

next. In wet weather there was an advantage in precipitation, because the action was largely, if not wholly, independent of dilution. The lime process was valuable, but not equal to the above precipitation processes.

DEATH OF MR. HENRY HANCOCK, F.R.C.S.

WE regret to announce the death of Mr. Henry Hancock, F.R.C.S., in his sixty-eighth year. The funeral took place on Tuesday last, at Chute Standen, Wilts. It was very numerously attended by all classes, both rich and poor, and by many of his professional colleagues from London. Amongst the principal mourners were Captain Heaton, Mr. Hancock, Rev. — Horton, the President of the College of Surgeons (Mr. Holden), Mr. Trimmer, Dr. W. J. Lush, and others. At the meeting of the Council of the College of Surgeons, on Wednesday last, the President referred in feeling terms to the serious loss they had sustained in the death of Mr. Hancock, who was one of the senior members of the Council. An obituary notice will appear in our next issue.

DR. ANDREW DUNCAN.

WE are glad to hear that this distinguished young surgeon is convalescent from the effects of his severe wound received at Cherasiab. A bullet struck Dr. Duncan in the back, and passed out in front of the chest. It was feared that the lungs had been seriously injured; fortunately for him, however, the bullet was diverted from its course, and passed round between the integuments of the chest-wall. A severe attack of pleuro-pneumonia subsequently supervened. When our advices left India, Dr. Duncan was in a fit state to travel, and he was ordered down to India, as it was feared that the cold in Afghanistan would be too extreme for him to bear.

VIOLENT DEATHS AT CHRISTMAS-TIDE.

THE Registrar-General's last Weekly Return affords, from a sombre point of view, evidence of some of the results of recent Christmas festivities in London. During last week no less than 93 of the deaths registered were caused by various forms of violence, 87 being referred to negligence or accident; 32 resulted from fractures and contusions, 16 from burns and scalds, 5 from drowning, and no less than 28 were of infants or children under five years of age from suffocation. Seven persons were killed in the streets of London, and five on different railways; six died in consequence of falling downstairs. The cases of infant suffocation are always excessive at Christmas time, and the recent excess has been greater than usual. So with the deaths of children from burns and scalds, which were last week nearly double the corrected average weekly number.

The constant recurrence of this increase of violent deaths at Christmas time places their connexion with the festivities incidental to the season beyond question. The indirect influence of this annual celebration of Christmas upon public health in England it is impossible to calculate.

ILLNESS OF SIR DOMINIC CORRIGAN, BART., M.D.

THIS distinguished physician is, we regret to learn, in an extremely precarious condition. He is attended by Drs. Banks and Cruise.

DEATH FROM CHLOROFORM.

A PATIENT died recently in the Royal Infirmary, Liverpool, while under chloroform, for removal of bone from the leg. We are informed that the post-mortem revealed extensive adhesion of the pericardium. It is said that the patient desired to have chloroform, and had inhaled it on three previous occasions.

A PARAGRAPH is going the round of the Indian papers relative to the suicide of a young surgeon, Dr. Dumbleton, on his way with a detachment of troops from Peshawur to join the Kurram Valley force. It would seem that he was attacked with severe fever on the march, and, exhausted by the combined effects of the disease and protracted riding (he being an indifferent horseman), when called upon to resume the march one morning, he shot himself. There are certain inconsistencies about the statement in the paragraph which lead us to hope that the version given of the circumstances under which Dr. Dumbleton came to an untimely end may be, in fact, founded on misapprehension. He was a student of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and joined the Indian Medical Service in March last.

AT a special meeting of the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons on Wednesday last, the 7th instant, Mr. Hulke, F.R.S., was elected a member of the Court of Examiners in the vacancy occasioned by the resignation of Mr. Curling, F.R.S. Mr. Hulke and Mr. Wood have resigned their seats at the Board of Examiners. The President, Mr. Luther Holden, has, at the request of the Council, undertaken to deliver the next Hunterian Oration.

IN connexion with the Sanitary Institute of Great Britain, the Wyatt-Edgell Prize of £200 is offered for an Essay on "The Range of Hereditary Tendencies in Health and Disease." The award will be subject to the conditions usual in such cases. The essays must be sent in on or before Aug. 1st, 1880. Dr. B. W. Richardson and Dr. William Farr are appointed adjudicators.

SURGEON-GENERAL THOMAS CRAWFORD, M.D., has arrived at Madras, and relieved Surgeon-General C. Gordon, C.B., as Principal Medical Officer of the Madras Presidency. The latter officer, having completed a five years' tour of service, returns to England by mail steamer.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

"THE SUNNY SOUTH."

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Very exaggerated statements having found their way into some of the English journals respecting the weather at San Remo and other parts of the Riviera, I ask your permission to make known the real facts in relation thereto.

No doubt the winter season here, so far as it has yet advanced, has been an exceptionally cold one; but, on the other hand, it has been remarkable for dryness and sunshine, and even the degree of cold reached has been but trifling compared with that which has prevailed in England and most continental countries.

Referring to my register for the month of November, I find that the mean minimum temperature—which, be it remembered, is for the most part a night temperature—was 48.4°, it having fallen below 40° once only during the month; and the mean maximum, or day temperature, 59.4°—the mean of both being 53.9°; that rain fell during that month on five days, the rainfall amounting to 2.4 inches; and that the sun shone for 182 hours out of a possible sunshine of 287 hours. It further appears that, to the 28th December inclusive, the mean minimum temperature was 39.0°, the thermometer having fallen below 40° on fourteen occasions and below the freezing point on three, the lowest point 27.9°, or 4° of frost only, being reached once only; that the mean maximum temperature was 51.6° and the mean of both the minimum and maximum 45.3°; that rain fell on three days only, the rainfall amounting to 1.6 inches; and that sun

shone during 201 hours out of a possible sunshine of 244 hours.

Now let anyone compare these figures with those for London or any part of Great Britain and they cannot fail to be greatly impressed with the remarkable difference shown in temperature, rainfall, and sunshine, in favour of the Riviera and of San Remo, to which place my observations more particularly apply. I may state that the instruments with which the observations were taken were of Negretti and Zambra's best, that they were placed in a north shade, and that they were freely suspended in the air, not being allowed to touch shutters, stone walls, or other cold substances. No doubt when so placed, or on the ground, the instruments would indicate lower temperature than those referred to above, but then they do not denote, as they should do, the temperature of the air itself.

About an inch and a half of snow fell on 1st December, and part of this remained on the ground and on the trees all night, a very unusual circumstance, and did not wholly disappear until eleven o'clock the following morning, when it quickly melted in the bright beams of the morning sun. It was the long continuance of the snow on the trees and flowers during the night of the 2nd December which injured the vegetation; but the injury in and near San Remo was mainly confined to the leaves of geranium, plumbago, heliotrope, and other tender plants, such as are usually found in England in greenhouses, the plants themselves being killed only in very few instances. In some situations the olives and lemons have no doubt suffered, but not the trees; although in San Remo itself I fail to discover any material injury even to the fruit. In my own garden, and in those of my neighbours, the lemon trees do not appear to have been damaged beyond the loss of a very few leaves.

Without entering into further details, I think I have now stated enough to show that, having regard to the extraordinary severity of the weather which has prevailed elsewhere, it has been at San Remo and some of the more sheltered parts of the Riviera surprisingly mild, dry, bright, and sunny; indeed, in this latter respect the Riviera has fully maintained its title to the appellation of the "Sunny South;" and visitors and invalids here have much to be thankful for in having been almost wholly spared the rigours of a winter which, in most other countries, has been almost Arctic.

I am, Sir, yours &c.,

ARTHUR HILL HASSALL, M.D.

San Remo, Dec. 29th, 1879.

NERVE-STRETCHING IN TETANUS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As Mr. Morris, in his interesting letter in your last issue, mentions a case reported by me in the *Glasgow Medical Journal* for July, 1879, and quotes from my report, I trust you will allow me space for a few remarks to correct certain conclusions which Mr. Morris seems to me to have arrived at rather hastily.

I must take exception to his classifying my case with that reported by Verneuil, as the two have really very little in common, the latter being very chronic in character, and limited almost entirely to the upper extremity, whereas, in mine, nearly the whole of the muscles of the body were involved in the spasm.

In what sense does Mr. Morris use the word "chronic" as descriptive of the affection in my patient? If he uses it as indicating the period of onset of the spasms, I concur with him, but if he intends it to be applied to the character of seizure, I think a re-perusal of my report will convince him that the history of the case does not bear out his application of the term. He will notice that the spasms often recurred at intervals of two or three minutes, and involved the whole of the muscles of the trunk, including even the muscles of deglutition, and that the temperature reached 103°, and the pulse was for many days above 120; these points should, I think, remove it from the category of chronic tetanus.

Mr. Morris lays particular stress on the spasm which occurred soon after the operation, as showing that no good had been effected. Such a spasm has been noticeable in nearly every case which has been operated on, and the explanation of the phenomenon is so simple that I wonder Mr. Morris has overlooked it. The act of nerve-stretching must necessarily produce some disturbance in the nerve centre, and if the patient were not under the influence of an anæsthetic this would be at once shown by violent tetanic

spasm; but the anæsthetic prevents this manifestation for a time, and it is only as its influence passes off that the spasm is felt.

My patient had no spasm, excepting the one which I consider due to the nerve-stretching, for about twenty hours after the operation; and the conclusion which I draw in the paper referred to is, "that nerve-stretching may for many hours arrest the progress of the symptoms in traumatic tetanus." My case "would therefore encourage further trials of an operation which is in itself harmless, in a disease the treatment of which has been hitherto most unsatisfactory and discouraging."—I am, Sir, yours very truly,

HENRY E. CLARK,

Lecturer on Anatomy, Glasgow Royal Infirmary
Glasgow, Dec. 31st, 1879. School of Medicine.

THE EFFECTS OF A FIXED IDEA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The following case, showing the curious effect of the imagination on a healthy and strong man, may be interesting to your readers, and throw some light on several cases of hydrophobia lately reported.

A gentleman, aged fifty-six, was away from home, and was dressing in the morning, when his mouth and nose suddenly filled with blood. He then became aware that his false teeth, which he seldom removed at night, were missing. He fancied he felt them in his pharynx, and imagined he had swallowed them during sleep. He became greatly alarmed, and immediately sent for my partner, Mr. Atkins, to whom he told the above story, and drew his attention to a hard swelling behind the larynx. Mr. Atkins examined this, which was certainly suspicious, and thrust his finger as far down the throat as possible without feeling anything internally. The patient persisting that the teeth were in the pharynx, I was telegraphed for, to bring instruments, &c.

When I arrived I found the patient in bed, with intense anxiety depicted on his countenance, with a rapid, small pulse; and, when I asked him a question, he motioned for pen and paper to communicate with me. Neither I nor Mr. Atkins could now discover any external swelling, though the patient implied by gesture that it was apparent to his own touch. I examined him with the laryngoscope with difficulty, the throat being very sensitive; and, seeing no signs of the missing teeth, I asked him why he could not speak, when he replied, "Oh! I can speak; but Mr. Atkins told me not to talk." I now introduced a probang into the throat, and the patient said he felt me touch the teeth, just behind the cricoid cartilage. I was afraid to attempt to push the probang forward, as the teeth were described as almost a complete set of lower molars; so I bent a 10-inch military silver probe and hoped to hook the teeth up. I once or twice struck something which felt hard, and the patient then said that I moved them, but the spasms both of pharynx and larynx were so severe, and the amount of glairy mucus ejected was so great, I had scarcely got the probe down before I had to withdraw it. After a few more explorations I came to the conclusion that it was an elongated horn of the hyoid bone and no foreign body that I struck against, and I was confirmed in this opinion by finding that the patient could swallow fluids without any difficulty. I told him I thought he was mistaken, and ordered a search of the room, when shortly the missing teeth were found on the top of a chest of drawers.

The patient's surprise may be imagined. All his symptoms immediately disappeared; he dressed and ate an excellent lunch.

My explanation of this curious case is that the patient's nose commenced bleeding when he was dressing; this first drew his attention to the absence of his teeth. He forgot he removed them the night before; being in a strange house did not know where to look for them. There was probably a clot of blood in the pharynx, and this imagination magnified into the teeth. Some spasm of the pharynx produced the hardness he and Mr. Atkins felt on arrival. The rest was purely the effect of a fixed idea, which in this case was fortunately removable by the production of the supposed cause; had that not been possible, I can quite understand, from the nervous condition of the patient, that even the dreadful symptoms of hydrophobia might (had that been the fixed idea) have been produced, the excessive secretion from the pharynx having already commenced.—Yours obediently,

E. M. WRENCH, F.R.C.S. Exam.

Baslow Dec. 20th, 1879.