

for cooking as "polenta" (porridge). Professor Celli, in consequence of this, has sought a remedy in another mode of manipulating the meal. With the coöperation of several skilled members of the baking guild he has succeeded in turning out a paste either from the "granturco" pure and simple or by the admixture of this with the meal of ordinary grain (in the proportion of from 25 to 50 per cent.). Richer in albuminoid substances than the "polenta" of "granturco," richer in the same substances than paste from the other grain even when of the best quality, this composite paste, relatively to nutrient power, is actually cheaper than the aforesaid "polenta." Professor Celli is anxious to have the results of his laboratory findings tested on a grand scale, and will, it is hoped, receive the countenance and support of the Government in the practical extension of his discovery to the alimentation of the poor.

Feb. 28th.

VIENNA.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

Professor Kaposi and the Socialists.

In the course of a lecture delivered last week Professor Kaposi said that owing to the mildness of the winter only a few cases of phtheiriiasis had recently come under his observation, and he added that sufferers from this disease may be found at the meetings which are about to be held in connexion with the Parliamentary elections. These remarks were repeated by the *Arbeiterzeitung*, a journal which circulates among the working classes, and on the evening of the same day some hundreds of Socialists assembled in front of his house and created a disturbance. Next day the newspapers published a statement by Professor Kaposi in which he denied that what he said was capable of an offensive interpretation, and he moreover referred to the gratuitous treatment which he had freely given to necessitous patients for the last thirty years.

Vomiting and Pregnancy.

Dr. Dirmoser has published in the *Medicinische Wochenschrift* an account of twenty cases of hyperemesis gravidarum which he has observed in the course of eight years. There are, according to Lang, three stages of this complaint. In the first stage the symptoms occur at short intervals varying from an hour to five minutes. In the second stage the pulse is accelerated, the temperature is increased, and the urine becomes turbid; patients presenting these symptoms sometimes recover. In the third, which is the comatose or nervous stage, the vomiting decreases, but there are grave cerebral complications, and sometimes strabismus and jaundice. In six cases in which the urine was analysed a great quantity of urobilin was found, as well as hæmoglobin, acetone, peptone, hyalin, and granular tube casts. The presence of urobilin indicates a decomposition of hæmoglobin in the body, and the tube casts point to serious derangement of the kidneys. In three cases Dr. Dirmoser also observed indoxyl and skatoxyl, substances which are products of decomposition in the intestine and are of great significance, indicating a general poisoning of the system and co-existing with increase in the bulk of the liver, spleen, and kidneys. According to Dr. Dirmoser the disease is due to the enlargement of the uterus irritating the motor nerves, as well as the sympathetic and the vagus, both of which when stimulated cause contraction of the stomach. Experiments made by Conteyon have shown that irritation of the vagus increases the secretion of the glands of the mucous membrane of the stomach, promotes the formation of mucus, which neutralises the acid gastric juice, and causes hyperæmia of the stomach. These effects predispose to the formation of toxins, which is further assisted by the atony of the intestine. Dr. Dirmoser accordingly recommends that the stomach should be washed out with a solution of boric acid, that the gases of the stomach should be absorbed by means of powdered charcoal made from the wood of the lime tree, and that food should be given by the rectum. When the patient is eventually able to take food by the mouth it should at first consist of somatose¹ and rice-water.

The Pituitary Body and the Thyroid Gland.

At the last meeting of the Medical Society Dr. Schiff discussed the influence of the pituitary body and the thyroid gland on the metabolism of the tissues. The relation between

these two organs has been studied ever since Marie proved that the pituitary body undergoes a change in cases of acromegaly and suggested that it exercises an influence over tissue change. Hypertrophy of the pituitary body has been observed after extirpation of the thyroid gland and in cases of myxœdema. Experiments made by Dr. Schiff with extract of pituitary body show that it leaves the excretion of nitrogen unaltered, but that it increases the excretion of phosphorus, a result indicating the decomposition of a tissue containing phosphorus, which may be either the structures forming the central nervous system, or, on the other hand, the bones. Dr. Schiff considers that it is the bony tissue which is affected. In his investigations of the functions of the thyroid gland Dr. Schiff made four experiments with iodothylin, and came to the conclusion that its action is by no means identical with that of thyroid extract, a result quite at variance with the opinions of Baumann, who considered that iodothylin represents, both quantitatively and qualitatively, the efficient part of the gland. Dr. Biedl then referred to the experiments made by him on cats with a view to the investigation of the symptoms which appear after extirpation of the pituitary body. He operated through the mouth, first performing tracheotomy, then partly dividing the velum palati, and finally opening the base of the cranium with a trephine. Sometimes the animals succumbed to hæmorrhage either from a cranial sinus or from the circle of Willis. In one case the animal lived for twenty-four hours, and then died with peculiar spasms similar to those occurring after extirpation of the thyroid gland, and due no doubt to an extravasation into the middle cranial fossa. He confirmed the results obtained by Oliver and Schäfer, who found that the extract of thyroid gland causes a decrease in the blood pressure, whereas the extract of pituitary body, like suprarenal extract, has the effect of increasing the blood pressure.

Accidental Injuries received at the Time of Death.

Dr. Haberda has published in the *Klinische Wochenschrift* a highly interesting case in which a lesion of a necessarily fatal character was sustained at the moment of death. It not unfrequently happens that dying persons receive severe injuries through falling down as they become unconscious. The results of such accidents, of course, vary in extent and severity, ranging from abrasions and bruises on the forehead, the back of the head, the nose, and the knee to fractures of the nasal bones and the extremities, and even to fracture of the skull with extravasation into the cerebral tissue. Dr. Haberda's patient was a woman, aged sixty-five years, who died suddenly. Post-mortem examination showed that the pericardium was fatty and contained about 40 c.c. of turbid blood. The right heart was soft, and on the anterior aspect, close to the anterior longitudinal furrow, there was a longitudinal fissure of the right ventricle. The mitral valves were hard and the posterior aortic valve was thickened; the entrance to the left coronary artery was contracted, but that of the right was normal. The small quantity of blood in the pericardium indicated that the rupture of the heart was not the cause of death, and the absence of suffusion at the place of the rupture proved that it occurred only after the heart's action had ceased.

Thoracic Diagnosis by Means of the Roentgen Rays.

Professor Benedikt has published an account of the observations made by him with the Roentgen rays on a man who suffered from dyspnoea, and who said that two years ago he had an attack of pneumonia and hæmorrhage from the lungs. On the right side in front there was dulness over the apex and bronchial respiration, and there was also dulness of the left back. By means of the Roentgen rays shadows of the heart and the diaphragm were obtained which showed no change in the position of these organs during expiration and inspiration, so that there evidently was an adhesion between the costal pleura and the diaphragm. There was condensation of the lung tissue, and the shadows cast by the lungs were studded with black patches; moreover, an abnormal shadow extending to the axilla corresponded to a situation where there was dulness without any other symptoms, so that no doubt the pleura was thickened and the pneumonia spoken of by the patient had really been pleurisy. The dyspnoea was due to the interference with the action of the diaphragm and to the diminution of the respiratory surface.

Amusing Reply to an Examination Question.

Medical circles in Vienna have been much amused by an

¹ See THE LANCET, Feb. 2nd, 1895, p. 294.

answer given by a student who was being examined in pathological anatomy and was asked to name the organs of the body in which cysts most commonly occur. He enumerated several, but omitted to mention the ovary, whereupon the examiner good-naturedly said: "Try to think of an organ which you do not possess," and the candidate, who was of Jewish extraction, immediately replied: "Oh, the prepuce!"

Feb. 28th.

EGYPT.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

Pilgrimages to Mecca.

WE are now well advanced in the Mussulman fasting month of Ramadan, and very soon the devout will be making preparations for the annual pilgrimage so as to be at the holy places before the great feast which will take place this year about April 13th. The French have very properly stopped all idea of pilgrimage from their colonies. The Indian Government seems afraid to take this step, and the Khedive of Egypt can hardly be expected to be more courageous than his English advisers. The Hadj of last year was the largest since 1893, partly because the chief day of the feast fell on a Friday, and the year was therefore considered to be a sacred one; 62,000 pilgrims landed at Jeddah, and the concourse at Mouna was reckoned at 250,000. Jeddah, in spite of its population of 20,000 people, had no money for scavenging purposes, because the Customs revenue destined for sanitation was swallowed up in paying the Government officials, whose salaries were eight months in arrear. The stinks and dangers in the town of Jeddah can be better imagined than described. It is true that the Sultan sent three medical men from Constantinople to inspect, a pasha and two beys, and they reported well of everything they saw. There was no cholera during last year's Hadj, but plenty of small-pox and a corresponding dearth of vaccine, while the other chief diseases were malarial fever, dysentery, and rheumatism, all treated by one sovereign remedy—the actual cauterium! One of the greatest wants is a railway from Jeddah towards Mecca. There is apparently no religious difficulty to this, but the amount of backsheesh required by the Bedouins is so enormous that the idea has been reluctantly postponed. One Arab tribe lives during the whole year upon the results of dastardly murders committed by it upon unprotected pilgrims. Nothing can be reformed until the Powers coerce Turkey. Every pilgrim should be provided before landing at Jeddah with a certificate of good health and at least £15 in his pocket. Many now land with less than 15s. in their possession, and hundreds are sent back every year by charitable persons. The British Indian pilgrims, I am ashamed to say, are the greatest offenders, about half of them being paupers. The Javanese, on the other hand, are the richest, because Holland insists on every pilgrim possessing an adequate sum. The Persians are universally pitied, because their Consul-General is said to levy very heavy contributions on them. In fact, the pilgrims are robbed everywhere—in Jeddah, *en route* by the Bedouins, and then again at Mecca. The Grand Shereef himself is a famous robber, and among other perquisites receives 3s. for each camel hired by the pilgrims. He is not very rich himself by all accounts, because of the large presents he has to send to Turkey. This completes the vicious circle, for it is Turkey which stops all sanitary reform in the Hedjaz, and it is idle to expect that Turkey will ever seriously mend matters there until she is forced to do so by the European Powers. When Europe found herself menaced by plague from Egypt in 1820 she compelled Egypt to create sanitary reforms up to the level of the European knowledge of the day. Has not the time come for Europe to put similar pressure on Turkey and the holy places?

Strongylus Subtilis.

This hitherto unknown worm was discovered at several necropsies in Cairo and Alexandria by Dr. Looss in 1895, and was then reported by him.¹ In the faecal matter of one of Dr. Sandwith's ankylostomiasis patients, an Egyptian peasant, Dr. Looss has now discovered the eggs of the

strongylus subtilis, and this is necessarily the first time that this parasite has been recognised in a living patient. The man now being studied is improving under the ordinary thymol and iron treatment.

Medical Appointments.

Crookshank Pasha, who has been Director-General of the Prisons Department in Egypt since its creation by Mr. Clifford Lloyd in 1884, has now been promoted to the important post of English Controller of the Daira Sanieh. This post carries with it a salary of £2050 a year, and is by far the most lucrative appointment which has yet been given to an English medical man in this country. The Daira Sanieh consists of the personal estate of the Khedive Ismail Pasha, and was reclaimed from him in 1876, at the time of settlement of the national debts. It comprised originally more than 400 000 acres, nearly all being cultivated land, chiefly sugar estates and factories; but to try to reduce the yearly deficit on the revenue several parcels of land have of late years been sold or exchanged to Government servants in lieu of pensions. The Prisons appointment has now been given to the Chief of the Cairo Police. This is, at first sight, a retrograde step, for the weak point of the Egyptian prisons has so far been hygiene and not discipline. It is apparently intended that the future sanitation of the city and provincial prisons shall be regulated by the already deeply pledged sanitary department. Dr. Warnock of the Government Lunatic Asylum and Dr. Wilson, Professor of Physiology at the Medical School, have both had their appointments permanently confirmed. Dr. W. Grant, a son of the late Dr. Grant Bey, has been appointed to the second medical post at Mombasa.

Animal Vaccine Institute.

The statistics for 1896 are very satisfactory. The number of primary vaccinations in Egypt during the year was 17,176 and of these only 577 failed. It must be remembered in addition not only that the vaccinators are all natives, but also that the custom of the country is to vaccinate each child on both its arms. This really means, therefore, a double number of successful results.

Feb. 24th.

NEW YORK.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

The National Museum of Hygiene.

WHILE the museum concerns hygiene generally, it has much to do with ships. Here quarters and berths are arranged for the sick on shipboard in models representing several methods. There should be seen in this exhibit a perfect hospital ship—one equipped with all modern conveniences in addition to the best medical and surgical means—as an example for those who construct as well as for those who use. The present sick-bays of warships are altogether inadequate to the exigencies of battle, and berth-decks, or rather makeshifts, could in no manner meet requirements as would properly constructed special hospital ships. These would, indeed, be floating homes of refuge, recognised by all nations as sacred to the unfortunate. In another portion of the building there is a ship-disinfecting apparatus, by the use of which long detention at quarantine is unnecessary, for with it purification is rapidly accomplished in the various parts of the vessel, while all germs contained in the clothing, bedding, &c., of passengers and crew are destroyed by a separate process. In the latter work the possibly infected material is subjected to extreme degrees of heat in closed cylinders, in which are moveable carriers, mounted upon a wheel track used for running material in and out. In fumigating a vessel with the apparatus mentioned two sulphur furnaces are used—one on a tugboat which lies alongside, and the other located on a wharf and mounted upon a track, so that it can be wheeled opposite any part of the ship. Each furnace is provided with a rotary suction blower driven by a steam-engine and connected with the hold of the vessel by galvanised iron pipes. The air is drawn from the hold through one pipe, forced over large pans of burning sulphur, and is driven back through another duct into the hold purified by heat and mixed with sulphur dioxide. While it has been said upon good authority that the best way in which to take wounded men from the hold is to carry them upon the back, effective mechanical arrangements for this purpose

¹ Centralblatt für Bakteriologie und Parasitenkunde, Band xviii., No. 6.