

of them the plea of insanity was put forward, but without effect.

Mr. STEPHENS concurred for the most part with the observations of Baron Bramwell, and thought it would be wrong, because a man might imagine his little finger to be made of glass, to acquit him of murder on the ground of insanity.

The CHAIRMAN said the number of instances in which the plea of insanity was put forward was in consequence of the answer of the judges to the question in the House of Lords; and such pleas had been upon the increase since M'Naughten's case; but if public opinion could be fairly tested, it would say that Bellingham had been justly executed and M'Naughten unjustly spared.

Dr. WINSLOW briefly replied, and the thanks of the society were voted to him.

## Editor's Letter Box.

### THE LIST OF MEMBERS.

LETTER FROM W. H. MICHAEL, ESQ.

SIR,—The great labour of preparing a list of members of the Association, and the desire to make it thoroughly correct, has, I presume, delayed its publication for two months. The end of the year is so close, that I beg leave to suggest deferring the printing of the list until the second or third week in January, when we could also have the names of new members, and also our losses from deaths and resignations. We should then possess a true index of the state of the Association.

It appeared from the Report of the Council at the Annual Meeting, that the state of the finances was "highly gratifying". It would, therefore, be satisfactory to the associates to see published, at the same time, a statement of the receipts and expenditure, also the assets and liabilities, to the end of the year. To establish our solvency, and to prove by figures that we are really advancing, is the true way to increase the number of our members, and the best means to secure progress.

I am, etc., W. H. MICHAEL.

Swansea, December 8th, 1857.

### MANCHESTER ROYAL SCHOOL OF MEDICINE.

SIR,—Will you allow me space in your JOURNAL to complain of the uncomfortable condition which has existed three winter sessions in the students' room of the Manchester Royal School of Medicine? The room is almost destitute of seats; only three forms, each about two yards long, are provided for the students to sit on. This disorderly state influences many students to frequent the public houses and billiard rooms, where, once in, they remain, thereby neglecting their lectures and hospital practice, to say nothing of the loose habits which they imbibe, from the mere want of a decent room to sit in. Surely, this could be easily rectified by placing therein a stove, a few comfortable seats, and a table. Trusting you will excuse this intrusion.

I am, etc.,  
A MANCHESTER STUDENT.

Manchester, December 7th, 1857.

## Parliamentary Intelligence.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.—Thursday, December 10th, 1857.

### THE PUBLIC HEALTH.

Mr. COWPER, in moving for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the Public Health Act (1848), said, it was the same Bill which was read a first time last Session, and could not be proceeded with for want of time. Being anxious that the Bill should not be again exposed to the same fate, he had taken the earliest opportunity to introduce it, and he trusted that the House would be prepared to consider it after the Christmas recess. The general object was to provide that every town in England, great or small, should have the opportunity of acquiring, without any considerable cost or difficulty, local representative government, armed with sufficient powers to provide structural works and to make regulations necessary for the sanitary improvement of the inhabitants. The tendency of manufactures and the movement of particular branches of industry caused

1055

the rapid growth of towns in places which were previously thinly inhabited. The suburbs of Birmingham, Manchester, and the eastern districts of London, had rapidly accumulated very large populations. Houses were built without method and without under-drainage, so that the refuse was carried into some neighbouring ditch, where it remained to create noxious vapours injurious to health. It was hardly to be expected that any private individual would have so much public spirit as to risk the expense, in case of failure, of an application for a private Act, and therefore these places had no organisation at all. Many of the older towns were also desirous of acquiring larger powers than were afforded by the Public Health Act. Both the towns which had and the towns which had not representative government, wished to be able to adopt the Public Health Act, with greater facilities and with provisions more adapted to their wants. He proposed the intervention of the General Board only in cases where the boundaries had to be altered, and where some of the provisions of the Public Health Act had to be modified. The powers to be acquired under this Bill would be for making structural works, borrowing money, supplying water, lighting streets, and providing regulations which were necessary for the good government of these towns. There were some who asked, Why such meddling and such unnecessary interference? The purpose of the meddling was to get rid of the refuse of thousands, which had the effect of substituting disease for health, weakness for strength, and death for life. The number of deaths from preventable causes was estimated at 80,000 a-year, a large proportion of which arose from diseases altogether to be prevented if towns were properly cleansed. It was acknowledged by the highest medical authorities that typhus fever was generated by overcrowding and by noxious exhalations; and in blind purlieus, courts, and alleys, typhus numbered among its victims about 17,000 persons. Other diseases, as erysipelas, consumption, and scrofula, were greatly increased by the same causes. It was admitted that cholera was a disease which could be prevented being fatal by cleanliness and care. No better illustration was afforded than by the two towns of Tynemouth and Newcastle. In the interval between the last two visitations of cholera, sanitary measures were adopted in Tynemouth, and neglected in Newcastle. At the last visitation, the deaths in Newcastle from cholera were 2,000, and in Tynemouth 4. Similar results were traceable with regard to pure water. It was found, by comparing the deaths which occurred among the population of London served by the different companies, that those who drank the foul water taken from within the tidal area, died in a proportion three and a-half times as great as those who drank the pure water which was taken from above the tidal area. Cholera, with diarrhoea and dysentery, destroyed 27,000 annually. In the same way, the mortality of infants depended greatly upon the influence of the air they breathed; and Dr. West mentioned that infantile diarrhoea, in the severe form in which it prevailed in the ill-drained districts, was not to be found in the well-drained districts of the metropolis. There was a tendency, continually going on in this country, to gravitate towards towns, and to live less in rural districts. The town population was more unhealthy than the rural. It was found that people died in large towns at the rate of one-third more than in small towns and villages. Among many causes which increased the unhealthiness of towns, was the neglect to remove immediately from the neighbourhood of houses the refuse which, if allowed to decompose, polluted the air and tainted the water. It was, therefore, incumbent upon those who were anxious to maintain the health and prosperity of the country, that they should give every facility for the proper sanitary administration of towns. This Bill had that for its object; and, notwithstanding the topics of absorbing interest pressing upon the attention of Parliament, he hoped that in the ensuing Session they would find time to consider it. The right honourable gentleman concluded by moving for leave to introduce the Bill.

Mr. AYRTON said, the right hon. gentleman was under a misapprehension if he supposed that the opposition with which his Bill of last year had been received, was to the end to which it was directed. It was to the indiscreet means by which it sought that end, and to the disposition evinced to bring all the action of the local authorities under the control of one central office. Provided that the Bill were drawn in such a manner as to effect the end of improving the sanitary condition of the people without infringing on their personal liberties, it would meet with his support.

Sir A. ELTON thanked the right hon. gentleman for the clear exposition which he had given of the objects of the Bill. From