sphincter muscle of the iris and the orbicularis palpebrarum are spasmodically contracted, through the intervention of the fifth nerve. A distant object may be seen through a very small pupil, but a very near object cannot be seen with a dilated pupil; and it is not to admit more light that the pupil dilates when distant objects are seen, as most writers have assumed, for distant objects are very light—a fact well known to artists and photographers, and Mr. Ruskin, in his lectures, lays great stress upon it; and a man on the look out, as a sailor at sea, shades his eyes with his hand to shut out the light. This dilated state is that condition of the circular muscle of the iris which is associated with complete relaxation of the internal rectus; in other words, the muscles supplied by the lower division of the third nerve contract together and are relaxed together, and when they contract we see near objects clearly, and when they are relaxed we see distant objects clearly; and I believe that the pressure of these muscles and the varied aperture of the pupil are amply sufficient to produce the very trifling change requisite to enable a healthy eye to see objects at different distances.

Extirpation. I have already at different times published many of my cases of extirpation of the eye and have now only to recapitulate them very briefly with one or two additions and remarks. They are in the following order: cancer in the child, which is always of the soft kind; secondly, cancer in the adult; thirdly, melanosis; and lastly cases where the eye has been extirpated to preserve its fellow.

[*To be continued.*]

Transactions of Branches.

NORTH WALES BRANCH.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

By THOMAS T. GRIFFITH, Esq., Wrexham.

[*Delivered June 18th.*]

GENTLEMEN,—On behalf of my professional brethren in this town, and for myself, I beg to offer you a hearty and sincere welcome. In addition to which I have to tender you my best thanks for the high honour you have conferred, in electing me a second time to the president's chair.

It affords me much pleasure to inaugurate my duties by offering to Dr. Turnour our unanimous and grateful thanks for his services to our Association during the year of his presidentship; and we gladly avail ourselves of this occasion for presenting to him our cordial congratulations on his marriage, and our best wishes for the long continuance of health and happiness.

We are gratified by the selection of Wrexham for our annual meeting. The short time allowed to our visitors on this occasion makes us regret the less that our town possesses but few objects to engage attention or satisfy curiosity. Its stately and exquisitely proportioned and ornamented church tower will ever attract the notice and admiration of all who delight in the beauties of Gothic architecture. The town has no ancestry of important events, political or historical, to boast; no stirring reminiscences of past deeds of murder, war, or rapine; but is more remarkable for the successful cultivation of the peaceful arts; though it has, on all occasions when war or the rumours of war have prevailed, proved by deeds its full participation in the patriotism and martial spirit of our country. Its immediate vicinity is formed in nearly an unbroken circle by the parks, woods, and grounds of a resident gentry; and is enriched and beautified by much varied and picturesque scenery. Placed as the centre to a very large and productive mining district, much of its increasing wealth and extent is due to the circumstance that a great proportion of the wants of this district is supplied from Wrexham. A main line of the Great Western Railway passing close to the town, connects it with all the great centres of trade and commerce, and, by affording a ready transit for mineral production, has led to a large investment of capital in mining speculations, which, in general, have proved eminently successful.

The town is situated on the slope of the segment of a basin formed by hills, which run from N.W. to S.W. But to the E. and S.E., the country stretches to the bases of the Shropshire and Cheshire hills in beautiful and gentle undulations. The declivities of the town itself offer great facilities for its general drainage; and there are other local advantages readily applicable to sanitary purposes. In the hills rising about three miles from the town, there exist rich beds of excellent coal, at a depth of from 80 to 260 yards, varying in thickness from 2 to 9 feet, overlaid by strata of shale, ironstone, fireclay, and sandstone of fine, hard, and durable quality, well adapted for buildings of every kind. These hills with rounded tops are concentric to another range, which rising abruptly and to a much greater height from deep narrow valleys which separate, by a very short distance, the two ranges, form the horizon in sharp broken outlines. This range contains highly productive veins of lead, combined with blende and calamine, and a small proportion of silver. The containing and overlying rocks consist of compact limestone chert and freestone.

From this brief notice of our locality, I must pass on to matters more connected with the objects for which we meet; and here I feel that if of necessity it belongs to my office to bring before you subjects novel or striking, I should at once shrink from such an obligation. But, confiding in your kind consideration and indulgence, I shall venture on, assured that all professional interests will engage your attention and sympathies.

From the apparent calm in medical politics, one might indulge the hope that our polity was established on a settled basis, and that our future prospects point only to harmony, and the realisation of long indulged hopes and wishes. But I fear the stillness is the mere reaction after years of toil and anxious suspense. Probably, too much and too little have been expected from the working of the Medical Act; but it has given the profession a status it can never lose; and I trust it contains within itself such elements of improvement and self-adjustment, as will eventually meet the wants and best interests of our common profession. A new and important change, deeply affecting the rising generation of general practitioners, has sprung from the recently created license of the London College of Physicians. An opportunity is thus afforded to every one to become connected with that college, an object I think more congenial to the *esprit de corps* than the existing connection between medical men and the Apothecaries' Company. It is most true, and must ever be gratefully acknowledged, that this company has done much in giving to the country a class of educated practitioners; yet I cannot but think that the time is come when the compulsory dependence of the members of a learned profession on a trading corporation should cease. I earnestly hope that the future regulations of the College will enforce a short apprenticeship. The entire absence of it will, it is to be feared, tempt young men to rush at once to the study of the higher branches of professional knowledge, before acquainting themselves with those rudimental matters—those first steps—which so greatly help to form the well informed and useful practitioner. The medical student has to practise his profession as an art, as well as study it as a science. But to reach the higher attainments in medical knowledge, his youthful mind

should be gradually trained, by a course of elementary teaching—which, I believe, will in no way be so efficiently obtained, as under the gentle discipline, orderly habits, and influential example and instruction of a teacher daily engaged in the active and practical pursuits of our profession.

By means of the New Sydenham Society, which Phœnix-like has risen with fresh energies from the ashes of the old one, we annually receive most valuable accessions to our medical literature. By it some of the standard works of the continent are reproduced by excellent translations, besides books from the hands of the ablest men in our own country. I have placed on the table a printed list of its issues, and beg to draw your attention to it; but, however important and attractive the general literature of our profession may be, it is a matter of nearer interest to us that our JOURNAL, as at present conducted, has become a periodical more in unison with the spirit of the times and the feelings and requirements of our Association.

Amongst the many valuable works which have during the past year issued from the medical press, there is one which will, I think, mark an era in our literature. I allude to the first volume of the *System of Surgery*, edited by Mr. Holmes. It contains monographs on some of the most common, and yet most important, forms of surgical diseases, by living authors of high reputation and position, of extensive practice and experience, of sound judgment, and of varied scientific attainments; and it is to be expected that the succeeding volumes will possess the same sterling worth that characterises the one already published.

The opening paper, by Mr. Simon, on Inflammation, is an excellent introduction to all the other. The author lays down with logical exactness first principles, and deduces from them a theory which places the whole subject of inflammation in a new, clear, and practical point of view. He maintains that the tissues develope and grow by the life of their own germs, the blood-vessels having only a ministerial office, conveying food to the tissues, and removing effete matters. He states that in inflammation the part does not inflame because it receives more blood; it receives more blood because it inflames. This, of course, very much does away with our previous ideas on the subject: for instead of an obscure undefinable process, by which it was supposed that the vessels in inflammation communicated a peculiar state and action from themselves to the tissues, as passive recipients, disturbing their healthy functions, modifying or destroying their normal structure, we are now taught that the inflammation commences in the tissues under the influence of a power inherent in themselves, and is ministered to and modified by the blood-vessels as carriers of that fluid to the inflamed tissues. There is so much that is demonstrative and suggestive in Mr. Holmes's statements that it seems more difficult to refuse than to accept his conclusions. In describing the principal conditions and changes attending inflammation, the author points to vascular tension as a leading and important state in its effects and as regards the treatment. This part of the subject is one of much interest to myself; because I find here defined and simplified an idea always present to my mind in the treatment of inflammatory disease. To ascertain the existence of vascular tension, its cause and amount; to follow it in its probable course and consequences, and to lessen or remove it,—have been the objects at which I have constantly aimed. Take as an example of vascular tension in its simplest form, produced in a limb by the depending posture and a ligature. The immediate effects are, depressing pain; a sense of fulness and tightness; infiltration of the tissues, from the effusion of serum or of plastic lymph, causing adhesions or other alterations of structure; then follow more or less of active inflammation, stagnation of blood, and partial mortification. These local changes soon involve the functions and vital powers of the general system, which may probably give way to a cause in its origin purely local and mechanical. But if, in the first stage of these changes, the ligature be removed and the position of the limb altered, all the fearful consequences are at once arrested. If in any part we can recognise vascular tension, whether in the form of simple hyperæmia, active inflammation, or exudation of lymph, serum, or blood, we shall do much for the relief of our patient by lessening or removing that tension. This may be done by mere change of position; or by fomentations, to relax the vessels; or by cold, to induce their contraction, thus forcing on the contained blood, and lessening its further influx; or by incisions; or by agents acting more generally on the centres of circulation and nervous power. Amongst these means, bleeding has always occupied a prominent position, from its influence in lessening the force of the heart's action, and depressing the vital powers generally. And then arises the important question as to the extent to which it is to be carried. This must be decided by a careful consideration of the object we have in view, the importance of the affected organ, and the amount of local disturbance, so as to proportion the amount of bleeding to the actual exigencies of the case; remembering that, by arresting vascular tension in its early stages, we may limit its effects to a temporary interference with the healthy functions of the part, and prevent those structural changes which may prove permanent in continuance, or fatal in their consequences. How many diseases, surgical and medical, owe their severest aggravations to this tension existing in the vessels, nerves, and fibrous tissues. And most of us have frequently seen the speedy removal of pain, fever, and delirium, effected by the free division of overstretched vessels and muscular or fibrous parts, and in no cases so remarkably as those of scalp wounds. The same principles and practice are applicable to the treatment of carbuncle, thecal abscess, phlegmonous erysipelas, symptoms foreshadowing apoplectic seizures, whilst vascular tension has not yet relieved itself by sanguineous or serous effusions; pneumonia, before the solidification of the lungs has impoverished the blood and depressed the vital powers, by withdrawing from the circulation a large portion of its fibrinous element; and to these more familiar instances might be added others of less frequent occurrence.

Of course, in thus giving an almost exclusive consideration to the one circumstance of vascular tension, I would by no means overlook or undervalue the importance of other associated causes of morbid action. These must ever retain their place in a just estimate of the disease we are treating. They will act as additional incentives to the due exercise of careful thought, accurate discrimination, accumulated experience, cautious inductions, and appropriate treatment. Lessons these of the utmost value, but which can be only successfully studied and applied by a watchful attention to disease in its varied forms and phases, and by a not less constant regard to the operations of nature in all her willingness and power to remedy the many ills which flesh is heir to.

In conclusion, I beg, gentlemen, to express the pleasure and satisfaction I feel in this reunion which brings so many of us together. It gives occasion to that social and friendly intercourse which can so rarely take place amongst men widely distant from each other. We here bring our experience, our anxieties, difficulties and successes, into a common fund, from which we receive in return, and I hope with interest, some wise counsel, some encouraging fact, or some of that kindly sympathy that lightens care and enhances joy. It gives proof of our love and devotedness to a profession which admits of a full and free exercise of all that is of worth in our

moral nature, and affords a wide field for the cultivation of every intellectual faculty.

The self-denying and often disinterested discharge of our duties exalts the tone of our mind and feelings, and does honour to a profession which numbered amongst its followers "Luke the beloved physician;" and whose Divine Master, in conferring the greatest benefits, did not disdain to "heal all that were sick."

Special Correspondence.

BIRMINGHAM.

[FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.]

THE *Annual Meeting of our Branch* was held on Friday, the 21st of June, and brought together about forty town and country members. Mr. Moore of Halesowen resigned the chair to Dr. Bell Fletcher, the new President, who, after the completion of the election of officers and other routine business, delivered an address, of which the following is a brief sketch.

Remembering, as he did, the death of Cline, which happened after he had entered at St. Thomas' Hospital, and having witnessed the practice of Abernethy, Astley Cooper, the earlier days of Brodie and Lawrence, and of others, both English and French, whose names have now become classical, Dr. Fletcher felt that he might consider himself a link between the old and the new schools of physic. And the more so, that he had entered the profession through the portals of the old fashioned but now unfashionable apprenticeship, all the stages of which he had worked his way through, from bottle-washing, to the compounding of mixtures and pills, till he had arrived at the honourable distinction of being allowed to visit patients. He was the last apprentice of his father's partner, Mr. Bayly of Shiffnal, the first having been Mr. Wood, the late distinguished Senior Surgeon of the General Hospital. After spending some years in general practice, he graduated in Paris, joined the Royal College of Physicians of London, and then commenced practice as a physician in Birmingham nearly five-and-twenty years ago. These personal particulars Dr. Fletcher gave to show that having passed through every possible grade of the profession, his opinions upon the education of students and the requirements of the various grades of practitioners, had not been formed without opportunity for acquiring a personal knowledge of these subjects. Without denying the superiority of the present over the past state of the profession, the President thought that whilst we have gained much we have also lost something.

Formerly the education of the future practitioner was entrusted, or rather left, almost entirely to his master; and the names of several former local celebrities were given to show that such a method of education was by no means to be despised, judging from its results.

At that time the members of our guild enjoyed a higher social status, perhaps, than they now often do. Parish and club work was more highly remunerated than at present, whilst at the same time those who did it were credited with a certain amount of public spirit and charity for its performance, which was indeed generally considered to be a boon granted by the doctor for a moderate and inadequate remuneration. Competition has sadly altered the complexion of affairs since those palmy days. Dr. Fletcher is an advocate for the old form of apprenticeship, during which the pupil should be entirely engaged with and for his master. He is quite certain that those who have not gone through this schooling often find themselves at a loss on entering practice on their own account, and indeed are frequently obliged to take situations as assistants in order to acquire that knowledge which used to be obtained as an apprentice; they thus lose time which would be much more advantageously employed in establishing themselves in practice. At the same time, he would not object to a reduction in the length of the pupilage, as, for instance, from five years to two.

Whilst commending the recent regulations for ensuring a better preliminary education, he feared that by these means practitioners might be so educationally elevated as would tend to throw the humbler classes more into the hands of druggists than they even now are.

The curriculum of students is too much entrusted to men who, honourable and high-minded as they undoubtedly are, possess but an imperfect acquaintance with the actual duties and requirements of the general practitioner. Dr. Fletcher thought that a committee of the British Medical Association might be very usefully employed upon this subject; they would be able to give many valuable suggestions; and whilst in a position to fully appreciate the too low standard of former education, they would also be alive to the dangers of the opposite extreme to which we are now running, which will presently have the effect of thinning the ranks of our profession, so much that there will not be enough medical men to do the work; for it is quite clear that, however much we may talk of doctors being too thick upon the ground, an investigation of the work done shows this not to be the case, the real truth of the matter being that those who attend the poor, and really do the hard work and low practice in all parts of England, whether town or country, are not properly remunerated, but underpaid, whilst they are overworked. The great bane of our profession now is the determination of many to obtain practice at any price, a weakness of which the public has not been slow to take advantage. Hence has arisen the pernicious system of contract practice which, if admissible at all, is only so when the poor are concerned. But it is not at all uncommon for a club-member, who would scorn to receive sick pay, to apply to the surgeon for advice and medicine without the slightest idea of making remuneration,—an imposition which every medical man ought to discountenance and resist to the utmost. Our great charities, noble and useful though they be, yet tend to undermine the provident habits of those for whose benefit they are instituted, and by making medical men cheap to the public, reduce their standing and importance.

Most of the difficulties with which we have to contend arise from want of that unity which is strength. It is therefore lamentable to see that, notwithstanding the magnitude and importance of our Association, and the conveni-