NORTH OF SCOTLAND MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

THE annual meeting of the North of Scotland Medical Association was held in the Medical Society's Hall, Aberdeen, on the 1st inst., under the presidency of Dr. Turner, Keith. There was a large attendance of members, who received the president's address with applause, and arranged that it should be printed and circulated. Dr. Beveridge read a very excellent paper on the diagnosis of certain obscure forms of disease of the brain, after which Dr. Mackie brought up a report of the committee on a code of medical ethics, and Dr. Ogston moved the appointment of a committee "to revise the existing scale of fees, and, if necessary, introduce a new one to replace them, so as to bring our remuneration in unison with the altered value of money, and to serve as a standard for the guidance of local societies." This was agreed to, the committee to consist of the presidents and secretaries of the local societies. The treasurer's accounts showed a balance to the credit of the association. The business of the meeting was brought to a close by the election of Dr. Harvey as president for the year 1873-4.

CHOLERA IN EUROPE.

THE returns of cholera in Italy show that there were, up to August 9th, 156 cases; of these 105 were fatal. According to an Italian newspaper, the deaths among the military from July 26th to August 8th amounted to 63, with 21 deaths. The disease has now invaded Stettin.

In Munich 100 seizures and 40 deaths occurred during the past fortnight. At Altona 26 cases have been reported; of these 22 were fatal.

A notification has been made by the Minister of Marine in the Netherlands that vessels arriving from Dantzic, Helsingborg, the Austrian and Italian ports in the Adriatic, will be subjected to quarantine. The *Madrid Gazette* has published an order declaring Trieste and the Turkish ports of the Danube to be foul. Consequently all vessels from those ports will be sent to a foul lazaretto. All arrivals in Holland from Hamburg are subjected to quarantine.

THE MEDICAL COLLEGES.

THE following award of prizes was made a few days ago:—

ST. THOMAS'S HOSPITAL.—Summer Session, 1872.—First-year students: Peck, College prize, £15; Sandford, College prize, £10; Potter, College prize, £5. Second-year student: Rossiter, College prize, £15. Physical Society's prizes: Palmer, third-year prize; Crossman, second-year prize; Poynder, first-year prize.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE.—Winter Session.—Surgery: Gold medal, Houghton; first silver, Whittle; second silver, Gould. Anatomy and Physiology: Gold medal, Hobson; first silver, Trafford; second silver, Davies. Anatomy: Senior Class, gold medal, Pepper; first silver, Jameson; second silver, Edwards. Junior Class: Silver medal, Rees. Chemistry: Gold medal, Jones; first silver, Todd; second silver, Riley. Medicine: Gold medal, Parakh; first silver (equal), Harvey and Appleyard. Comparative Anatomy: Gold medal, Pepper. Practical Physiology: Gold medals (equal), George and Rogers; silver medals (equal), Davies and Trafford. Clinical Medicine: Fellowes medals—gold, Crocker; first silver, Davis; second silver, Eales. Junior Class: Fellowes silver medal, Elliott.

LONDON HOSPITAL.—Clinical Medicine: £20 scholarship, Kershaw. Clinical Surgery: £20 scholarship, Watson; honorarium, £15, Lang. Clinical Obstetrics: £20 scholarship, Watson. Dressers' Prizes for zeal, efficiency, and knowledge of minor surgery: £15 prizes, Collenette, Chip-pingdale, and Brandum; £5 prizes, Price, Snell, and Needham. Baxter Scholarships: £30, Mears; £20, Fisher. Human Anatomy: £20 scholarship, Neylan. Anatomy, Physiology, and Chemistry: £25 scholarship, Fox.

GUYS' HOSPITAL.—Treasurer's gold medal for medicine, Mr. H. Ashby; gold medal for surgery, Mr. F. T. Paul;

first third-year students' prize, Mr. D. H. Forty; first second-year students' prize, Mr. H. F. Lancaster; principal first-year students' prize, Mr. J. B. Waterhouse.

CHARING-CROSS HOSPITAL.—Llewellyn Scholarship, Mr. G. Brown; Goldney Scholarship, Mr. H. A. Wickers; gold medal, Mr. G. Brown.

MIDDLESEX HOSPITAL.—The Broderip Scholarship, for the best examination at the bedside and in the post-mortem room, has been adjudged to Mr. J. J. Kirby (first), and Mr. Arthur Tones (second).

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

THE CHOLERA CASES AT VIENNA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Your appeal in one of your leaders last month for additional information respecting the two deaths from Asiatic cholera that occurred on the 26th and 28th of June at Vienna did not escape me. One of the unfortunate ladies was my sister, Mrs. Brewster, widow of the late Dr. Brewster, of Paris; but I was not then equal to the task required of me. I feel, however, that it is my duty now to give you some further details, as my relative's death has a direct bearing on the origin and propagation of cholera, and on the questions respecting water purity raised by Sir Wm. Fergusson in his recent address.

I passed three days with Mrs. Brewster, at the latter part of last May, on my return from the south, at her residence at Versailles, and found her perfectly well. She was then fifty-one, had passed favourably through the period of life from forty to fifty, which so often tries the health of women, and seemed, as the saying is, to have taken a new lease of life. Her constitution was good; indeed she never had had a serious illness in her life. She left home early in June to go to Munich, Vienna, and St. Moritz, with a daughter aged seventeen, and a maid. Her son, aged twenty-two, was travelling in Eastern Europe, and was to join her at Vienna on the 10th June. The arrival in Vienna took place on the 9th, the family meeting on the 10th, and on the 11th they settled at the Hotel Donau, a large, new, and luxurious hotel, recently built and opened, adjoining the Exhibition. Mrs. Brewster, thoroughly acquainted with all the laws of hygiene, found fault with the water from the first day, and my nephew says that it often smelt so bad he had to put eau de cologne in it to wash. The maid and my niece had slight diarrhoea, as had many of the servants and visitors, but it was considered to be caused by the heat of the weather. The water gradually got worse, and my sister complained of it daily, in letters home, to those around, to the authorities of the hotel; and yet blindly, unaccountably to me, went on drinking it, instead of leaving the hotel, or falling back entirely on wine, beer, milk, or mineral waters. She did have recourse partially to the artificial mineral waters so common on the continent under the name of "siphon," but it was discovered later that these siphons were prepared at the hotel, from the wells which supplied the premises. On Wednesday the 25th, the hot water positively smelt bad at breakfast, and the master of the hotel was sent for. He said that they had found that one of the drainage pipes had burst and communicated with the well, but that a dozen workmen were then busy repairing the mischief. My niece had refused to drink the tea made from this water, but my unfortunate sister, although complaining, had drunk it. All that day was spent at the Exhibition, and the evening at a concert. She was perfectly well, and in overflowing spirits, as she had been all the time at Vienna. On the return home at eleven, vomiting and purging came on. This, no doubt, was the beginning of the choleraic seizure, and medical assistance ought to have been at once procured, instead of which, Mrs. Brewster, a self-reliant, courageous woman, thinking it was only a common bilious attack, sent her children and servant to bed, and remained alone in her room, ill, no doubt, all the while. When she did summon assistance, it was some time before a medical man could be

found, and he came without medicines, which had to be sent for from some distance. Thus it was five o'clock before the medical treatment commenced, and five or six hours had been lost. Already the vomiting and rice-water purging had all but stopped, the face was cyanosed, and the cramps general. The latter never ceased; she became unconscious about 12, and died at 2 P.M., fifteen hours after the first seizure.

My nephew subsequently learnt that two gentlemen had died two days before in the hotel of cholera. According to a German newspaper, which my friend Dr. Pyemont Smith, of Leeds, saw, four other persons died at the hotel the same day as my sister (June 26th), and nine more between that and the following Wednesday—that is, fourteen deaths in six days. Besides this, many servants were sent to the hospitals, and probably some of them died there; we know of one, the valet of a Parisian gentleman. The police then interfered, had the water analysed, and found it contaminated with sewage. The hotel was shut up, thus closing and stamping out this one focus of cholera.

The scientific explanation of the above facts is quite clear. Whilst the water-supply was merely contaminated by ordinary sewage in a moderate degree, those who drank it merely had diarrhoea and functional disturbance. But once it became contaminated by cholera germs, from the dejections of real cholera patients, cholera broke out with virulence, destroying fourteen persons, perhaps many more, in six days, and was only arrested by the closure of the house. Had not the publicity given to this case in *The Times* stirred up the authorities to action, hundreds of lives might have been lost.

My unfortunate sister lost her life, whilst in full and vigorous health, partly owing to defective drainage and water-supply, and partly owing to the Vienna authorities concealing the presence of the cholera. According to *The Times* correspondent, it had been in Vienna since April. Unprepared and unaware of any cholera danger, Mrs. Brewster went on drinking impure water; and when the danger came she ignored it, and thought it was only bilious diarrhoea from heat. Thus was lost the time for treatment, and when assistance was obtained it was too late.

Both the young people were attacked with choleraic diarrhoea of a severe character, and were probably saved by prompt and efficient assistance. I am now with them, watching over their convalescence, and giving them such assistance as is in my power.

I am, Sir, yours &c.,

HENRY BENNET, M.D.

Pourville, near Dieppe, Aug. 8th, 1873.

ON THE GROUSE DISEASE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I should be glad of the opportunity of saying a few words in your columns about the grouse disease, for the subject is not only one of great interest, but its investigation seems to require much more scientific study than it has yet received.

Although recent reports from Scotland reassure us concerning the wholesale destruction of birds which was feared some few months ago in many quarters, its ravages have been most disastrous, and have not only caused the loss of large quantities of eminently nutritious food, but must also bring about a good deal of temporary depreciation in the value of extensive tracts of property. Considering, then, that these effects are produced on an average every six or seven years, and that a moor frequently only recovers its full stock in sufficient time to be again decimated, it is surely not too soon that some systematic attempt were made to unravel the intricacies of this mysterious disease. Dr. Cobbold has long since exploded the tapeworm theory, and future research can only be pushed towards the root of the matter by first clearing up the following points.

1st. Is there any essential connexion between the disease and meteorological conditions, more especially such as might affect the heather crop; or, in other words, does it depend on over-stocking, or under-feeding, or on the use of unwholesome food?

2nd. Is it infectious in its nature, spreading by individual contact, or by the excretions of the sick, or does it transmit

its influence by so-called epidemic waves, travelling rapidly from place to place?

3rd. What are the precise pathological conditions discovered after death?

My own conviction strongly leans towards the theory of an infectious fever, communicable both by contagion and by the evacuations, and springing up from some unknown cause in various and widely scattered foci. The rapid emaciation, dulness of plumage, and predilection of the affected birds for the neighbourhood of water, all seem to point in this direction, and the extraordinary rapidity with which the pestilence spreads is sufficient proof that something more is present than a mere individually exhausting pathological process.

Granting, then, for the sake of argument, that I have established these ideas, I shall go on to my next proposition, which is the absolute futility of endeavouring to stay the progress of such epidemics by any sort of treatment directed to the disease itself. We all know that the utmost refinements of science were powerless to arrest the cattle plague, and that England was only saved from national disaster by the vigorous application of the poleaxe; and although we cannot place a cordon around our grouse-moors, nor exterminate every diseased covey with unerring precision, something may undoubtedly be attempted in the way of prevention, and this is what I would venture to suggest:—When the disease breaks out in any particular district, let all the adjoining proprietors combine and obtain a mandate from the sheriff to kill birds out of season. Having procured the requisite authority, let each laird cause his grounds to be carefully worked over by a close hunting dog, and let every bird be at once destroyed which shows any symptoms of feebleness or poor condition. A little practice would soon make it easy enough to detect the earlier stages, and if the diagnosis is confirmed by a rough post-mortem examination, let the rest of the covey be followed up and exterminated. In this way the various centres of infection might readily be stamped out, for at the time of year when the disease first appears the various coveys never rise with one another, nor do they ever stray to any extent from the limited piece of ground which they have selected as their home. Nor can the advantage be overlooked of thus getting rid of those weakly birds which would inevitably have provided their miserable offspring as a fitting nidus for the infective process. Let all dead birds be at once picked up and destroyed either by burial or burning, let all wells and sources of water-supply be at once carefully examined and cleansed, and let all droppings, so far as possible, be disinfected with carbolic acid or other powerful disinfectant.

It is, of course, too late to put any such plan as this into operation during the coming season, but I feel convinced that, crude although it may be, it contains at least the germs of truth; and I must sincerely hope that when the opportunity again occurs for its consideration we may find a firm basis of scientific research on which to rest our preventive measures.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

ROBERT FARQUHARSON, M.D.

Brook-street, Grosvenor-square, Aug. 11th, 1873.

P.S.—Since writing the above I have perused my friend Dr. Cobbold's letter and pamphlet on the grouse disease, and find that he has now changed his views respecting the parasitic theory. Being unwilling to import any controversial element into the simple statement of my opinion on this subject, I shall only append my tribute of admiration for the very valuable discovery with which Dr. Cobbold has recently enriched science.—R. F.

AFFECTABLE AND INFECTABLE SUSCEPTIBILITY OF MILK.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Through the loss of notes on this question, made several years since in consequence of my own family suffering from an otherwise unaccountable series of gastric attacks, sometimes typhoid, and once attended with malignant thrush, I must trouble you with a letter of suggestion, lacking, as I now do, the data on which to write a paper on the above subject.