

While the book must be regarded as a valuable one, it cannot claim to discuss aphasia, in the usual sense of that term, in anything like a scientific manner. It is more in the nature of a *résumé* of the various writings on aphasia with numerous quotations of cases, and an important part of the work is that in which the cases observed by the author are given, with full—rather too full—clinical details. The bibliographical part of the book is full of interest. It is also instructive to read the accounts of the various discussions in Paris, in Dublin, and elsewhere, at a time when speculations as to aphasia had not yet crystallised into knowledge.

As we have said, a scientific discussion of aphasia is not attempted in this book. If it were, we should be inclined to strongly deprecate the very scant notice which the researches of Hughlings Jackson have received. Even as things are, it is, we think, a matter for regret that those researches which mark an epoch in the history of aphasia should have been touched on so briefly. The book is embellished with quotations from numerous authors—from Ovid and Euripides, from Tasso and Tennyson,—but this is quite in accordance with the colloquial character of the work, which is valuable as a recapitulation of some of the most important clinical records in connexion with aphasia, and interesting as the work of one whose attention was early drawn to this intricate and fascinating subject, but its value, as we have said, is historical, and it would be unfair to criticise it from any other standpoint.

The Annual of the Universal Medical Sciences; a Yearly Report of the Progress of the General Sanitary Sciences throughout the World. Edited by CHARLES E. SAJOUS, M.D.

WE drew the notice of the profession to this work and its excellences on the appearance of the edition of last year. The Annual of this year has been delayed in publication in consequence of the illness of more than half the editorial staff from influenza at the time the several sections were about to be completed. It will be remembered that this work is the result of the labours of seventy associate editors, assisted by over 200 corresponding editors, collaborators, and correspondents, in various parts of the world, and gives a general summary and comment on the important contributions to medical knowledge and progress during the previous year, illustrated in various ways when this has appeared advisable. "The improvements in this year's issue mainly consist in the creation of departments on subjects heretofore considered under general heads." Thus syphilis, surgical mycoses, and thoracic surgery are so treated; and various sections have undergone modifications which are not without value. The scope of the work is large, and five volumes are required to contain the summary of the year's work. The various sections are carefully edited, and there is no doubt the issue of the Annual is looked forward to as an important event in the medical year by all who are anxious to keep abreast of the times

SOUTHERN HOSPITAL, MANCHESTER.—The annual report of this institution for the past year records a general increase of the work done in previous years. During the year 383 in-patients had been admitted, 4768 out-patients (including children) were relieved, and 97 poor women had been received into the maternity branch of the hospital. The balance-sheet showed that a deficit had been averted by a special munificent gift. Although no paying patients are admitted £212 12s. 6d. had been voluntarily contributed by poor people and their friends. The trustees of the late Mr. Proctor had given £1250 to the institution, which had enabled the committee to proceed with an enlargement of the building to meet existing requirements. The completion and furnishing of this extension will render necessary an outlay of £1000.

DISPOSAL OF LONDON REFUSE.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Your notice of the above in last week's issue of THE LANCET in connexion with diphtheria, together with the letters which have recently appeared in the daily press under the startling heading "A New Terror," leads me to record my experience during the last summer of the disposal of London refuse other than by the "destructor" in the neighbourhood where it is produced.

For a month in the midsummer of the present year I took charge of a practice in a small town about twelve miles from London. Running close by this town is the Grand Junction Canal, along which were brought daily in barges large quantities of the contents of dustbins &c. from the Paddington district. These were discharged on to the fields adjoining the canal, where the refuse was allowed to lie in large heaps to decompose before being applied to the land. The fetid emanations which arose from these heaps poisoned the whole atmosphere for nearly half a mile. So bad was it during the night that it was impossible to sleep with the bedroom windows open, and on one or two occasions the policemen on night duty were attacked with vomiting and diarrhoea. Close by the canal large school buildings are situated, in which about 600 boys live, play, and are educated. Illness among the boys broke out on the morning of my arrival, and for the next three weeks two or three fresh cases were admitted into the school infirmary daily. The history and symptoms were the same in almost every case: they went to bed the preceding evening quite well, were awakened in the night by pain in the epigastrium, followed by vomiting, shivering, and violent pain in the forehead; there was no diarrhoea. When seen in the morning before admission to the infirmary the face looked pinched and blue, hands and feet blue and cold; pulse very rapid, small, and easily compressible; tongue covered with white coating; temperature varying from 100° to 103° F. After being in bed for an hour or two the face became deeply flushed, and continued so for two or three days. In several of the cases a profuse crop of herpes appeared on the lips, spreading from the angles of the mouth on to the cheeks; distinct physical signs of pneumonia could be detected in nearly all the cases on admission; the early cases were very severe and protracted, the majority of the later ones ran a very favourable rapid course.

A peculiar feature of the epidemic was that in six consecutive cases occurring towards the end of the first week the pneumonia attacked the right apex in every case; in these cases the pain in the axillary region for the first twenty-four hours was very severe. It seemed highly probable that all these cases had a common cause; the sanitary arrangements of the school buildings were thoroughly overhauled, but nothing could be found in any way to account for the epidemic. It had been noticed with the fresh admissions that all the boys were about the same age, nine to eleven years; it was ascertained that they all played in the same playground, separate from the older boys. About 200 yards from the buildings barges laden with refuse were being emptied, large volumes of dust being lifted into the atmosphere during the process, and carried away by the wind; it was also noticed that the position of the particular playground was very favourably situated for receiving some of the dust. Seeing that the offensive odour from the earlier deposited refuse was perceptible around all the school buildings and the neighbouring houses, the inmates of which escaped, I consider the cause of the outbreak must have been due to the boys actually inhaling particles of decomposing organic matter carried by the wind from the refuse, probably during the time it was being removed from the barges. This cause may possibly explain the very large proportion of cases of apical pneumonia. Surely, this refuse should be rendered innocuous nearer where it is produced. It is stated by authorities on sanitary matters that the destructor has been in use in several of the large provincial towns for some years without creating any nuisance. If this result is attainable in the provinces, may we not look for a similar result in the metropolis?

I am, Sirs, your obedient servant,
Northampton, Oct. 27th, 1890. H. CROPLEY, F.R.C.S.

THE LANCET.

LONDON: SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1890.

THE report from the Council of the College of Surgeons, which we summarised last week, displays very clearly the autocratic spirit which animates the government of the institution. A bare collection of excerpts from the minutes, it contains not a word of explanation, not a line indicating any sense of responsibility to the constituency, not a glimpse of the individual action of members of the Council. The Council sits in secret conclave, and its inner life is shrouded in Cimmerian darkness. The Fellows are as absolutely deprived as if they were Members only of any opportunity of ascertaining how their representatives on the Council speak or vote, and the sole period when the least deference is shown to them is when a retiring member of the Council becomes a candidate for re-election. It appears to be assumed that the College is exclusively a scientific and licensing institution, and that whilst the Fellows constitute merely a machinery for selecting at distant intervals the hospital surgeons who are to be admitted into this sacred circle, the Members may be grateful for having had to pay large fees to obtain pieces of parchment which are of no greater value to them than the less expensive diplomas which they could have obtained from other qualifying corporations. At the first glance, it is difficult to understand how it is that a highly educated and accomplished constituency like the Fellows of the College can submit to be treated like children, to be held at arm's length, and kept under subjection by effete Charters and oppressive By-laws. The wonder ceases when the composition of the constituency is investigated. First come the hospital surgeons themselves, with all their subordinates, retainers, dependants, and friends. As there are twenty medical schools in England, and each may furnish a contingent interested in upholding the official fabric, it is evident that, to start with, there is a solid vote of between 100 and 200 Fellows who are perfectly content with things as they are. Then there are the Fellows by election and grace in 1843, 1844, 1852, and succeeding years, whose tendencies are to support the existing *régime*. Others there are who are influenced by the prestige of distinguished names, and are content to submit the conduct of affairs without question to men of eminence in the surgical profession. Fourthly, there are the young men fresh from the curriculum, who vote for men from their own school, and for favourite teachers and authors, whatever their opinions on collegiate matters may be, and this gives a preponderating advantage to candidates from schools like St. Bartholomew's, Guy's, and University College, which send up considerable contingents for the Fellowship. Having acquired the Fellowship by dint of extra labour and expenditure of time and money, many of the younger Fellows are jealous of the smallest tittle of privilege which the Fellowship confers, and would prefer

that the Fellows should remain powerless to running the risk of sharing electoral privileges with the Members, or seeing Members admitted to seats on the Council. Add to all this that only a minority of the Fellows are well versed in the history of their profession or understand much about College politics. In a discussion on College politics, a hospital surgeon gravely denied the claims of the Members of the College of Surgeons on the ground that the College of Physicians did not recognise its Licentiates!

When all the foregoing classes of Fellows are deducted, there remain for the promotion of reform a comparatively few thoughtful, informed, and independent Fellows who are alive to the fundamental defects and closeness of the constitution of the College, and even here the inherent difficulties in the way of securing substantial improvements deter many who are fully occupied in the practice of the profession from taking an active part in the contest. Notwithstanding all these drawbacks, the present movement in favour of reform at the College started well in 1884, when the Council of the College submitted their suggested alterations in the Charters to a general meeting of Fellows and Members, and when the two independent Associations of Fellows and Members sprang into existence in consequence of the Council of the College not accepting the principles which had been affirmed at the meeting. A difference of opinion, however, soon arose between the two Associations in consequence of the claims of the Members to equal electoral privileges with the Fellows and to the right of electing twelve out of twenty-five members of the Council. A compromise for the common good was effected in May, 1885, and the understanding between the Associations allowed the campaign to be prosecuted with vigour both in the College and before the Privy Council, but the final issue of their efforts was that a new Charter was granted in 1888 containing only the amendments which had been accepted both by the Council and by the Fellows and Members. Dissatisfied with this result, the Association of Members drafted a Bill of a radical character for introduction into Parliament in 1889. This action, which not a few friends of reform think unfortunate, not only prejudiced an intra-collegiate settlement of the questions at issue, but retarded the cause of reform by preventing progressive Fellows from obtaining seats on the Council. A feeling strongly adverse to the pretensions of the Members was aroused in the constituency of Fellows, and the cry of "spoliation of the Fellows" was raised. The elections of 1889 and 1890 were the reflex of this emotional disturbance, and the result has been seriously to hinder the cause of reform. The contingent of reformers in the Council, though high-minded and sincere, is too weak to make headway against the adverse tide, nor will they be able to do so until they have been reinforced by colleagues with sufficient initiative and backbone to temper the autocracy of the ruling spirits in the Council, and to promote those reasonable concessions to the Fellows and Members which are in accordance with the spirit of the times, conducive to the harmony and well-being of the College, and essential to the development of the profession at large. How long it will be before the Fellows become keenly alive to their inferior position as