

a man of the highest honour, occupying the highest position, and in every manner perfectly qualified; and whether he is elected or not it will neither add to nor detract from his present position. But the election on the Council is no longer a personal question, and if the present members cannot or will not alter the law in compliance with the implied wishes of the Fellows, the latter must exert their privilege and secure the election of those Fellows they believe will best serve the interests of the profession. Surely, considering the large number of candidates, metropolitan and provincial, who are already merging into a green old age, and who are anxious for a seat on the Council, it is not too much to ask that after eight years' service the Councillor should retire, when, if properly qualified, he should still be eligible as an Examiner, whether on the Council or not. I do trust you will again exert your influence in preventing these constant re-elections, and that you will endeavour to secure to the Fellows a fair share in the administration of the affairs of their own College.

Yours obediently,

June, 1864.

A FELLOW.

## PARISIAN MEDICAL INTELLIGENCE.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

I do not intend to go over the details of that sad affair which brought its author to a bloody end—I mean the trial of Couty de la Pommerais. After creating immense sensation and keeping the public mind in breathless anxiety, first as to the decision of the jury, and then as to whether the penalty which had been pronounced would be commuted or not, everything ended in the execution of the unfortunate man, which took place before an immense multitude, even more boisterous perhaps than it usually is on such occasions, and as little edified as ever by the ghastly spectacle. Of course, the whole details of the drama, from the first rumour of the murder to the bloody expiation, formed the bone and sinew of all newspaper chronicle during the time it lasted. Some papers, foreign to our profession, seized the occasion to expatiate on the duties and dangers of the medical profession; but the special medical journals here very sensibly abstained in general from all reflections and commentaries on the subject, and contented themselves with presenting the bare facts to their readers. That affair has given rise to many important questions, and amongst others it has revived the discussion as to the necessity of abolishing the punishment of death. A certain number of political papers took up the theme and argued in an affirmative sense; and it is said that a petition asking for the abolition of that penalty is in circulation amongst the people, and already bears more than a hundred thousand signatures. You are aware that the well-known M. Dupin, attorney-general at the Cour de Cassation, in a lengthy discourse which he delivered when the case of La Pommerais went before that tribunal, and which has, I believe, added nothing to his reputation, attacked in the strongest terms the principle of life insurance, declaring it to be a barbarous custom, unworthy of a civilized people, and productive of the greatest evil. Such does not seem to be the general belief here; it is thought, on the contrary, that the principle of life insurance is a product of civilization, a wise and prudent measure, and a custom too deeply rooted to be overthrown by the spirited but specious argumentation of M. Dupin. The question has, however, been incidentally agitated here in the medical journals and among the profession whether it would not be more becoming the dignity of a medical practitioner to abstain from life insurance, and thus free himself *de facto* from the slightest suspicion of dishonesty and fraud. M. J. Guérin expressed that opinion in an article published in the *Gazette Médicale*. I believe that such, on the contrary, would be a very unwise feeling; and that the adoption of such a course, far from serving our dignity, would be a weakness unworthy of our profession. The very fact of entertaining such an idea is beneath our dignity. Such, I am happy to say, has been the opinion of the generality of papers which took the pains of answering M. Guérin. It is not because a La Pommerais and a Palmer have disgraced their title and abused their position that the whole medical corps, numbered by thousands, should renounce the rights and advantages which belong to all free and honest men.

During the last two months, of April and May, acute diseases of the respiratory organs still prevailed in the different hospitals of Paris, but since the beginning of this month they have steadily decreased. At the same time the eruptive fevers, and

principally measles, made their appearance, particularly in the children's hospitals. There the cases of croup are now far rarer and more benign.

Scarcely had the last wreaths of smoke which ended those fiery debates on the origin and nature of vaccine vanished away into the air, at the Academy of Medicine, when that learned body again set to work, and on a subject equally exhaustless and far less useful. MM. Gavarret, Bouillaud, Barth, &c., are thundering in eloquent peals against the unfortunate M. Beau and his theory on the sounds of the heart. Why throw away so much eloquence, and of the best? M. Beau's theory had already fallen; it had enlisted but a few straggling followers—it cannot stand the test of any severe examination, anatomical, physiological, or pathological. Yet does he manfully keep his ground against his numerous opponents. It is impossible to show a better countenance in a worse cause. I am much afraid that after so many eloquent speeches and multiplied efforts, M. Beau's conviction will remain the same; and I am pretty sure that were it not for the *galerie*, his adversaries would have spared themselves the exertions they have made to plead a cause already judged by the public.

Professor Laugier, one of the surgeons of the Hôtel Dieu, has recently made a most important communication to the Academy of Sciences. In an operation performed on the arm, and in which the median nerve had been severed, that skilful surgeon united by a suture the two ends of the nerve. Almost immediately after signs of sensibility were observed, and in a few days more the nerve had entirely recovered all its properties of sensation and motion. I need not insist on the importance of this case, which throws such a new light on physiological pathology of the nervous system. No longer than two weeks ago, in a discussion which took place at the Society of Surgery, it was affirmed by several members that the regeneration of the nervous tubes, which alone could cause the recovery of sensibility and motility, was the work of weeks and months, and could not immediately take place. Such, also, was the opinion of M. Brown-Séquard and of MM. Vulpian and Philippeaux. These two gentlemen published last year a memoir which received academical honours, and in which they gave the relation of different experiments they had made, the result of which is entirely opposed to that recently obtained by M. Laugier. The memoir of that eminent professor, read at the Academy of Sciences, has been the scientific event of the week.

Paris, June 28th, 1864.

## Parliamentary Intelligence.

### HOUSE OF LORDS.

JUNE 25.

#### NOXIOUS VAPOURS BILL.

In answer to a question from Lord RAVENSWORTH,

Lord STANLEY OF ALDERLEY ascribed the imperfect working of the Act for the suppression of nuisances caused by noxious vapours from certain manufactories to the short time the law had been in operation.

### HOUSE OF COMMONS.

JUNE 27.

#### POOR-LAW RELIEF.

Mr. WARNER, asked the President of the Poor-law Board whether he would lay upon the table of the House in the present Session a Bill to carry into effect the recommendations of the Select Committee on Poor Relief.

Mr. VILLIERS said that the recommendations of that Committee had reference to matters of various kinds, and not immediately connected with each other, and it would probably be convenient to introduce several Bills to carry them into effect. He had directed the report to be sent to the different Boards of Guardians, with the view of ascertaining if there were any practical difficulties in the way of adopting some of the amendments proposed. He should shortly be in a position to inform the House what course the Government would adopt with regard to the report. At all events, he should be prepared at the earliest moment of the next Session to introduce a Bill on the subject. (Hear, hear.)

#### THAMES CONSERVANCY BILL.

The House went into Committee upon this Bill.

Mr. ALCOCK proposed an amendment on Clause 75, to th