

the vestry offices of the interested towns, where they may be inspected by the public.

The area proposed to be dealt with is about one hundred square miles, and contains a population of about 300,000. The sewage now passes into the Thames. Mr. Bazalgette proposes to purchase 3000 acres of sterile land between Woking and Bagshot, to be irrigated by the diverted sewage. Part of the sewage would be conveyed by gravity to Hampton, where it will be lifted by pumping, and allowed to flow by gravity to Chertsey. Other main sewers commencing at Eton and Windsor would bring the sewage from that district to the same point, where a second pumping-station would be made to raise the united volume of sewage to a reservoir commanding the land intended to be taken as a farm. It is proposed to provide for double the present population, and the rainfall and subsoil drainage will be excluded from the new system as far as practicable. Mr. Bazalgette estimates the total expense at about one million, to be paid by a rate which would commence at 4*d.* in the £1, and be rapidly reduced to $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* He proposes a board of commissioners, with powers to take land, borrow money, and raise a special rate.

We regard this scheme with great favour, and would recommend its serious consideration by the various local boards.

MEDICAL DECLARATION RESPECTING ALCOHOL.

THE following declaration is published, signed by about 250 of the leading medical men in London and the provinces:—

"As it is believed that the inconsiderate prescription of large quantities of alcoholic liquids by medical men for their patients has given rise, in many instances, to the formation of intemperate habits, the undersigned, while unable to abandon the use of alcohol in the treatment of certain cases of disease, are yet of opinion that no medical practitioner should prescribe it without a sense of grave responsibility. They believe that alcohol, in whatever form, should be prescribed with as much care as any powerful drug, and that the directions for its use should be so framed as not to be interpreted as a sanction for excess, or necessarily for the continuance of its use when the occasion is past.

"They are also of opinion that many people immensely exaggerate the value of alcohol as an article of diet, and since no class of men see so much of its ill effects, and possess such power to restrain its abuse, as members of their own profession, they hold that every medical practitioner is bound to exert his utmost influence to inculcate habits of great moderation in the use of alcoholic liquids.

"Being also firmly convinced that the great amount of drinking of alcoholic liquors among the working classes of this country is one of the greatest evils of the day, destroying—more than anything else—the health, happiness, and welfare of those classes, and neutralising, to a large extent, the great industrial prosperity which Providence has placed within the reach of this nation, the undersigned would gladly support any wise legislation which would tend to restrict, within proper limits, the use of alcoholic beverages, and gradually introduce habits of temperance."

THE CHOLERA.

RUSSIA.

At the meeting of the Epidemiological Society on the 11th inst. an interesting paper on recent Cholera in Russia was read by Mr. W. D. Michell. The facts related showed that cholera had declared itself in South-Eastern Russia in Europe in August, 1869, and that from that time to the present the disease had never been absent from the kingdom. But the epidemic had prevailed with curiously different degrees of intensity in different provinces. This fact was very clearly shown by a shaded map, prepared by Mr. Michell from data obtained from published

official returns of the Russian Government. This paper was further illustrated by elaborate analyses of returns showing the mortality of the epidemic, and of the meteorological returns of the Central Imperial Observatory for a portion of the time during which the epidemic prevailed.

Mr. Michell contented himself with detailing the principal facts he had brought together, with much labour, concerning the progress of the epidemic in the empire (west of the Ural Mountains) generally. He touched also upon the prevalence of the disease in the Caspian and Caucasian provinces of the empire, and on the Russian shores of the Black Sea. He did not attempt to suggest any explanation of the more striking facts given, very properly observing that our ignorance of the state of the greater portion of the Russian empire, as affecting the spread of cholera, would render such attempt futile. He dwelt, however, at some length upon the prevalence of cholera in St. Petersburg, and gave numerous instructive details of the many localising causes of the disease existing there, and of the peculiar meteorological conditions likely to foster the disease which existed in the past and present year.

TURKEY.

The following are numbers of daily deaths in Constantinople from Oct. 30th to Nov. 19th inclusive—namely, 57, 62, 39, 46, 21, 24, 28, 24, 44, 61, 62, 87, 56, 45, 59, 48, 65, 60, 55, 38, 54. The sanitary cordon around Haskeni has been discontinued. Cholera has likewise made its appearance at Jeddah. At Galatz, also, cases are reported to have occurred; this town is in anything but a perfect sanitary state.

MEDINA.

It is reported that in Medina the deaths from cholera between Sept. 21st and Oct. 4th (twelve days), were 773, and that all caravans from that place to Mecca are obliged to perform quarantine before being allowed to enter that city.

Cholera is also stated to have broken out at Astrakan.

ST. JEAN D'ACRE.

A death from cholera of a passenger from Constantinople is said to have taken place at St. Jean d'Acre.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

DISCHARGE OF UNCURED PAUPER LUNATICS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As one of the Visitors of the Sussex County Lunatic Asylum, I readily express my high appreciation of any opinion expressed by my friend Dr. S. W. D. Williams on any subject with which he is acquainted. His letter, however, in your last impression, describing the discharge of uncured but harmless and chronic patients to the care of their friends as something new, and his suggestion of the difficulty of "initiating" such a plan in Middlesex, prove the inexpediency of the medical superintendent of one asylum attending to the practice of other asylums, especially if the writer labours under the disadvantage of imperfect information on the practice of the asylums adverted to.

The practice of discharging patients, though still uncured, to the care of friends, which Dr. Williams describes as "his" plan is not only "initiated" in Middlesex, is not only not new, but has been in operation long before my friend had commenced his professional career; but the greatest caution is requisite in ascertaining the motives and capabilities of the persons to whom the patient is to be entrusted, and Dr. Williams's faith in "the advancing enlightenment of the age," as preventing ignorant, injudicious, and often untrustworthy relatives from ill-treating or neglecting uncured patients, is more robust than mine; and while at Hanwell we are constantly discharging uncured patients to the care of competent relatives, we are as constantly refusing applications when, on investigation, we

find that proper accommodation and suitable supervision are manifestly wanting.

Dr. Williams's suggestions for the visitation of such patients by paid officials, and for the weekly allowance of money to these poor people, are open to two objections. One is, that in the present state of the law they are not practicable; or next, if practicable, they would insure "that infliction of further pecuniary burdens on the already over-taxed ratepayers" which Dr. Williams deprecates.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

P. NORTALL LAWRIE,

Dec. 18th, 1871.

Chairman of the Hanwell Asylum Committee.

THE THEORY AND TREATMENT OF CHOLERA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It is perhaps unnecessary at the present season to occupy the attention of your readers with any further remarks on the true theory and treatment of cholera. But before the discussion is closed, it may be useful to direct notice to the following important admissions, which, so far as can be gathered from his remarks on the subject, are expressed or implied in Dr. Johnson's communication to THE LANCET of Dec. 9th, in reply to my late paper "On some Physiological Errors connected with Cholera."

1. That temporary albuminuria is not *conclusive* evidence of blood-poisoning.
2. That cyanosis is not a *diagnostic* sign of cholera.
3. That the secretion of urine by the fœtus is not "even more scanty than that of a patient in cholera collapse."

When Dr. Johnson pleads that my so-called "merciless criticism" of his statements respecting a certain "interesting physiological correlation," to which he has referred at some length, is unjust, because a lately published paper on the subject (Aug. 1870) has been selected instead of one of a much earlier date (Feb. 1866), he simply succeeds in illustrating the truth of my remark, that the unsoundness of his theory "becomes more apparent after every fresh effort on the part of the author to retrieve his position."

"Our failures may be as instructive as our successes," was the sad but hopeful comment of Dr. Johnson himself on the treatment of cholera at King's College Hospital in 1866, for no temporary success of a theory can justify any continued failure in treatment; and it is reassuring to find that the lesson learnt on that occasion has not been forgotten. For although the opinions of the distinguished Professor of Medicine at King's College respecting the nature of the disease are still apparently unchanged, yet his opinions respecting its treatment have since undergone a marked and progressive change for the better, in consequence of which he no longer advocates "the necessity of a cathartic method of treatment in the widest sense of that term"; and his theory is now very far from being in strict accordance with his practice. "The good effects of heat" were, we have been assured by Dr. Johnson in his Notes on Cholera in 1866, "unquestionable"; whilst cold water was decidedly injurious, in consequence of its "diminishing the vascularity of the mucous membrane, and thus interfering with the excretion of the morbid poison." It would be, of course, impossible for me to fix the exact date at which the decisive change in Dr. Johnson's opinions on the treatment of cholera occurred. It is sufficient to know that a very great and a very praiseworthy change of opinion has lately happened, and that he has at last kindly consented to be guided by the experience of others in the revision of his plans for the future treatment of the disease. With reference to this subject, it is interesting to note that in place of hot liquids to drink, and of hot injections into the rectum, he is, *for the present*, inclined to give an abundant supply of cold water; and we have been quietly led to infer that castor oil may, in most curable cases, be safely omitted.

We are quite content to rest and be thankful, since so much has been gained in the warfare against a fatal error. "The copious imbibition of pure cold water," with perhaps the addition, which has been lately recommended, of a little phosphoric acid, "will suffice for the cure of most curable cases"; and when the pathology of the disease is better understood, it may probably be admitted that the applica-

tion of castor oil and *hot liquids* to the alimentary mucous membrane during choleraic collapse is painfully suggestive of the application of petroleum to a house on fire.

I am, Sir, your humble servant,

Park-place, Upper Baker-street,
December 11th, 1871.

WILLIAM SEDGWICK.

* * This controversy must really end now.

THE SANITARY STATE OF WEST NEWTON.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In your report on West Newton one or two inaccuracies occur, which I trust you will allow me to correct. I should not presume to do so, but that my local knowledge extends over eleven years, during which time I have attended the majority of the sick in the village.

The wells are not all shallow, but there seem to be two water-bearing strata at least, besides that supplying the surface water, and in two epidemics of typhoid four distinct water-supplies have been used by different batches of patients.

In 1860, after a very wet summer, an epidemic commenced in September. In 1870, again in September, another epidemic commenced.

The first cases in 1860 were all supplied from a well which is 32 feet deep—i.e., from surface of ground to surface of water (it has been made lower since 1860, but was then a deep well). It is near the bottom of the hill. The second batch of cases in 1860 were at the top of the hill, and were supplied with water from a shallow surface well; a new one, 13 feet deep, has since been made.

In the 1870-1 epidemic, the first cases were using water from a surface well near the bottom of the hill, and the second batch, water from a well 9½ feet deep, and half-way up the hill.

In the yard called Billing's I have not had a case of typhoid, though, with the rest of the village, it has been visited by scarlet fever. There are no manure heaps nor privies in this yard, the privies being at a considerable distance down the hill, while the well is quite at the top of the hill, the depth being 15 feet 6 inches from surface of ground to surface of water. A privy in the adjoining yard may possibly affect it.

I remain, Sir, yours very faithfully,

Grimston, Lynn, Norfolk, Dec. 18, 1871.

A. E. BARRETT.

IRELAND.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

THE annual meeting of the Belfast General Hospital was held last week in the Town Hall, Belfast, under the presidency of the Mayor. The honorary secretary, Mr. Macrory, submitted the report of the general committee, from which it appeared that the total income of the institution from all sources, during the year, amounted to £4793, as compared with £4260 of the preceding year. The medical school connected with the hospital continues to be a decided success, and, during the year, 144 students attended the lectures and hospital dressings, being 32 over last year. Mr. Macrory also submitted a report in reference to the establishment of a Nurses' Home and Training School in connexion with the hospital. The reports having been adopted, a resolution was passed, on the motion of Dr. Browne, R.N., expressing deep sympathy with the Queen and the Princess of Wales in the anxiety and distress caused by the illness of the Prince of Wales.

A munificent donation has lately been made by Samuel Martin, Esq., of Belfast, who has purchased twenty-eight acres of land in one of the healthiest and most picturesque sites in the vicinity of that town, which he intends to hand over, clear of rent, to trustees for the following purposes:—One-half to be devoted to the erection of cottage-hospitals for orphan children, preference being given to those suffering from spinal affections. On the construction of these hospitals Mr. Martin purposes to expend £2000, and to give them an endowment of £1000 a year for at least five