

hotel or lodging-house is still frequently a very small, ill-ventilated place, not unfrequently with only a borrowed light, having, what is now justly regarded as an insanitary abomination, the old pan closet, plastered thick with faecal matter, with most inefficient water-supply, and giving off an odour which is simply poisonous.

I should like to ask medical officers of health whether it is the duty of lodgers to report to them such defects as I have described, and if they have power to enforce the remedy? In these days of actions against medical practitioners it might be dangerous to suggest a "black list" of insanitary lodgings. But our brethren in seaside towns might ably assist the cause of sanitation by urging it upon such of their patients as let lodgings, and by only recommending to visitors such as are absolutely safe. Until some such guarantee can be had, I fear that we shall continue to hear of mysterious illnesses occurring during, or shortly after, a seaside visit, while many besides myself will contemplate a visit to the seaside with great anxiety.

I am, Sir, yours truly,

March 10th, 1885.

A PROVINCIAL SURGEON.

SUICIDE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In your issue of Feb. 21st, you were kind enough to announce that I had delivered a lecture on "Suicide, Its Causes, and the Best Means of Prevention," at a meeting held in the Medical Society's Rooms. As I am still collecting statistics on suicides, attempted and accomplished, I should be glad if any of your readers will favour me with any information obtained by themselves of the "Relative Proportion of Attempted and Complete Suicides."

I am, Sir, yours truly,

WYNNE WESTCOTT, M.B.,

Deputy Coroner for Central Middlesex.

Torriano-avenue, Camden-road, N.W.

BIRMINGHAM.

(From our own Correspondent.)

WOMEN'S HOSPITAL.

THE annual meeting of this Charity was held on the 11th inst., when the report of the Managing Committee was presented; 294 cases had been treated as in-patients during the year, and 239 operations performed. The committee expressed their regret that the results obtained at the in-patient department did not compare favourably with those of the preceding year, 12 deaths having occurred among the 133 patients upon whom major operations had been performed. After declaring that the hospital arrangements were in every way satisfactory, and that these did not justify them in explaining the causes of the increased mortality, they say that they are forced to the conclusion that any variations in the results must be due to causes which are personal to the operating surgeons. There are but two of these, and it must be annoying to them to hear the chairman of the committee propound his opinion that, just as the greater success was due to greater skill, less favourable results were due to less skill. Some exception was subsequently taken to the wording of the report as it thus stood, and it was eventually resolved to alter the construction of the sentence, that it might read, "must be *mainly* due to causes which are personal to the operating surgeons," a reflection which is indicative of the authority under which the managing body hold their rule. An additional instance of the arbitrary nature of the tenure in which the professional staff hold office was shown in the adoption of the following law: "It shall not be competent for any member of the acting staff to accept or hold any acting medical appointment upon the staff of any other institution without the consent, in writing, of the Committee of Management." Truly, we live in an enlightened and liberal town, whose motto is "Forward."

HALFPENNY DINNERS.

A short time since attention was drawn to the working of the penny dinner movement for school-children, and it was shown that a palatable and nutritious meal could be provided for that sum with a margin of profit after all expenses had been

included. A step further has been taken in this praiseworthy direction, and an experiment is being conducted by which the very poorest children may be provided with a good meal for the modest amount of a halfpenny. As many as 303 children were fed on the first day, the number going up afterwards to 566. A choice within a certain limit is given, and care is taken to make the food agreeable and wholesome. The first course consists of a rich stew or bacon sandwiches, the second of bread and jam or bread and cheese. That the children find the dinners ample to satisfy their hunger is shown by the fact of their continued attendance and the little waste made. From the calculations it is demonstrated that, with the cook's wages, cost of gas, and implements excepted, there is no loss, and that they can be made self-supporting.

A WISE VERDICT.

At an inquest recently held in an adjoining town, it was shown that a woman, aged thirty, found in a canal, died from the effects of an attempt to commit suicide. The jury returned a verdict of "Death from shock to the system," a conclusion which affords considerable range to human probabilities in the form of death, and is remarkable for its vagueness. We are reminded of the ingenuous reply of the man who, when asked what his father died from, said that his death was due to a sudden fall from a scaffold early one morning while engaged in conversation with the city chaplain!

Birmingham, March 11th, 1885.

GLASGOW.

(From our own Correspondent.)

THE UNIVERSITY.

THE Lord Rector of the University, Dr. Lushington, gives his inaugural address to the students on March 26th, when he will doubtless meet with an enthusiastic reception. The Chair of Botany in the University has become vacant through the appointment of Dr. Bayley Balfour as Sherardian Professor of Botany in the University of Oxford. There are already at least three candidates in the field.

EXTRA HOSPITAL ACCOMMODATION.

The Public Works Loan Commissioners have granted the application of the Glasgow Local Authority for a loan of £28,000 for the construction of additional pavilions to the Hospital for the Treatment of Infectious Diseases at Belvidere.

MORTALITY OF GLASGOW AND ITS SUBURBS.

There has been under discussion lately a proposal that there should be prepared monthly a statement of the total death-rate in the city and its suburbs, so that a fair comparison might be made with the other large towns in the kingdom. It is very desirable that this should be done, as at present our vital statistics are very defective and misleading, the Glasgow registration district including only the central portion of a community, from which the circumferential part, divided from it in most cases only by a boundary line, is excluded.

EXPERIMENTS ON THE EFFECTS OF LOW TEMPERATURES.

At a meeting of the Glasgow Philosophical Society, Prof. McKendrick and Mr. J. J. Coleman gave an account of some recent experiments on the effects of low temperatures on the putrefactive process and on vital phenomena. They found that the continued exposure of putrescible fluids to a temperature of 120° below zero did not prevent putrefaction, showing that the micro-organisms causing putrefaction are not killed even by this extreme cold, a temperature probably lower than any prevailing in the Polar regions, so that micro-organisms may exist even there. They hoped to continue their experiments with an atmosphere at a temperature of 150° below zero.

CASES OF LEPROSY IN GLASGOW.

During the last few months practitioners in Glasgow have had an opportunity of studying two very typical cases of leprosy, in which the signs of all the varieties of the disease were manifest—the tubercular, macular, anæsthetic, and ulcerating forms. At one of the Societies also the leprosy bacillus has been exhibited.

GLASGOW PUBLIC DISPENSARY.

The annual meeting of this institution was held a few days ago, when an interesting report was presented. In the notes regarding cases of ear and skin diseases, it was stated that two patients had been treated for acute ear affection caused by a "box on the ear" from school teachers—a form of punishment which is very reprehensible. In giving the statistics of some of the departments, a distinction is made between the number of individual patients seen and the number of consultations—a distinction which may be commended to the other medical charities of the city, where every patient, whether he be a new comer or have been seen before, has his name entered anew, with the object apparently of swelling their statistics. It is stated also in this report that an electric light apparatus has been set up in the dispensary, the dynamo being worked by a small water-wheel, a "Hercules" turbine; the leading wires pass directly from the dynamo to the electric lamps in the consulting-room, where the light is used in physical examination.

Glasgow, March 11th.

PARIS.

(From our Paris Correspondent.)

THE SURGICAL TREATMENT OF VARICOCELE.

At a recent meeting of the Academy of Medicine, Dr. Horteloup, Surgeon of the Hôpital du Midi, read a note on the Surgical Treatment of Varicocele, wherein he proposed a radical cure for that troublesome affection. Dr. Horteloup stated that, although he was aware that after the age of thirty the malady gradually disappeared spontaneously, yet he thought something should be done to render life supportable, even if the malady could not be cured before that age. This is all the more desirable in the cases of young men who present themselves for enlistment in the army, several of whom are annually rejected on account of the infirmity. Various methods of cure have been employed by surgeons, but they have proved merely palliative, and very frequently patients were sent away with only a suspensory bandage, which they had to wear for an indefinite time. In other cases, when operative measures were adopted, several fatal accidents have occurred, which caused some repugnance to surgical interference. Dr. Horteloup, however, considers that, since the application of the antiseptic treatment of wounds, &c., the opinions of surgeons have been considerably modified as to the result of surgical operations, and he did not see why a patient suffering from the affection in question should be denied the benefits of an operation. That proposed by Dr. Horteloup consists simply in cutting out a rather large portion of the scrotum on each side, thus reducing it to a size that would enable it to form sufficient support to the testicle and the spermatic cord. Dr. Horteloup has performed this operation eighteen times within the last two years, and he found that, the size of the scrotum having been reduced, the suspensory bandage could be advantageously dispensed with.

THE DIAGNOSIS OF SUBMERSION DURING LIFE OR AFTER DEATH.

Struck with the divergences of opinion among authors as to the diagnosis of submersion having taken place during life or after death, Dr. Bougier made the subject an object of study, and during a whole year he had performed several experiments and autopsies at the Morgue, of which he gave an account in his thesis for the doctorate, which he obtained about a month ago. The author's conclusions are as follows: 1. The exterior aspect of the body is about the same in both cases—that is, when the body has been submerged before or after death; the appearance of moss on the body would be of some diagnostic value. 2. Water and foreign bodies penetrate into the air passages and in the bronchial tubes of those submerged before, as well as of those immersed, after death; but in the latter the foreign bodies do not go beyond the fifth or sixth divisions of the bronchial tubes, and the liquid is arrested at the bronchi of medium size by the column of compressed air; whereas, in the submerged during life, it penetrates down to the small bronchial tubes. 3. The epiglottis is vertical in the submerged; it is only half open in the corpses immersed.

4. Water penetrates in a pretty large quantity to the stomach of the former, but never to that of the latter; and in making a comparative analysis of the liquid found in the bronchial tubes, one might arrive at a certain diagnosis. 5. The same is the case with the middle ear. 6. The characteristic moss is found only in the submerged. 7. If the fluidity of the blood exists in certain cases of poisoning by opium, it is easy by the aid of the spectroscope, and by analysis, to form the diagnosis. 8. In putrefied corpses, all the signs have nearly disappeared, and the medical jurist can only draw conclusions by presumptions.

RETIREMENT OF HOSPITAL PHYSICIANS.

Dr. Hérard, physician to the Hôtel Dieu, and Dr. Bernutz, physician to the Charité Hospital, having attained the limit of age for hospital physicians, have been placed on the retired list, and the title of honorary hospital physicians has been conferred on them.

FEELING AGAINST FOREIGN MEDICAL STUDENTS.

The animosity that has long since been brooding between the French and Germans appears to have extended to all foreigners, especially the English and Americans, and the spirit of exclusiveness on the part of the French even manifests itself in the medical profession. The Paris Municipal Council, however, decided at its last meeting, by forty-one votes against two, that foreign medical students who have taken their inscriptions at the Faculty of Medicine will continue to be admitted as heretofore, as internes or externes of hospitals, but for the functions of hospital physician or surgeon, or for the prosectorate, the candidates will have to be naturalised.

The Société Française of Otology and Laryngology will hold its general meeting at Paris on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th of April, 1885, at 8 o'clock in the evening, at the mairie of the 1st arrondissement.

Paris, March 11th.

THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.

At an ordinary meeting of the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons of England held on the 12th instant, the report of the Committee of Management of the Royal College of Physicians and the Royal College of Surgeons on the letter of December 1st last from the President of the General Medical Council was approved, adopted, and entered on the minutes.

It was decided to elect an additional Examiner in Elementary Physiology; this was referred to the Nomination Committee for report. A letter was read from Dr. Peter Redfern, of Belfast, asking for recognition of the certificates of vaccination granted in Belfast. To this the Council replied, that the College was pledged to the Local Government Board of England to receive those certificates only which are recognised by it; and if any alteration be made, it must be through the Local Government Board.

A vote of thanks was unanimously given to Professor John Marshall for the Hunterian Oration, which he was requested to publish.

MEDICAL NOTES IN PARLIAMENT.

Criminal Lunatics.

In the House of Lords, on the 10th inst., the Earl of Milltown moved for a copy of the warrant under which Frederick Marshall, who was committed for trial at the Central Criminal Court charged with the wilful murder of his sweetheart at Woolwich, and against whom a true bill was found by the grand jury, was removed from the jurisdiction of the court before his trial, and committed to Broadmoor Asylum as a criminal lunatic by a warrant signed by the Secretary of State. The noble lord objected strongly to the law by which a presumably innocent person could be sent without trial to pass the rest of his life among criminal lunatics; and he argued that in the hands of a weak Home Secretary, and in the case of a wealthy or influential person charged with the murder, the power might become very dangerous. After some discussion, the Lord Chancellor stated that he considered this person was a prisoner because he was detained under the authority of the