

great on the score of expense, both to the individual members, and to the Association at large, that the Central Council were prevented adopting the course which he suggests, and which, after a full consideration on previous occasions, has always been rejected as inexpedient.

IN the House of Commons on Wednesday, June 26th, Mr. NEWDEGATE rose to move the second reading of the Railway Accidents Bill; a discussion afterwards took place, in which Mr. ELLIS, for the Midland Company, defended the course they had pursued against Mr. SANDS COX and Messrs. DAVIES and SILK, and objected to the Bill as bearing hardly upon railway Companies. But the most important point in the debate, was the admission made by the ATTORNEY-GENERAL of the correctness of the first recital of the Bill,—“That no action was maintainable by a medical man against a railway company whose servant called him to attend a person who sustained an injury.” But the ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he thought that medical men would willingly, on being sent for, render their services to a sufferer, even though they had no power of recovering money from the Company. We agree with the ATTORNEY-GENERAL that medical men will attend to these cases, in spite of the risk to which they will be exposed—of loss of time, money, and perhaps reputation, because we believe that our brethren have more humanity than to leave a fellow creature to endure the agony of a maimed limb, or perhaps a crushed spine, whilst they are making inquiries as to his capabilities of affording a proper remuneration for that skill which he no doubt requires. There may be insuperable legal difficulties in the way of fixing the claim on the Company, and if so we, as good subjects, are bound to yield, but it does appear hard upon us, as a body, that we should be expected to allow the appeal, *ad misericordiam*, to be made upon us so often and so successfully.

By the Poor-Law regulations we are compelled to work for the public good for the wages of a day-labourer, and now we are to be constantly liable to be called to attend upon chance passengers by railways, with the prospect of repayment for our services if the individual happens to be successful against the Company, and honest enough to acknowledge that he is so.

The Bill was thrown out by a majority of 55.

Reviews.

A Treatise on the Climate and Meteorology of Madeira, by the late J. A. Mason, M.D. Edited by SHERIDAN KNOWLES. To which are attached a Review on the State of Agriculture and Tenure of Land. By GEORGE PEACOCK, D.D., F.R.S., &c. And an Historical and Descriptive Account of the Island. By JOHN DRIVER, Consul for Greece. London: Churchill. 1850. pp. 378.

As is well remarked in the preface, this elegant volume is invested with a peculiar interest, by the knowledge that its production occupied the waning hours, if it did not positively hasten the end of its accomplished author. Self sacrifice in the cause of humanity in one way or other is so ordinary an occurrence among members of the medical profession, that to hear of this or the other who has fallen a victim to fatigue or pestilence, scarcely commands a passing thought; and it is only when, as in the present instance, some enduring memento of the dead is brought before us, that even among ourselves any can be found to accord a just tribute to unselfish devotion.

Dr. Mason was one of the numerous brotherhood of temperate regions in whom the possession of talent and amiability is too often linked with the inheritance of a disease which, spite of the experience of ages, continues to cull hecatombs of victims from among those whose qualities render their existence among us the most to be desired; but, though knowing himself destined to fill an early grave, he cast aside all worldly thought of his approaching end, and without intermission or pause completed a series of difficult and fatiguing observations, with the noble view of rendering a benefit to society. As the editor of his labours feelingly observes:—“The exposure and privations which he would have imperatively prohibited a patient from encountering, he fearlessly and enthusiastically contended with in his own person, undeterred by the most trying fluctuations of temperature, the prostration attendant upon a constant strain of the mind, and the watching which broke in upon that rest, which even the robust cannot forego without some degree of suffering. To none would he depute the task he had undertaken; and when all around him were enjoying repose, this martyr, as he may be called, passed the night with his instruments and journal, noting down the minu-

test change which the atmosphere underwent, from the first sinking of the sun to its first indication of its rising." Such toil upon an enfeebled constitution could be followed but by one result, and, accordingly, we find that at the early age of twenty-seven Dr. Mason died, apparently from exhaustion.

The proceeds of this laborious existence are embodied in the first portion of this tripartite volume, and consist of extensive observations on the hygrometric conditions, winds and temperature of the climate of Madeira, inreference to their effects upon the human economy, and more particularly in that class of invalids who make the island their resort, too often to find on it their last home. To give at length the elaborate tables and notices with which this volume abounds, would far exceed our limits; but if, as we trust will be the case, some of the more scientific readers will be induced to search for themselves, we promise them that they will find Parts I. and III. to afford them much valuable meteorological information.

As a specimen of the author's style, and at the same time to exhibit the energetic tone of his mind, we subjoin the concluding paragraph of his chapter on the general effects of climate:—

"I would strenuously enforce upon the profession generally the absolute necessity of making extensive meteorological observations, as a means of materially advancing the science of medicine, for our present knowledge of local climates, even those of our own country, is entirely unsupported by accurate data, founded on experiment. The attention of the scientific ought to be directed—first, to the temperature; secondly, to the dewpoint or distance from the point of saturation; thirdly, to the pressure of the atmosphere; fourthly, to the rapidity of the evaporation; fifthly, to the range and intensity of solar radiation; and, sixthly, to the different states of electric tension. Were all these causes, which are constantly varying, carefully registered, together with an account of the topographical relations of the place of observation; the geological and mineral formations constituting the basis of its soil; its state of cultivation; the most frequent winds to which it is subject; the moral condition of its inhabitants, and the diseases prevailing at the time, especially their varying types, we should then make rapid progress in meteorological science, and possess positive data with reference to the action of different atmospheric conditions on the animal economy, both in its healthy and diseased states. It is impossible to calculate the benefits that would result from the information that would be thus acquired, not only as regards the practitioner, but as the public in general are concerned. It would enable the former to gain precise knowledge as to the influence of different atmospheric conditions in producing, modifying, or arresting diseased action, whether arising

from functional derangement, or from more serious modification of structure, so that he could place his patients under the most auspicious circumstances for bringing about the healthy condition of the functions. And it would gratify the latter to select such atmospheric conditions as best conduce to the enjoyment of that existence which, through ignorance or infatuation, is now too frequently rendered a helpless prey to disease."—p. 176—178.

The Sumbul: a new Remedy of great power against Nervous Disorders, Spasms of the Stomach, Cramp, Hysterical Affections, Paralysis of the Limbs, and Epilepsy, with an account of Physical, Chemical, and Medicinal Characters, and specific property of checking the progress of Collapse-Cholera, as first ascertained in Russia. By A. B. GRANVILLE, M.D., F.R.S., &c. Pamphlet.

THE object of a small pamphlet with the above prolix title page, is to introduce to notice a new drug called "*Sumbul*," of Asiatic origin. It appears to have acquired some celebrity in cholera, but had previously been employed in Russia, as a stimulant in malignant fevers, and in exhausting diseases of other kinds.

The plant is indigenous to Bucharica, and is thought to belong to the natural order *Umbelliferae*. The dried root, which is the medicinal part, has a perfume resembling musk, and a strong aromatic taste. The diseases for which Dr. Granville informs us that it has been given with advantage, are those commonly known as nervous and hysterical disorders, chlorosis, paralysis, epilepsy, and lastly, in cholera.

The character given to this drug by Dr. Granville, if confirmed by further experience, will cause it to be considered as a valuable addition to our Pharmacopœia, but we fear that, as in the case of "*Koussou*," its scarcity and consequent expensiveness will be a great drawback upon its usefulness.

Proceedings of Societies.

ANNIVERSARY MEETING
OF THE
LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE BRANCH.

THE fourteenth Anniversary meeting of the Lancashire and Cheshire Branch of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association took place on Wednesday,