SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

PARIS.

Grave Charges against Hospital Staffs.—Disturbances among Medical Students in Paris and Toulouse.—A Syndicate of Nurses.—Brutes as Vehicles of Malignant Pustule.—Accidental Belladonna Poisoning in a Prison.—General News.

At a recent meeting of the Municipal Council, M. Charles Lament called attention to what he considers serious defects in the direction of the Paris hospitals. He says the subordinate officials were drunken while the superior officers shrieked their work. The hospitals had not during the cholera epidemic curtailed their holidays. M. Charles Péan spoke in the same sense, and M. Dubois said a cholera patient had been placed in a general ward and had transmitted his disease to some of the other patients. He also alleged that at the Hôtel Dieu the cholera ward is close to the maternity ward. M. Peyrin is rarely never blamed by the Municipal Council, the Prefect of the Seine constantly. M. Peyrin did not seem to appreciate the change.

Last Saturday the Hôtel de Ville (the Paris Guildhall) was invaded by 300 medical students. They had just left the Assistance Publique, where a competitive examination for hospital dressers (externes) ought to have been held, but as soon as the examiners appeared the students made a noise, broke the windows, and turned out the gas, then made for the Hôtel de Ville, shouting: "Two with Peyrin! Down with Strauss!" This violent behaviour was intended to express their dissatisfaction with M. Peyrin because he has struck off from the list of hospital dressers a M. Salmon who kept on his cat and continued smoking in a hospital ward while M. Strauss, a municipal councillor and the director of the hospital were visiting the wards. When demonstrator with him answered rudely. The 300 students went, after their visit to the Hôtel de Ville, to the Medical Faculty and held a meeting. M. Brousset, the Dean, told them to be calm, and promised to investigate the matter and, if he saw reason, intercede for M. Salmon. M. Peyrin has already agreed to allow M. Salmon to resume his duties as dresser on New Year’s Day. The students of the Toulouse Medical Faculty have made a violent demonstration against the Dean. Seven were arrested but were afterwards freed.

The hospital nurses have organised a syndicate, but have requested that their names shall not be made known, fearing the anger of the Assistance Publique. A nurse present stated that there are 6,000 nurses of different grades employed in the hospitals of Paris, and 4,000 in the suburbs. They work from fifteen to sixteen hours a day. Nurses earn £1 a month, matrons £3 francs, sub-matrons £3 francs, certified nurses £3 francs, but for reasons of economy, these are rarely chosen. A considerable section of these nurses, in order to earn their living, are obliged to seek work among the general public. Agencies exist for this purpose which make the nurses pay so heavy a commission that their wages are greatly reduced. The syndicate is formed to remedy these evils.

A brushmaker at Lille received some bristles from Persia; one of his workpeople who manipulated them fell suddenly ill, and died within twenty-four hours. This death was followed by four others. All five presented the same symptoms. A pustule appeared resembling the malignant pustule of charbon. The Sanitary Commission of the Lille Faculty of Medicine is investigating the affair.

Dr. Lesage, after investigating at the prison of Beauvais, during some days the cause of the prisoners complaining of feeling ill, asked to taste the extract of walnut leaves mixed with the prisoners’ drinking water. A few minutes after a number exhibited symptoms of belladonna poisoning. Inquiry revealed the fact that, owing to the mistake of a chemist’s assistant, the poison had been supplied with extract of belladonna instead of extract of walnut. The chemist has been sentenced to six days’ imprisonment and a fine of 100 francs.

The Figaro has opened a fund for sending tobacco and comforts to the wounded at Dahomey; 1,000 francs have been collected, of which 500 francs were contributed by MM. Rothschild.

AERDEEN, BANFF, AND KINCARDINE BRANCH.

At the recent meeting of the Branch held in Aberdeen on November 16th.

New Members.—The minutes of the last meeting having been read and approved, Dr. Levack, Great Western Road, Aberdeen, was nominated for ballot at the next meeting of the Branch; Dr. A. R. Gillies, Rosemount Place, Aberdeen; Dr. McRae, Torff; Dr. Trup, Old Aberdeen; and Dr. Beddie, 17, Saltoun Place, Fraserburgh, were balloted for and admitted members of the Branch.

The late Dr. Urquhart.—A letter of thanks from Dr. Thelston Urquhart to the members of the Branch for the cross of flowers sent as a tribute at his father’s funeral, was read, and the Secretary was instructed to convey a message of condolence from the Branch to Dr. Urquhart’s family.

Communications.—Dr. Scott Riddell related a case of compound fracture of the clavicle in which a very successful result had been obtained by a plastic operation after the fragments had been sutured with wire. The patient was exhibited. Dr. Riddell also read notes of a case of vesical calculus in which, while attempting to crush by means of a lithotrite, the blades of the instrument got jammed, giving a fragment of the stone. Dr. Riddell then performed suprapubic lithotomy, and removed a very hard mulberry calculus of oxalate of lime, which was shown. The patient made a good recovery.

Photographs of Deceased Members.—On behalf of Professor Oston, Mr. D. Leask proposed that an enlarged photograph of the late Dr. Urquhart should be procured by the Branch, and placed in the Medico-Chirurgical Society’s rooms. After some discussion it was remitted to the Secretary to communicate with the Medico-Chirurgical Society as to the advisability of joint action in the matter; further, to consider whether the photographs of other deceased members (as Professor Smith-Shand, a former President of the Branch) should be obtained at the same time.

THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE BRANCH.

The first meeting of the session was held on November 15th, at Gloucester; Mr. E. D. Bower, President, in the chair. More than twenty-five members were present.

Presidential Address.—The minutes of the last meeting having been read and confirmed, the President delivered an address on the Progress of Ophthalmic Surgery during the last ten years. Special reference was made to the subjects of retinoscopy, cocaine, the treatment of immature cataract, evisceration and excision of the eyeball, the treatment of panophthalmitis, the after-treatment of cases of cataract extraction, etc. He advocated the institution of an examination in ophthalmology by the Ophthalmological Society similar to the one in mental diseases now conducted by the Psychological Society, or in public health and preventive medicine by the various examining bodies. A certificate by such a society would have a distinct value in the filling up of hospital appointments; for if it was considered essential for a candidate applying for the post of medical officer of health to produce evidence of special knowledge, it should be equally necessary in the case of those whose duty it was to perform delicate operations upon the human eye. The address concluded with some general remarks and practical suggestions as the future meetings of the Branch. A vote of thanks to the President for his address was passed unanimously.

Successful Vaccination.—Dr. David J. Jones, Public Vaccinator of the Penderyn District of the Merthyr Tydvil Union, has received a Government grant for successful vaccination.