infection, it is believed, in removing a partly decomposed body from a Chinese house early in the preceding week.

A good deal of strong feeling is being expressed in certain quarters regarding the recent death of a prisoner in Victoria Gaol from septicæmia resulting from a flogging inflicted as a punishment for an offence against prison discipline, and it may be well to state the medical facts of the case. A Chinaman, aged 30, was condemned to imprisonment with hard labour for twenty-eight days for larceny on May 11th, and was duly passed by the prison surgeon as fit for the same. On his refusing to work he was put on rice and water for three days, and persisting in his refusal was on the 18th given six strokes with a rattan rod. It was noted that the skin of the buttocks was slightly abraded, but there was no cut. After three days freedom from work he was again certified as fit for labour by the surgeon, but persisted in his refusal. On the 23rd he was passed for further flogging, and on the 25th twelve strokes were inflicted. On the 27th two gluteal abscesses developed; they were opened and duly dressed with antiseptic precautions in the gaol hospital, but septicæmia supervened, and death occurred on June 2nd. Punishment by flogging exists in Hong Kong for a limited number of crimes, such as earring snatching, assault with intent to murder, etc., and for gross misconduct or insubordination within the gaol; but while the need of it in some cases is matter of opinion, the flogging of 535 out of 5,014 prisoners admitted last year seems overdoing it, even in dealing with the phlegmatic Chinaman. Two per cent. of them developed gluteal abscesses, the preliminary starving probably contributing to this result by lowering the vitality of the tissues.

### BELFAST.

#### *The Medical Superintendent's Report on the Health of the City.—Deaths from Diarrhœa, Typhoid and Typhus Fevers.—Other Zymotic Diseases.—Respiratory Diseases.—Privies, Ashpits, and Foul Yards.—New Hospital for Infectious Diseases.*

DR. WHITAKER, Medical Superintendent Officer of Health for Belfast, has recently issued his annual report for the year 1895, which is a carefully compiled document, and contains much valuable information. The average death-rate for the year was 24.3, which is slightly in excess of the rate for the previous year, but rather less than the average for the past five years—viz., 24.8. In estimating the significance of this somewhat high rate, it must be borne in mind, as Dr. Whitaker

fairly points out, that the birth-rate for Belfast is also high—viz., 33.7 (average of five years), and that for obvious reasons a high death-rate and a high birth-rate are frequently found associated. The zymotic rate for the year was rather high—viz., 3.3 per 1,000, which is higher than the rate for any town in Ireland, with the exception of Lurgan. Diarrhœa was responsible for 325 deaths, typhoid for 184, whooping-cough for 109, measles for 107, scarlet fever for 88, typhus fever for 19, diphtheria for 34, and "simple fever" for 29. These figures are rather under the average of the last five years.

The deaths from diarrhœa are numerous, and are attributed by the report to (1) a soil contaminated with liquid filth and excrementitious matters; (2) want of cleanliness in the houses of the people; and (3) absence of pure air both within and without the dwelling-place. It is obvious that these are preventable causes, which could be removed by a sufficiently strict system of sanitation.

The deaths from typhoid fever show an increase on the average of the previous five years, which is a most important fact in view of the circumstance that the Corporation has just completed an elaborate and costly scheme of main drainage. It is too soon yet to judge the effects of this scheme, but there are good reasons for believing that main drainage schemes alone are quite insufficient as remedies against the dissemination of typhoid. The condition of the subsoil and the nature of the water supply are quite as important in this connection. It is unsatisfactory to find typhus fever raising its head again in Belfast, the deaths from this cause in 1895 having been 19 in number, as against 4 in 1894, 14 in 1893, and 11 in 1892.

The deaths from measles, scarlet fever, and whooping-cough do not call for any comment. The mortality from diphtheria is distinctly low. It is satisfactory to find that there has been no death from small-pox in Belfast since 1891, in spite of the fact that severe epidemics of this disease have occurred in recent years in Dublin, Newry, and Lurgan. The disease has been repeatedly imported into Belfast, but has invariably been promptly stamped out. Dr. Whitaker and his assistants deserve much credit for this result. Their labours are facilitated by the almost complete absence of antivaccination fanatics in Belfast.

The deaths from phthisis numbered 1,083, and those from respiratory diseases (other than phthisis) 1,380. These figures represent about the usual average, which is high. The high phthisis rate is undoubtedly due in the main to the large proportion of the population engaged in unhealthy occupations, such as flax-dressing and spinning. It is only due in a minor degree to the damp subsoil and the climate. So long as the occupations of the artisan population remain what they are, so long will Belfast have a high rate of mortality from phthisis. It is satisfactory to find that the rate of infantile mortality in Belfast is low. Of 1,000 births, 169 children died under 1 year in the year 1895, while the corresponding rate in Dublin was 170, in Birmingham 182, in Leeds 191, in Manchester 203, in Liverpool 218, and in Blackburn 236. Belfast comes out surprisingly well in this comparison. The explanation probably is that there is very little chronic poverty in Belfast, and the working classes are in general comfortably housed and well fed.

Dr. Whitaker again launches a vigorous protest against some of the breaches of sanitary law which continue to go on in Belfast, more especially against the accumulation of filth in privies and ashpits, and the imperfect cleansing of back yards. In previous reports he has strongly condemned this state of matters, and he regrets that there has not been more substantial improvement.

He also strongly urges upon the Corporation the necessity for a new hospital for infectious diseases, and for the adoption of the Compulsory Notification of Infectious Diseases Act. The Corporation has already approved of the former suggestion, and a Committee is at present at work endeavouring to secure a suitable site for a fever hospital, and it is believed that compulsory notification will speedily be adopted when the new building is ready to receive patients.

**TOTTENHAM HOSPITAL.**—The Tottenham Hospital has received a gift of £1,000 from Mrs. Morley, widow of the late Mr. John Morley, who in his lifetime interested himself greatly in the institution.