

nently establish the classical 1 in 120 private puerperal mortality; but they will be thought neither too minute nor too troublesome by those who earnestly endeavour to minimise the saddest and most reproachful of death-rates.

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ART. XXIII.—*A Retrospect of the International Medical Congress of 1884.* By F. J. B. QUINLAN, M.D. Dubl.; M.R.I.A.; Fellow and Censor, King and Queen's College of Physicians; Physician to St. Vincent's Hospital.

UP to the year 1867 the medical profession throughout the civilised world consisted of a number of independent local bodies, connected by a certain bond of sympathy, but each cultivating medicine as best it could. Their only personal ties of connexion were the occasional appearances of foreign students in renowned centres of medical study, or the visits of qualified medical strangers to such places; but, most of all, the perusal of each other's writings. The medical journals and permanent medical literature of France and Germany attained an early and deserved repute, which was worthily rivalled by those of Great Britain and Ireland, and more lately by those of the United States. From the rest of the world but little illumination was obtained, although every now and then some ray of light streamed forth, showing what treasures of experience were running unheeded into the sea of oblivion. The character of the medical profession was intensely local, but in other branches of biological science there was a greater exchange of thought and of observation, but always confined to nations, or at least to languages. The first departure of a purely international character was in the direction of Hygiene, in which all countries were interested, particularly as regards quarantine. This Congress was held in Brussels in the year 1852, and its utility was so evident that in 1857 an international meeting was held for the discussion of the advancing subject of Ophthalmology, at which England, France, Germany, and Austria brought into one focus their separate researches into this great speciality. The idea of international medicine was now in the air; and, at the meeting of the French Medical Congress held at Bordeaux in 1865, Professor Henri Giutrac made the happy suggestion that, as "all the world" would be at the great International Exhibition at Paris in 1867, it would be well that the French medical profession should hold professional converse with the vast crowd of foreign physicians

and surgeons who would certainly be there. This suggestion was received with acclamation, but was wisely carried out in a limited and tentative manner. The discussions, which were in French only, were confined to seven questions connected with the purely scientific domains of medicine, and which had been previously announced throughout Europe by the medical journals. This Congress was a great success; and, although carried out without *fêtes* or ceremonies, enjoyed the active patronage of the French Government, as was shown by the official presence of the Minister of Public Instruction. In opening the proceedings M. Bouillaud used these remarkable words:—"We celebrate to-day the most magnificent *fête* that the history of medicine records;" and it was evident to all that an important new departure had been taken. On the second day Dr. Pantaleoni, of Rome, recommended that "the present should be the first of a series of international reunions;" and at the close of the meeting every country was competing for the honour of receiving the next gathering. M. Vidal proposed that these meetings should always coincide with whatever international exhibition might be going on—apparently distrusting the vitality of the medical profession to sustain such action without external stimulus. Finally, Florence was selected as the theatre of what M. Bouillaud, in the lofty diction of the French professor, designated as "the second Olympiad;" and here a further development occurred. The Italian Government furnished halls and offices; the matchless public and private art collections of the city of flowers beside the Arno were thrown open to the foreign visitors; and a pleasant trip to the royal baths of Montecatani, along with a grand banquet given by the medical profession and inhabitants of Florence, tended to smooth away any possible international friction—in fact, the *Gazette Médicale* candidly admitted that on this occasion "things were not done better in France." The Franco-German warlike cataclysm now intervened, and, as a consequence, the next Congress was delayed until 1873, and was held at Vienna along with the International Exhibition; and here some organic changes occurred. The meeting was compressed into a week instead of a fortnight, and in place of one language proceedings were permitted in French, German, Italian, or English—the latter being an instance of great liberality, as the share of the British medical profession in the movement was up to this nominal. At the instance of Messrs. Warlemont and Crocq, the Belgian delegates, the next meeting was fixed to be held in Brussels in

1875 ; and here it may be said that the mechanism of the International Medical Congress was moulded into its present form and shape. The Congress was divided into sections, and daily programmes were published announcing the work to be done in each, so that every member could devote himself to the departments in which he was specially interested. The number of meetings was thus increased and the amount of work done enormously magnified. All communications and discussions were confined to the French, German, or English languages, so that to the well-educated members everything was open. The King of the Belgians honoured several of the meetings by his presence, and splendid *fêtes* and excursions enlivened proceedings which will always be looked back to with pleasure. The only thing, in fact, which has had to be altered was the curious system of taking votes upon scientific questions—in the sections as a court of first instance, and at the general meeting as a tribunal of supreme appeal. This system of scientific plebiscite, which can never settle any scientific question, has since been entirely abandoned. The succeeding Congresses at Geneva in 1877, at Amsterdam in 1879, and at London in 1881, followed closely upon the lines of Brussels. The London Congress was distinguished by the splendour of its hospitalities, and by the admirable manner in which its “Transactions” were brought out by the Secretary-General, Sir Wm. MacCormac. The London Congress was, moreover, the largest in numbers ; but the Copenhagen Congress was much more important in an international point of view. In the London Congress two-thirds of the members were British and Irish medical men, and the foreigners were in a great minority, whereas in the Danish capital these proportions were much more than reversed—in fact, never before were so many foreign physicians from different parts of the globe collected together in one city. The sectional arrangements were similar to those of London, except that the Dental Section was absorbed into that of Surgery, which was well ; and that of Pharmacology and Therapeutics was entirely omitted, which was simply deplorable. The consequence was that at Copenhagen practically nothing was done in the direction of Therapeutics, the most advancing branch of medicine, and the one which affords the widest field for original research of a scientific and definite character. There was a very successful Therapeutical Section at London in 1881, and at the recent meeting of the British Medical Association at Belfast a similar section (inaugurated for the first time) was the leading

feature of the gathering. With this exception the arrangements at Copenhagen were simply perfect. The reception of the foreign visitors was cordiality itself; the Sectional Presidents were indefatigable; the Secretary-General, Dr. Lange, was almost ubiquitous; and a Committee, who apparently spoke among them every language in Europe, were always at hand to afford all information and assistance to their foreign guests. This Committee was at the railway station to receive us on the Saturday morning of our arrival, and saw us off on the evening of our departure—and let not the graceful official compliment of the Danish Custom-house authorities be forgotten, in their exempting from all examination the luggage of their scientific visitors.

Reviewing the work of the recent Congress, we cannot fail to be astonished at the progress which the medical art has made in the last seventeen years, during which the medical profession of the whole civilised world has worked as one harmonious and compact body—meeting every two or three years to compare results, to correct erroneous views by international discussion, and to encourage each other in the onward path. No other human avocation or calling presents the spectacle of several thousand scientific investigators from every part of the globe, including such places as Iceland and Russia, Turkey and Australia, America and Japan, meeting for a week at some appointed rendezvous, speaking or listening, generally through the medium of some foreign and artificially acquired language, and then flitting away, each to his own home, instructed and improved. There we see and hear those famous celebrities who would otherwise be to us simply names; and, if we very often discern the depths of our own ignorance, we are at least encouraged by seeing what has been accomplished by others. To give anything like a detailed account of what has been done at Copenhagen, would be manifestly impossible; but I would single out the luminous address of M. Pasteur, who has, by a discovery equal in importance to that of Jenner, brought us within measurable distance of the extinction of hydrophobia—one of the most appalling and incurable of the maladies which afflict humanity. The virus of smallpox has been attenuated without human effort by naturally passing through the system of the cow, and this attenuated virus produces in the human body a disease practically free from risk; and if this harmless disease be artificially produced in the system of a human being in infancy and again after puberty, that individual is found to be incapable of

contracting smallpox. M. Pasteur has, by an artificial process, attenuated the hydrophobic poison, and finds that a dog inoculated with this attenuated virus sickens, but recovers; but that the animal, having gone through this process, becomes impregnable against canine rabies. Having completed his experiments, M. Pasteur applied to the Minister of Public Instruction, M. Fallières, who appointed a commission of supreme authority containing such men as MM. Vulpian, Villemin, Beclard, and Paul Bert, and to them M. Pasteur delivered twenty-three protected dogs for experimentation. The committee commenced by operating with rabid salivary poison, obtained from the Veterinary School at Alfort, upon nineteen dogs. In eight of these dogs a small hole was trephined in the skull, and the poison was injected under the membrane of the brain, and all died of rabies. In six the poison was injected into the veins, and four died. Five were exposed to be bitten by a rabid dog, and three died. M. Pasteur's twenty-three protected dogs were tried in all these ways, and none of them died of rabies—in fact, in the expressive words of the committee in their report to the Minister, “we find that M. Pasteur has advanced no statement that has not been confirmed by experiment.” “Hydrophobia,” said M. Pasteur, “never originates in the human subject, but is always contracted by his having been infected by some rabid animal, generally a dog. Now, as there is nothing to prevent every dog in Europe being protected, it is evident that the total extinction of this awful malady has arrived within the region of possibility.” Two questions M. Pasteur still reserves—1. Whether, a dog having been “protected,” the immunity continues for the life of the animal. 2. Whether, if an individual be bitten by a rabid dog, and immediately after inoculated with the attenuated virus, he will be protected from hydrophobia. As the period of the incubation of hydrophobia often runs to many months, this is possible; but M. Pasteur wisely leaves both these important questions to the test of future experience. A French medical student had offered to permit M. Paster to inoculate him with his “protection” virus, and then to allow himself to be bitten by a rabid dog. This noble offer was most properly declined; but it is to be hoped that the memory of this heroic student will not be forgotten. His self-sacrifice is quite on a level with the brave conduct of the late Dr. Rabbeth, Resident Surgeon to the Royal Free Hospital, London, who was making an opening in the windpipe of a little child dying of

diphtheria. Finding the windpipe choked with fluid, and with a full knowledge of the danger which he was incurring, he sucked it clear. Alas, a noble life paid the forfeit, and added another name to the list of medical martyrs who have perished in the discharge of professional duty.

A very striking address was that of Professor Tommasi-Crudeli, of Rome, upon malaria, the deadly and mysterious scourge which renders practically uninhabitable and uncultivable the vast district around the Eternal City, as well as many other places, all of which were formerly teeming with population, and were the granaries of the world. This learned Professor showed the microbe of malaria, and microscopically demonstrated it in all its stages from the time that, appearing as a speck upon a red blood corpuscle, it spread and finally shrivelled up the organism, thus killing the patient by the gradual and progressive deterioration of the circulating stream of life. Once the malarial poison takes possession of the system, if it do not destroy life, it impairs the whole subsequent life of the sufferer, constantly subjecting him to attacks of periodic fever, and even giving a periodic tendency to almost every sickness. About this malarial poison four great facts appear established—1. That anyone who sleeps at an elevation of at least forty feet over the ground level is usually safe from night infection. 2. That any temperature under 68° F. stops the action of the malarial poison. 3. That the greatest danger is incurred by those digging up or ploughing virgin malarial soil. 4. That certain medicines, such as the salts of quinia and of arsenic, have a curative and preventive power. Professor Crudeli prefers the latter, and in doing so agrees with the French Algerian military medical authorities, and differs from the majority of British observers.

Space will not permit the details of Professor Crudeli's address; but all heard with dismay that the re-afforestation of the district around Rome with the trees of the Australian *Eucalyptus globulus* has proved an entire and most costly failure. This remarkable conifer has the faculty of exhaling a constant terebinthine vapour, and it was hoped and believed that by ozonising a considerable portion of the atmospheric oxygen it would completely kill the malarial poison. All parties in the State have co-operated in this great social hygienic effort—the Italian Government, the Trappists of the Tre Fontane, other monastic establishments, and hosts of private individuals, and now we learn that all this effort and expenditure are in vain. There is unfortunately no doubt as to

the correctness of Professor Crudeli's statements, and they are fully confirmed by Dr. Aitken, of Rome, in a letter published in the *Brit. Med. Jour.* of Sept. 13. Professor Crudeli is of opinion that malaria can be abolished only by the thorough subsoil main drainage of the Campagna, and by the removal of stagnant surface water; but it is to be feared that the chances of these results being accomplished are utopian, and that the abolition of this depopulating scourge is a hygienic problem for future discoverers.

The debate upon pulmonary consumption and tuberculosis was a valuable one, notwithstanding the absence of Koch, of Berlin, who was not there to defend his bacillus. The paper of Professor Ewald, of Berlin, upon tubercular infection was interesting; and the discussion was enlivened by the bold declaration of Dr. Jaccoud, of Paris, that Koch's discovery was almost sterile in a clinical point of view. None of the Germans present seemed inclined to contradict this opinion, which most practical physicians will endorse. The infective character of pulmonary consumption was admitted in principle, but while there is no doubt that in Southern Europe this is a real substantive danger, it is equally certain that in our colder latitudes such an occurrence is exceptional.

Great progress has been made by the committee for establishing an uniform international nomenclature of stethoscopic sounds. At present in almost every country these sounds have different names, and much confuse the readers of foreign medical works, to whom uniformity in this respect would be an unmixed benefit.

The principle of the Listerian or antiseptic system of operative surgery was entirely endorsed, although there is still some legitimate difference of opinion as to the best method of carrying out this the greatest of advances in modern surgery. All agree that to insure success the most scrupulous attention should be paid to the most minute details so as to keep out every germ; that the contact of a single germ with the open surfaces is fatal to success, but that if the germs be effectually kept out the free opening of the knee-joint and other operations, which formerly no prudent surgeon would attempt, can be performed with the best results. The future of antiseptic surgery is now secure, and a century hence its remaining opponents will take rank with those mediæval chirurgeons who refused to trust human life to one of Ambrose Paré's new-fangled arterial ligatures, and resolutely plunged the freshly amputated stump into the can of boiling pitch.

These pages would not be a suitable place to describe the

splendid hospitalities of the Danish people from their Majesties downwards, and it is the less necessary, as they received from the public journals an amount of notice which was not awarded to the scientific details. The British and Irish members feel deeply grateful, and in the touching address drawn up by Sir James Paget have expressed their respectful sympathy with the Royal Family of Denmark and with the Danish people upon the destruction by fire of the grand palace in which they were so royally entertained by hosts as cordial and gracious in bearing as they are exalted in rank and enshrined in the hearts of their subjects. These Congresses will give a great impulse to the general education of the rising generation of physicians, for there will henceforward be a Congress every three years, and medical aspirants will do well to remember that their own language will afford but one of the three keys of knowledge. All who desire to attend these Congresses with profit must in addition acquire such a knowledge of French and of German as will enable them to at least follow the meaning of a French or German colleague reading a paper or taking part in a discussion. Without this faculty attendance at the Congress will be monotonous and comparatively unprofitable, but the possession of it—and it is not too difficult to acquire—will open all the fountains of knowledge to the inquiring visitor.

The next meeting has been appointed to be held in the capital of the United States in 1887, and there is no doubt that the welcome promised by Surgeon John S. Billings and by Dr. Browne of the Medical Department of the United States Navy will be in every way worthy of the great Transatlantic Republic. As this meeting will be held in the far west, it is thought that the reunion of 1890 will be in the extreme east, possibly in Constantinople. The smouldering fires of a great warlike conflagration cause a difficulty for the present in regard to any German city; but from the cordial spirit evinced by both nations at the recent gathering, it is certain that, in the medical profession at all events, such asperities will soon pass away. The Italian Government desire a meeting in Rome, the Spanish authorities are equally anxious for Madrid, and St. Petersburg also would wish it. There is great and noble work to be done, and let us all hope and believe that our cosmopolitan profession, which knows no creed or party, will approach it with intelligence, patience, and energy, with no polemical, political, or personal purpose to serve, but looking solely to the advancement of science and the elevation of our common humanity.