

South Australia.

[FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.]

THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BRANCH OF THE ASSOCIATION.

THE medical year has been tranquil, and comparatively uneventful. The annual meeting of the local Branch took place on June 29th, when Dr. W. A. Verco delivered a thoughtful and original address on the influence which the medical profession might, could, and should bring to bear upon the national life in Australia; it was an able discourse on eugenics, broad in its purview and elastic in its application. His successor as President is Dr. W. T. Hayward, the Senior Physician to the Adelaide Hospital, who occupied the same chair just a quarter of a century ago. Dr. Hone was elected Vice-President. The usual dinner took place in the evening.

AUSTRALIAN ARMY MEDICAL RESERVE.

Surgeon-General Williams, C.B., paid a visit to Adelaide last month, and addressed a large special meeting of the Branch with a view to bringing up the reserve to its proper war footing. General Williams's reputation as an administrator stood the test of comparison with the British authorities both during the Soudan Expedition and the South African war. The present scheme for a reserve is comprehensive, and seeks to enrol all medical men, chemists, dentists, and medical students, together with members of the St. John Ambulance Society. There is plenty of material to choose from, and there should be no difficulty in filling the ranks.

DIPHTHERIA.

The outbreak which commenced two years ago seemed to abate last Christmas; but with the re-opening of the State schools it broke out again immediately, and has during the past six months assumed the proportions of an epidemic in Adelaide and its suburbs, whilst small outbreaks have been reported in many country schools. The Children's Hospital increased its accommodation from about a dozen to over forty beds, and the General Hospital has had to provide another 60 beds. Nor is the outbreak confined to South Australia, for it has affected the Eastern States as well—so much so that there is a threatened scarcity of antitoxin. A simple way of ending it would be to close all the schools for a few months, and probably then the epidemic would be speedily stamped out.

HOSPITAL APPOINTMENTS.

The post of Superintendent of the Adelaide Hospital, vacant by the resignation of Dr. Wells, has been filled by the appointment of Dr. de Crespigny of Victoria, who adds considerably to the strength of pathology in South Australia. A former superintendent, Dr. Bronte Smeaton, has been appointed Assistant Surgeon, vice Dr. Frank Magarey, resigned.

DISTRICT NURSING.

This subject has been invested with considerable interest lately on account of the scheme proposed by Her Excellency the Countess of Dudley for supplying nurses in bush districts. To give effect to her scheme Lady Dudley induced Mr. Harold Boulton, M.V.O., and Miss Amy Hughes to travel out to Australia to spy out the nakedness of the land. The scheme has rather hung fire for various reasons. In the first place, everyone was informed that it was to be, and no one was asked whether it would be either practicable or acceptable. Then when it did hang fire an unwise attempt was made to tack it on to a memorial to the late King. Ultimately the "bush" idea was allowed to subside into the background, and the memorial suggestion was dropped, because the various States had already contributed handsome sums for statues and other objects. In its latest form the scheme is simply one of extension of district nursing, and opposition to this was at once manifested in South Australia, where a very successful society has been in

existence for some sixteen years; it was thought that it would be a pity for it to become absorbed into a bigger organization, and that obvious advantages would accrue from loss of its individuality.

Special Correspondence.

BUDAPEST.

Professor Forel on Heredity and Education.

THE aged apostle of anti-alcoholism and the sexual enlightenment of senior schoolchildren seems to be fond of Hungary. For a third time Professor Forel has left Switzerland for a European tour, and though he did not intend at first to come to Hungary, his friends in that country persuaded him to change his mind, the result being that he visited Budapest once again, and gave a lecture on heredity to the Medical Society. His lecture commenced with a dissertation upon the theory of heredity, the laws of which, in his opinion, are precisely the same as the laws of all organic life. Heredity is not merely the mutual action of the qualities possessed by both parents, but a process which began hundreds of thousands of years ago, which continues to-day, and which will continue as long as there is organic life in this world. The life of every one of us at this present moment is nothing more than the result of lives which were over and done years before we came into being. If we seek the traces of these former existences which have had such an influence upon ours, we find a mighty library wherein we can trace their every detail. This library is simply the whole earth, each layer of which is a page, the words thereof consisting of the relics we find there—skeletons, fossils, stones, etc. The human body is made up of millions of cells. Our bodies do not differ very greatly from those of animals; it is only the brain of the human being that separates him from the brutes. The progress of biology and natural history enables us to speak with certainty of the general affinity of all living things, and affinity which exists through our common ancestors. It is true that the original races and their various offshoots have become widely different during the course of ages, but this is owing to external influences. For instance, suppose a lady of Budapest marries a negro, and has by him two children. These children may be as utterly unlike each other as if they belonged to two separate families in different hemispheres. One child may be white, like his mother, but with curly hair, flat nose, and blubber lips; the other might be a mulatto, with a finely-cut Greek nose and the lips of a European. Thus, in spite of the tie of blood between them, it is possible for the children of such parents to differ greatly from one another. Consequently, it is an axiom of eternal truth that Darwin gave us when he said that the different races have been in process of formation for thousands of years. Even at the present time there are new developments in the process of formation. For example, in Hagenbeck's zoological garden at Hamburg, a successful experiment was made by mating a lion with a tiger; the result was that one of their two cubs was a cross between a lion and a tiger. From this a new breed has been established. Though the mule has been known for 3,000 years, mankind did not recognize this great fact of natural history in its full completeness. The mating of dogs with cats was tried for a long time, but without success. This proves, therefore, that they are not akin, though no one can deny their organic affinity. Their skeletons resemble each other very closely; they possess the same organs; whilst their mode of life and even of reproduction is so alike as to be almost identical. Cats, also, are not akin to mice, though more features in common can be found between these two classes of animal than between cats and birds. No affinity whatever has ever been found between the feline and the feathered race. One could go on in this way till it came to

comparing the cat with the butterfly, etc., and it would still be possible to find some feature common to all living things, whether cat, butterfly, or microbe. All these different species owe their existence to the desire of life inherent in every living creature, and their endeavours to maintain it in spite of the dangers and difficulties encountered at every step. The biogenetic law of Haeckel proves that all animals originate from one common root. Haeckel regards the womb as the book in which the history of evolution is written. From the moment of conception the embryo goes through every stage of that development, which it has taken the human race it may be as much as half a million years to accomplish. At the time of conception the human being is a two-celled being, one on the father's and one on the mother's side; but after a few hours these two cells fall into two parts and begin their propagation. This state of the two cells is the most ancient form of human life, and what goes on the womb is the development of the human species. Some three hundred thousand years ago man was just like the three months old embryo: magnify this seven or eight times, and we get the atavistic man, who has reached his present form only after continued and continual evolution. When the uterine embryo reaches that stage of development which corresponds to the state of development of present-day mankind it is born. Now, if we examine the development of the eggs of fish or salamander, and the ova of the bear, ape, or hare, we see plainly that at a certain stage of development it is quite impossible not to recognize the affinity. But if that is so—and present-day science has proved the truth of it—then it is clear that heredity has its origin in infinity, rather than in the mutual action of the parents. The cells from which we originate bring into our organism the universal forces of those cells from which they themselves evolved, and in their turn the same process of heredity had been gone through by these latter. Experiments have been made to find out what changes can be brought about on the single formation of cells by external influences; and by these means it has been proved that the cells in themselves are susceptible to external influences, and this susceptibility is transmitted from cell to cell as a latent energy. This energy enters, either wholly or in part, into those cells which are united. The truth of this statement is illustrated in a striking manner by the manifestation in a child of qualities inherited from his parents or very often from ancestors of five or six generations earlier. It is seldom that characteristics are inherited from any earlier generation, say the seventieth or two-hundredth; but it sometimes occurs, and this is atavism—the resurrection of the ancestor. Forel then spoke of the present system of education, which he regards as harmful from a morphological point of view, and which, in his opinion, never seems to accomplish its real object. The present school system, he says, which overburdens but does not develop the brain of the child, will have to be abandoned, and the modern school must be run on quite different lines. It is only in this way that the evil tendencies of heredity can be checked in our children, and in the course of a generation or two be overthrown and completely stamped out.

THE next meeting of the Society for the Study of Inebriety will be held in the rooms of the Medical Society of London, 11, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, W., on Tuesday, October 11th, at 4 p.m., when Mr. John Newton, Secretary of the United Committee for the Prevention of the Demoralization of Native Races by the Liquor Traffic, will open a discussion on Alcohol and Primitive Races. Each member and associate is at liberty to introduce a visitor.

THE Lettsoman Lectures will be delivered in the rooms of the Medical Society of London on February 6th and 20th and March 6th, 1911, by William F. Haslam, F.R.C.S., on a Review of the Operations for Stone in the Male Bladder. The anniversary dinner will take place at the Whitehall Rooms, Hotel Métropole, on Wednesday, March 8th, 1911, at 7.30 p.m.

Correspondence.

THE MIDDLESEX HOSPITAL.

SIR,—I am happy to be able to inform you that I have now received the £20,000 I asked for to enable me to remove the debt from the Middlesex Hospital, a generous friend, who desires to remain anonymous, having just handed me a cheque for £231 in order to complete that sum.

I find some difficulty in suitably expressing the deep sense of gratitude I feel towards all those who have so loyally responded to my appeal on behalf of an institution in whose activities they have now shown, by their practical sympathy, the highest confidence and appreciation.

Rich and poor alike have contributed to the success of my effort, for the sums I have received range from one thousand guineas to threepence. It has afforded me the greatest gratification to observe the generosity of those who owe their present freedom from disease or relief from pain to the hospital's kindly influence, and I venture to say that no stronger proof could be found of the value of this ancient charity than that those who were once under its care should have come forward, cheerfully and often with much self-sacrifice, to share its burden in its hour of need.

To each and every contributor I once again offer my sincerest thanks, and I also take this opportunity gratefully to acknowledge my indebtedness to the press for the valuable assistance they have afforded me by bringing the needs of the hospital prominently before their readers.

But my task is not yet finished. The debt of £20,000 has, it is true, been removed, but that liability represented the accumulated deficits between income and expenditure for three years, and from this it is obvious that, until a steady and permanent addition of £7,000 per annum is made to the hospital's income, its financial position is not secure, and every third year the Governors will find themselves face to face with a crisis similar to that which has now happily been averted.

It is my ambition to substitute, for such a hand-to-mouth administration as this, one which will provide the Governors with an income sufficient to meet the normal expenses of the year, so that they may apply themselves solely to seeing that it is expended to the best advantage in the interests of those whom the hospital serves, and, directly I am able to do so, it is my intention to devote my time and energy to building up an adequate annual subscription and donation list. I feel sure that my confidence in the generosity of those to whom I apply will again be fully justified.—I am, etc.,

FRANCIS OF TECK,

Chairman of the Weekly Board of Governors.

Middlesex Hospital, Sept. 25th.

CORONERS' LAW AND DEATH CERTIFICATION BILL.

SIR,—I have read the correspondence under the above heading, and am surprised that so few practitioners have expressed themselves, and those so mildly. As "A Country G. P." says, "It will be indeed iniquitous if we are to be burdened in the public interest without adequate remuneration." Much outcry has been made, and quite rightly, against the Births Notification Act, yet what does it involve? Just filling up a postcard in regard to a visit already made; whereas the proposed enactment will frequently require a journey over rough roads or no roads at all, for a distance of anything up to ten miles and back, in any weather, and however busy one may be with paying patients. Such a journey when snow is deep may well occupy half a day, and be ill paid at a guinea; yet, forsooth, we are to go for nothing, and have as solace the reflection that the journey has not been and could not be of the smallest benefit to a single creature. It is said that "we are out for fees." Personally I have not the smallest desire for such journeys at any fee; but if I have to make absurd expeditions to satisfy a few nervous faddists, I see no reason why I should not be paid for them, and adequately, too. Dr. Humphrey Davy's suggestion to charge the ordinary visiting fee will not do at all. It is just the