

had a university education, and without any reference to their professional acquirements, the majority of whom are mere "imbeciles" in practice, and totally incapable of communicating instruction to others. When such nuisances are abated, we may expect to see men like Andral, Louis, and a host of others in France and Germany, investigating disease in all its varied forms, prosecuting their researches with that ardour which is the true characteristic of genius, and seeking to fit themselves by a long and systematic course of study, and we may say of discipline, for the arduous duties which their profession imposes upon them.

THE FRENCH SCHOOLS.

[From our Correspondent.]

PARIS.—No. 1.

Dans un pays libre, on crie beaucoup quoiqu' on souffre peu : dans un pays de tyrannie, on se plaint peu quoiqu' on souffre beaucoup.—CARNOT.

In attempting to furnish you with a sketch of the system of medical education pursued in France, I cannot do better than commence with an account of the schools of Paris, since they may be said to be the representatives of the rest. There is much to censure, and much to commend, in the plans adopted by the French ministry, in respect to education in general. The appointment of Frassinous, the Bishop of Hermopolis, at the head of public instruction, has placed too much power in the hands of a priest, the sure consequences of which are intolerance and discontent. But more of this anon. It seemed to me necessary to preface the description of medical education, by an account of the hospitals ; as, without understanding the working of them, it would be difficult to understand many points hereafter to be mentioned.

From the time of PHILIP AUGUSTUS, to the period of the revolution, nothing could exceed the wretchedness which prevailed in these abodes of human suffering. Their maladministration, joined with the want of air and beds, caused a dreadful mortality among the inmates and patients ; and every successive inquiry brought to light the most appalling facts, without giving rise to any efficient measures for their amelioration. In the year 1786 a pamphlet appeared, which demonstrated the urgent necessity of removing the patients from the Hôtel Dieu, and distributing them in different houses ; it also proposed the demolition of the Hôtel Dieu, and the erection of four hospitals without the barriers. This pamphlet called

forth an answer from the superintendents of the hospital, who opposed the measure ; a third appeared from the first party, which displayed such scenes of mismanagement and misery, that the public became highly incensed at the administration of the hospitals.

This controversy having interested the public in favour of a change, LOUIS XVI. commanded the *Academie des Sciences* to make an inquiry into the state of the Hôtel Dieu ;* their report showed the state of the hospital to be most deplorable. The construction of the four hospitals was therefore ordained, and the king invited all classes to concur with him, by subscriptions and donations, in this work of beneficence. All classes seemed anxious to contribute towards carrying the project into execution, and considerable sums were raised ; but the profligacy of the minister Calonne, the impoverished state of the government finances, and the events which preceded the revolution, caused several millions of livres of the fund to be dissipated. The revolution breaking out shortly afterwards, the hospitals remained without improvement ; but the project of dividing the Hôtel Dieu, and establishing four hospitals, was not forgotten.

By a decree of the national convention, the administration of the department was directed to transfer, without delay, part of the patients into the convents and other buildings, which had become national property ; and by a subsequent decree, two new hospitals were added, so that at various successive periods, the state of the *Hôpitaux* and *Hospices* of Paris, has been much improved, particularly since they have been put under the direction of a general administration.

All the public places of amusement, the French Opera excepted, pay a tax of *ten per cent.* on their receipts toward the support of the hospitals ; and nearly a fourth of all the entrance duties collected at the barriers, is devoted to the same object. A heavy tax for their support is also levied on every piece of ground purchased for the purpose of burial in the cemeteries.

The general administration form a board, which is attended daily by medical men to examine the patients who apply for admission ; by means of which arrangement, the physician of any hospital, whose attention is directed to any particular class of diseases, may have certain patients sent to the hospital to which he is attached. Thus

* Before the revolution, five and six patients were sometimes placed in one bed, the dead with the living ; and to be sent to the Hôtel Dieu, was only another word for being sent to the grave.

it happens that the cases of fistula in ano, are sent to Baron BOYER at the Charité, because, nobody knows how, the old gentleman has got a peculiar reputation for *cutting* for this complaint, a reputation which he well deserves, as he generally contrives to cut the unfortunates once in a fortnight, and sometimes more frequently. According to the same system, the diseases of the skin are, for the most part, sent to ALIBERT and BIET, at the hospital St. Louis; and very deservedly so, since there is no place in Paris where these diseases receive more attention, or are more successfully treated. The patients labouring under diseases of the heart and lungs were sent to the wards of LAENNEC, for the benefit of the *auscultants*, or Laennec's trumpeters, as they have been maliciously called by some; the syphilitic patients are all dispatched to the Hôpital de Veneriens, to drink Sydenham's decoction and Van Swieten's liquor, under the superintendence of uncle CULLERIER and his nephew Jaques; whilst all ailing bantlings are sent to suck oxymel of squills and syrup of poppies, under the direction of JADELOT, in an establishment especially set apart for the study of juvenile pathological anatomy.

The Bicêtre and Salpêtrière receive the crazy and cracked members of the Parisian population,—a community of which PINEL, ESQUIROL and PARISER are the mayor and common-council-men. Then, lastly, there is the *Maternité*, where the young ladies of Paris find a very convenient asylum, when it is reported necessary that they should go into the *country* for change of air.

The *central bureau*, or general administration, is attended with many advantages, and some disadvantages; the influential men procure the best cases, and some of the most deserving men have nothing to do but to treat ulcers, *gastro-enterites*, and chronic rheumatisms. Accidents and urgent cases are admitted into the hospitals in their immediate neighbourhood, without the observance of this ceremony.

In general, the hospitals of Paris are clean and well managed, for which they are not a little indebted to the *Sœurs de la Charité*, and females of other religious orders who devote themselves to the care of the sick, and "watch over the interests of the Charity." Notwithstanding all this, they are not to be compared with our hospitals, either in point of ventilation, elegance or cleanliness. The tiles of which the flooring of some hospitals is composed, give a sombre appearance to the wards, which at the same time are frequently badly lighted, and almost always irregularly built.

The number of beds in the several hospitals and hospices, is about *fourteen thousand*, and the revenues of the institutions amount to

more than *nine millions and a half of francs*. The mean number of beds in the hospitals, occupied at the same time, is about four thousand two hundred, and the mean annual expense of each bed, is 603 francs, about 24*l*. The mean expense of the *hospices*, which must be distinguished from the hospitals, as it is a term applied to those buildings for the reception of the aged, infirm and foundlings, is 2,958,823 francs; and their ordinary number of inmates is nine thousand eight hundred persons, each of whom costs about 13 sous a day, a sum equal to nine pence.

In order to prevent any abuse in hospital government, or the residence of incurable patients in the hospital, the *Bureau d'Admission* must make an examination of all the patients in all the hospitals, once in three months. Eight days are generally allowed to a convalescent for his removal, but those recovered from fever or severe surgical operations, are allowed a somewhat longer time.

The *mortality* in the hospitals of Paris is about 1 in 7, that is to say, about 14½ per cent.; and when it is recollected that the lower classes of the people are admitted into these Institutions without any reference to the nature of the disease, the mortality will not appear excessively great. It must be remembered also, that there are no poor-houses in Paris, to receive the last struggles of expiring wretchedness; since in France there are no poor-laws, whether a loss or gain to the people, political economists have not yet determined. It happens that as the people are occupied in getting their *daily bread*, (*to-morrow* seldom entering the thoughts of a Frenchman,) they are content to spend the fruits of their labour in the *carpe diem*, and to go into the hospitals to die.

By far the greatest number of the Parisian hospitals are supported by the government in the manner before pointed out; and even those which were originally private foundations, as the Hospitals Beaujon, Necker, and Cochin, are, with the former, submitted to the superintendence of the "*Administration générale*" of the civil hospitals and infirmaries.

The patients who wish to get admitted into any of these institutions apply to the Bureau central, which is situated just in front of the entrance to the Hôtel Dieu, in the parvis Notre-Dame. At this Bureau certain physicians and surgeons attend to examine the patients, to send those whose cases require to the hospitals, and to give advice, support, trusses, &c. to such as may not be ill enough to go to a hospital. Assistance is given in this manner to from 10 to 11,000 persons in the course of the year.

The division of the patients into parti-

cular classes, according to their diseases, and the sending of these classes to particular hospitals, is a point in the administration which differs essentially from that adopted in the hospitals of London, where, far from admitting only certain classes of disease into certain hospitals, each ward of a hospital is made to receive medical and surgical cases of all kinds and in all stages, so that it is not unusual to see a case of gangrene in the next bed to a patient with fever, and to hear the incessant prattle of the delirious, or the barking cough of the consumptive, disturbing day and night the surrounding patients suffering from painful chronic diseases. The hospitals here are much better regulated; they have their *Salles de Médecine* and their *Salles de Chirurgie*, and the most dominant forms of disease are placed under the care and treatment of the same individuals. In London, the Lock and Fever Hospitals, the Cancer Ward of the Middlesex, and the foul wards of the large hospitals, are almost the only examples we can find of a similar practice.

No doubt can exist as to the propriety of placing surgical and medical patients, and subdivisions of these, into separate wards, and it is a disgrace to our hospitals, and their officers, that they have not adopted such an arrangement; but it is not quite so certain, that in all cases the same advantage results from the distribution of particular diseases to particular hospitals. It is very commendable in the diseases of children, since they require particular nursing and diet, and their incapacity of accurately expressing their wants, requires that they should have persons as nurses who are acquainted, by habit and observation, with their expressive but inarticulate language.

The Hospital Visit.—At the principal hospitals the visits are made at an early hour; in summer at six or seven, and in winter at eight or nine. The visit occupies about an hour, and after the visit is the clinical lecture. By this arrangement both pupils and teachers are allowed the more active parts of the day to their other occupations. The following is generally the routine.

The surgeon enters the ward, surrounded by the pupils, and having tied on his white linen apron, he proceeds to call over the list of the *Elèves*, whose duty it is to be then present. The *Elèves* having answered, the business commences. The directing officer has two sheets of paper, on which the *Elèves* mark in the one the dietetic, and in the other the medical orders for the day. The visit to each patient is generally performed in a very slight and superficial manner; the questions are very loosely put, and follow each other in great rapidity. The number of the patient's bed

is called out; the physician or surgeon then reports to the *Elèves*, carrying the papers, what alteration he wishes to have made in the diet or medicine, and the procession moves on.

It is impossible to go through the wards, without being struck with the inert measures generally used; the treatment is passive and dietetic, and that in a degree bordering on the ridiculous; whereas the English practitioners treat their patients with great activity, and perhaps verge to the opposite extreme. Who can go through a single ward of a hospital in Paris, without hearing such prescriptions as *petit-lait*, *eau d'orge*, *decoction blanche*, *potion anodyne*, *tisane de bourrache*, *de chiendent*, *bains*, and a half score others of the same sort sounded at the bed side of every second or third patient; the most potential command amounts to the application of six *sang-sues*, or a bleeding of four ounces. The preparations just named, with the addition of a few grains of nitre or sal ammoniac, make up the entire materia medica of many. Ask a physician either in or out of the hospital how he is treating a given form of internal disease, and his answer will generally be, "*avec des rafraichissants*," "*des delayants*;" and it is in this mild and almost vegetable negative treatment, that they are content to continue and incur the well deserved censure of the practitioners of neighbouring countries. What was once said by a writer in the *Edinburgh Review*,* still holds good as regards the practice of the French, namely, that "the English *kill* their patients, whilst the French *allow them to die*." Metallic preparations are very rarely used, and calomel, the *sine qua non* of the English practitioners, is seldom heard of. It is but just, however, to observe, that there are many honourable exceptions to this general slovenness of treatment among the Parisian practitioners.

A peculiarity in the management of the large hospitals, is the changing of the physicians every two or three months. In the *Hôtel Dieu*, for example, where there are several physicians appointed, the change is made every two months, so that one often sees the very opposite doctrines and treatment adopted in the same Hospital in a very short time. A bloodletting disciple of Broussais leaves to day, and is succeeded to-morrow by a staunch hæmatophobist, who loudly abuses the searching for smothered inflammations, and vigorously doses his patients with diaphoretics, valerian, and angelica.

* On the state of science in England and France. *Edinburgh Review*, Nov. 1820.