

102° for brevity, as they do not affect the evidence of the action of kairin on the temperature. Twenty days only are recorded above, but the next twelve showed temperatures very similar.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Kendal, June 21st, 1884.

T. B. GREEN.

## "PHYSIOLOGY OF THE FEET."

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—While reading with great interest Mr. Ellis's article on the above subject (THE LANCET, June 21st, 1884), I was surprised to find that so careful an observer had fallen into the common error of supposing that, in walking, the toe or anterior part of the foot touches the ground first. The error seems to be widespread, and is taught by some very good physiologists. Text-books on medicine also state that a peculiarity of the gait in locomotor ataxy is that the heel touches the ground first. It is quite true that it does so, because it would be difficult to place the foot otherwise; the peculiarity is in the clumsiness with which it is done. Our plantigrade relatives among the carnivora walk chiefly on the anterior part of the foot, using the heel rather during rest; but the upright attitude of man, with the straight position of the knees, throws the weight largely on the heels in walking. When the foot is put forward the heel is the part nearest the ground, and touches it first; the ball of the toes touches immediately after, and the toes themselves last of all, the action of the foot somewhat resembling that of a rocker. Should anyone have any doubt on the matter, let him watch the passers-by in a public thoroughfare. He will there see walkers, good and bad, of all ages; but they will invariably place the heel first on the ground; a man who did otherwise would be supposed to be practising a burlesque step for the stage. The form of the ankle-joint is suitable to this action, the articular surface of the astragalus being wider in front than behind. Through this arrangement the impact of the heel on the ground, by driving the astragalus forward, slightly separates the articular surfaces, and friction is thus reduced. Here I would make a conjecture as to the origin of raised heels to our boots. Most persons acknowledge the comfort of shoes "with no heels"; and for this reason, presumably, slippers are made without them. Why, then, do we ever wear raised heels? May it not be because the impact of the heel wears out the posterior part of the shoe-leather before the anterior, so that it has been found economical for outdoor walking to have a thick piece over the heel? For the same reason, apparently, the skin over the back of the heel is the thickest on the foot. Of course this does not explain the fancy of women for extremely high heels, which is as unphysiological in its origin as the fancy for "dress-improvers."

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

F. J. ALLEN, M.A. Cantab.

Royal Southern Hospital, Liverpool, June 28th, 1884.

## THE BROMPTON CEMETERY.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—“How long will a man lie i' the earth ere he rot?” is the question asked of the gravedigger by Hamlet, and we all know the facetious reply given. Walking through the Brompton Cemetery, I passed by the grave of one who was for many years the best impersonator of the First Gravedigger upon the English stage, and I thought of the well-remembered scene in the churchyard at Elsinore. There was no earth here, however; but only flint stones, sand, and gravel. In this necropolis thousands of bodies are lying, some of them actually resting upon shelves placed in buildings erected above the ground. The emanations arising from these decomposing bodies poison the air, and the soluble parts, washed out by the rain, must be disseminated under the houses and streets, which are now built close to the burying-place. Day after day processions of hearses and mourning coaches (“a ghastly band”) arrive at this cemetery; and the enormity is perpetuated of burying under gravel, sand, and flint stones a mass of human remains in the midst of their living fellows. The gates of this cemetery ought to be closed at once and for ever, and the office at No. 12, Haymarket, appropriated to some less horrible purpose than the one it is now used for.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

July 2nd, 1884. JOHN TOPHAM, M.D., F.R.C.P. Lond.

## LIVERPOOL.

*(From our own Correspondent.)*

### CITY HOSPITAL FOR INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

AT the monthly meeting of the City Council a letter from the Local Government Board to the Mayor was read. In this it was stated that the Board were clearly of opinion that the Mill-road Workhouse should cease to be used as a small-pox hospital as soon as the City Council made the necessary arrangements for the accommodation of patients. It was resolved to provide temporary hospitals on a site either at the southern or eastern extremity of the borough. It will be remembered that it was stated in THE LANCET some months ago that the use of workhouse hospitals for other than pauper patients could not be justified.

### THE CASE OF POISONING YEAST.

At the city sessions, held last week, two men named Gilder, father and son, yeast-dealers, were convicted of maliciously damaging five baskets of yeast belonging to a firm of flour-dealers by poisoning it with carbolic acid. The Recorder, in sentencing the elder prisoner to six months' and the younger to three months' imprisonment, characterised the offence as a very serious one.

### THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH'S ANNUAL REPORT.

Dr. Stopford Taylor's annual report has just been issued, and contains many interesting details. The total population of Liverpool is estimated at 566,753; the births were 19,207, a decrease of 591; while the deaths were 15,074, an increase of 256 over the previous year. Small-pox is rarely absent, owing to its frequent importation by visitors, emigrants, and others. Scarletina caused 388 deaths, and measles 618. The deaths of infants below one year amounted to 3686.

### THE LIVERPOOL PARISH INFIRMARY.

The parish of Liverpool is one of the largest and most densely populated in the kingdom. Some idea of this is shown in the numbers of inmates in the workhouse and its branches. These are in all 2648, including 1325 sick and infirm. These, again, include 732 persons under medical treatment, 51 being infectious cases.

### THE WEATHER.

The weather for the last few weeks has been remarkably fine, and the heat almost tropical in its intensity. It has, however, been tempered to a considerable extent by the sea breezes, of which Liverpool has the benefit, except in unusually calm weather, and so far there have been no cases of sunstroke.

### DISCOVERY OF A BODY IN AN EMPTY HOUSE.

While a corporation official was engaged on Tuesday last in an inspection of a house which has been empty for more than a year, he found in a closet in the yard the body of a woman reduced almost to a skeleton. The discovery in the hand of the deceased of a newspaper dated 6th July, 1883, limits the death to within that period. The body was found doubled up, and has not yet been identified. An inquest will be held in due course.

## IRELAND.

*(From our own Correspondent.)*

### QUEEN'S COLLEGES COMMISSION.

THE Commissioners, after visiting the three Queen's College, proceeded to hold an inquiry in Dublin, and to receive evidence in respect of various matters bearing on the subjects to be investigated. Among those who gave evidence was the Rev. Dr. Walsh, President of St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, who thought that inconvenience arose from the fact that examiners of the Royal University were professors in colleges, so that students not taught by them did not stand on equal terms with those who were. Dr. Curtis, who had been Professor of Natural Philosophy in Galway College, was of opinion that the matriculation examination fulfilled the purposes for which it was intended; while Mr. Brougham Leech, who was Secretary to a Treasury Commission which