

RAILWAY ACCIDENTS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In consequence of two or three accidents which have happened lately to “shunters” at this junction, I have led to make inquiries amongst those likely to know as to any cause for these accidents concerning which it appeared that drunkenness was not the cause, and that they could not be accounted for, and from these inquiries I am led to think that *excessive smoking* may account for them upon some occasions. There is a dreamy condition induced by smoking in some, which incapacitates as much as drunkenness in others; but though the question as to *drinking* is asked at coroners’ inquests, any inquiry as to *smoking* is not made. If you think these observations likely to be useful in preventing some of these accidents, so sad in their consequences to railway servants and their families, please insert them in THE LANCET.—I am, Sir, yours truly,

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NIEMEYER.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In your leading article last week, in referring to the losses which the medical profession has to regret, “some of inevitable decay or scarcely less inevitable disease;” “others, like Niemeyer, of disease that we call preventable,” will, I am afraid, lead the profession to the belief that Felix von Niemeyer died of typhoid fever. But such is not the case. It is generally believed, however, that his over-exertions in the fever hospitals around Pont-à-Mousson in the latter part of 1870 hastened the event which had threatened (and of which he was fully aware) for months past.

Niemeyer was the subject of fungus hæmatodes of the bladder, and died in Tübingen of the effects of this disease March 14th, 1871.

Yours sincerely,

London Hospital, January 2nd, 1872.

ROBERT W. PARKER.

IRELAND.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

THERE is a surgical vacancy at present in the Meath Hospital, occasioned by the death of the late Dr. Mayne from malignant small-pox. Several candidates have signified their intention of offering themselves for the appointment, and it would be invidious for me to mention any particular name as most worthy of selection.

The Governors of Sir Patrick Dun’s Hospital have received a letter of thanks from the Duke of Cambridge for the important service that hospital has rendered to the Army in instituting a Training School for Army Midwives. This is the only training school of its kind in the United Kingdom. It has been very successful since its foundation by Dr. Sinclair, Professor of Midwifery to the maternity of the hospital, no less than 136 women having received instruction in midwifery and obtained the diploma of the hospital. This training is conferred gratuitously, subject only to each applicant being a woman of good character and possessing a moderate amount of intelligence.

I regret to state that small-pox is still increasing in Dublin, the disease being now very prevalent. The following list of registered deaths for the last six months will certify how rapid has been the spread of the malady:—In July there were 4; August, 5; September, 11; October, 27; November, 45; and last month, up to the 23rd, there were 79 deaths. According to the last report of the South Dublin Union, there were 89 cases remaining in hospital, 7 having died during the week, and nearly all these fatal cases had typhoid symptoms on admission. In consequence of the want of proper accommodation for convalescent small-pox patients in the different hospitals in this city, it has been suggested that a convalescent hospital should be erected; and it is believed that this most urgent and charitable want will soon be provided for, as otherwise patients must be dismissed to their homes while in a state likely to

communicate the infection to those coming in contact with them. In Cork a meeting of the Joint Committee of the Corporation and the Poor-law Guardians was held on the 30th ult., to make arrangements in view of an extensive outbreak of small-pox, such as is feared in that city. It was stated that there were 27 cases of the disease in hospital, and several fresh cases were occurring daily. The senior medical officer of the union said he feared they were just at the beginning of a severe outbreak, and recommended that the entire fever hospital should be set apart for small-pox patients, which suggestion was adopted unanimously by the meeting. In Wicklow seven deaths took place last week, all the parties being unvaccinated. In Belfast the disease has greatly increased, and at one hospital in that city 41 fresh cases were admitted during the week ending the 23rd ult.

In reference to the death of the celebrated Irish dog, Master Magrath, it may be mentioned that he died from pneumonia of both lungs, and that the heart was found to be enormously hypertrophied, being at least double the normal size of the heart of a dog of his weight; but in every other respect it was perfectly healthy.

Dublin, Jan. 2nd, 1872.

PARIS.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

AMONGST the most evident consequences of the late war are a thirst for knowledge and a desire to ameliorate the present system of scientific teaching. There is positively a rush for knowledge among the medical students of Paris. The lectures at the Faculty at the Ecole Pratique, the dissecting amphitheatres of Clamart, the cliniques of the special and general hospitals of this city, are literally thronged. This is gratifying when we remember the lukewarmness which has marked all the belongings of scientific teaching during the last few years. The Professors have already drawn up a programme, which they are to submit to the Minister of Public Instruction, in connexion with a forthcoming law on liberty of teaching, and in which they distinctly call upon the Government to abolish the privileges of the existing Faculty, and to allow the institution of as many free and rival Schools of Medicine, whatever their origin and tendencies, as may be created by private efforts. All that the Faculty claims is to be endowed with such various resources (laboratories, cliniques, &c.) for teaching as will enable it to stand on an equal footing with the rival schools. In respect to graduating and the granting of diplomas, it is said that the programme presented by the Faculty includes the following proposed measures:—All the various Schools of Medicine recognised by Government would have the right of granting, after the necessary examination, the title of Licentiate in Medicine. This would entitle the graduate merely to practise. But a jury of State would be appointed to carry on various higher examinations, and bestow the degree of Doctor of Medicine; and in order to fill certain hospital or official appointments, the licentiates would be obliged to go up for these examinations and take the doctorate. Another important point contained in the Faculty’s programme is the re-establishment of examination by *concours* or public competition for the future nomination of Professors to the Faculty. It is argued that the stimulus of these *concours* produced such men as Velpeau, Malgaigne, Nélaton, Samson, Bouillaud, and Roux. The opponents of the *concours* system are so few in number that it is very probable the Minister of Public Instruction will carry out the wishes now expressed by the Faculty. Meanwhile, the Professors seem determined to do away with the system of permutation of chairs, by which a Professor who was elected, for instance, to the Chair of Anatomy, might, in a very short lapse of time, take the Chair of Surgical Operations, then of External Pathology, and finally settle down in the more convenient and lucrative Chair of Professor of Clinical Surgery in one of the hospitals. There are in the present number of professors as many as ten or twelve who have thus changed the chair for which they were formerly elected.

At the recent meeting of the Academy of Medicine, Dr.