

SCOTLAND.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS.)

The Summer Session in Edinburgh.

THE Summer Session in the Medical Faculty commenced on Monday, in the usual matter-of-fact style. From the number of men about there would not appear to be any falling off in the attendance at the school.

Bananas as Food and Medicine.

Dr. John Dougall, of St. Mungo's College, Glasgow, has a letter in a recent issue of the *Glasgow Herald* on the banana. He quotes from Stanley's "In Darkest Africa," showing that "for infants, persons of delicate digestion, dyspeptics, and those suffering from temporary derangements of the stomach, the flour, properly prepared, would be of universal demand." During Stanley's two attacks of gastritis a slight gruel of this flour, mixed with milk, was the only material that could be digested. It is odd, also, as pointed out in Stanley's book, that in most banana lands—Cuba, Brazil, West Indies—the valuable properties of the banana as an easily digested and nourishing food have been much overlooked. Dr. Dougall has made some experiments in making banana flour. He concludes that it should be made from the ripe fruit at its place of production. In trying to make it from bananas purchased in Glasgow, he obtained, on drying the pulp, a tough sweet mass like toasted figs, an appearance probably due to the conversion of starch into sugar. Bananas contain only about 50 per cent. of pulp, and of this about 75 per cent. is water; they would yield, therefore, only one-eighth part of flour.

Physiological Action of Carbon-monoxide of Nickel Ni(CO)₄.

At the last meeting of the Philosophical Society at Glasgow Professor M'Kendrick and Dr. Snodgrass submitted a short paper on the above substance. It is a clear, colourless liquid, which is very volatile, readily decomposing into metallic nickel and carbonic oxide. It is intensely poisonous, and, when present in the atmosphere to the extent of one-half per cent., proves fatal to animal life. Injected subcutaneously, even in minute quantity, it acts as a respiratory poison, giving rise to symptoms similar to those produced by carbonic oxide. The spectrum of the blood of an animal poisoned with it is similar to that of carbonic-oxide hæmoglobin. Uniting with the hæmoglobin of the blood, it apparently prevents the tissues from being supplied with a due amount of oxygen, and oxidation being interfered with, there is a large and prolonged fall of temperature. The extremely poisonous nature of the substance and its proneness to decomposition render it as yet unsuitable as an antipyretic; but means may be devised of diluting it so that it may be of value in the reduction of abnormally high body temperature.

Milk-poisoning from Colostrum.

In connexion with an outbreak of milk-poisoning which took place a few weeks ago in the west-end of Glasgow, an outbreak marked chiefly by great prostration, vomiting, and purging, a report has been issued which traces the affection to the use of milk from newly calved cows. Dr. Russell in his report says: "To send for sale as human food the milk of a newly calved cow is always inadvisable. All well-conducted milk companies have a clause in their contracts with farmers prohibiting this. The usual words are: 'No milk to be sent from a newly calved cow,' but one company prescribes 'four clear days from the date of calving.' Another, in Copenhagen, requires an interval of twelve days. The normal constitution of cow's milk is peculiar for several days; Fleming says 'for five or six.' The physiological purpose is to purge the calf, and it is not surprising that the effect on human children may be violent even when the cow is doing well, especially when by any accident the milk is not freely mixed with other milk."

Convalescent House, Arbroath.

This Convalescent House at Jennyswells, in connexion with the Arbroath Infirmary, was formally opened for the reception of patients on the 1st inst. The infirmary patients are to be admitted free of charge, but it is also open to other patients on payment of a small weekly sum as board. The House is the gift of the late Mr. Alexander Duncan, of Rhode Island, United States, and his brother, Mr. John Duncan, of Park-hill, Arbroath. It has cost about £1500.

Health of Edinburgh.

The mortality last week was 84, making the death-rate 16 per 1000. Diseases of the chest caused 50 deaths, and zymotic diseases 7. The intimations for the week comprised typhoid fever 5, diphtheria 1, scarlatina 19, and measles 83.

IRELAND.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS.)

DUBLIN.

Royal College of Surgeons.

THE annual elections for examiners usually take place on the first Monday in May, but this year they have been postponed to a later date. Mr. John Cranny, M.D. Dub., F.R.C.S.I., has intimated his intention of becoming a candidate for the Vice-Presidency of the College in June next. There is a probability that Mr. William Frazer, ex-member of Council and examiner, may also be induced to become a candidate for the vice-presidency.

Dublin Main Drainage.

At a meeting of the Dublin Corporation the following resolution was unanimously adopted:—"That inasmuch as the present condition of the River Liffey renders it a public nuisance owing to the constant discharge of sewage from the city and some of the townships into it, and as the recent consolidation of the city debt places the Corporation in a favourable condition to deal with the pollution of the river and the main drainage of the city, that a Main Drainage Committee be appointed to make inquiries as to the best scheme of main drainage for the city of Dublin, and report to Council with as little delay as possible." A perfect system of main drainage is absolutely necessary, and must be undertaken sooner or later, the only reason for the delay being the enormous cost of such an undertaking. If the adjoining townships—viz., Clontarf, Kilmainham, Pembroke, Rathmines, &c.—bear their proportion of the cost, the expense to the Dublin ratepayers would be considerably lessened, and the purification of the entire Bay of Dublin be undertaken, while probably assistance might be obtained from Government for so important a local object. At all events, the appointment of a committee to examine into the matter carefully and wisely cannot be underrated, and must prove of great benefit to the citizens of Dublin and the inhabitants of the adjacent townships.

Irish Emigration Returns.

The emigration from Ireland for the past year was considerably less than that for 1889. The decrease amounted to 9365—viz., 4998 males and 4367 females. The total number of emigrants, natives of Ireland, who left Irish ports from May 1st, 1851, when the Registrar-General's returns were first issued, up to the end of last year was 3,407,893.

The Corporation have erected a pillar box close to Carlisle Bridge for the receipt of newspapers and periodicals for the use of patients in the infirmary of the South Dublin Union Workhouse.

Her Excellency Lady Zetland entertained nearly one hundred nurses belonging to the Dublin hospitals at the Viceregal Lodge last week.

Dr. Thomas F. Farrelly died at Bailieboro', County Cavan, on the 28th ult., from fever contracted in the discharge of his professional duties, aged thirty-three years.

Mr. William Greene has been elected medical officer of Howth dispensary district, in the vacancy caused by the death of Mr. Neary.

At a recent meeting of the Royal Hibernian Academy, Mr. Booth Pearsall, F.R.C.S., was elected an honorary member of the Academy. Mr. Pearsall's artistic abilities are well known and appreciated in Dublin, and this year he has two pictures on exhibition in the Academy.

Mr. Robert H. Woods, M.B., who obtained the Surgical Travelling Prize last year at the University of Dublin, is one of three students who have been elected by their fellow-students to attend the *fêtes* at Lausanne on the 17th inst. and four following days.

BELFAST.

The Royal Hospital.

On Wednesday, April 29th, at an "At Home" given in Belfast Castle, the leading citizens of Belfast and district assembled to present an illuminated address and silver

casket to the Earl of Shaftesbury on his coming of age. The Mayor of Belfast presided, and after the address had been read, the gift presented, and the young Earl had replied, his mother, the Countess of Shaftesbury (daughter of the late Marquis of Donegal), delivered a most eloquent speech in which she announced a very generous gift to the Royal Hospital, as a memorial of the events of that day. She said the Royal Hospital was held under her by a terminable lease made by her grandfather in 1813, and in twenty years that valuable property would again become part of the estate. Knowing how the advantages of the hospital reached all sections of the community, and that its efficient maintenance was most desirable, she and her son (the present Earl) had arranged a new lease to the Corporation of the Royal Hospital for 10,000 years, at the nominal rent of 2s. 6d. per year, to commence immediately in lieu of the present rent. Further, should it be decided to build a new hospital on another site, as more advantageous, she would consent to a sale of the present building freed from all obligations as to its use for the 10,000 years' term at 2s. 6d. a year, the sum realised to go to the building of the new hospital. The Countess having handed the lease to the Mayor of Belfast, he thanked her in the warmest terms on behalf of the citizens, and gave the document to Mr. Wakefield Dixon (chairman of the Board of Management of the hospital), who returned thanks to the Countess and the Earl of Shaftesbury for the munificent gift. At the usual meeting of the City Council, held on May 1st, it was unanimously decided to send a vote of thanks to the Countess for her great kindness and generosity to the city of Belfast; and the Board of Management of the Royal Hospital have passed the following resolution:—"The Board of Management of the Belfast Royal Hospital, while anxious to avail themselves of the first opportunity of placing on record their gratitude for the handsome gift to the hospital by the Countess of Shaftesbury and the Earl of Shaftesbury of the hospital property practically free of rent for 10,000 years, defer until a meeting of the Corporation, which will be held on Monday, the 25th inst., the passing of a resolution conveying to Lady Shaftesbury and Lord Shaftesbury their appreciation of the value of the gift which they have made to the inhabitants of Belfast in connexion with an institution which endeavours to alleviate all those suffering from accident or disease, more especially in connexion with the working classes."

Queen's College.

The council of the college has nominated Mr. Benjamin Moore, B.A., a distinguished student of chemistry, for the scholarship lately placed at their disposal by the Commissioners of the 1851 Exhibition. The scholarship is worth £150, and is tenable for two or, in special cases, for three years. Mr. Moore intends to study chemistry at Leipsic during his tenure of the scholarship.

The Summer Session.

The summer session commenced on May 5th, when clinical teaching was resumed at the Belfast Hospital for Sick Children. The gold medal at the close of the session was awarded to Mr. Scott.

PARIS.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS.)

Treatment of Wounds of the Abdomen.

THE importance of the above subject in these days of giant armaments and repeating rifles is self-evident, and it is not surprising that deductions gathered from civil practice should provide occasional matter for discussion at our learned societies' meetings. In 1887 Dr. Barnard, at the suggestion of the late Professor Trélat, took this subject as the theme of his inaugural thesis. In that opusculum he pronounced strongly in favour of the formation of an early diagnosis (penetration or non-penetration) by means of a flexible probe, or, if necessary, an exploratory dissection of the wound down to the peritoneum. Penetration being proved, he advised immediate laparotomy through the linea alba for the purpose of suturing any wounds of the stomach, intestines, or bladder that might be discovered, or, what is of equal importance, of tying any wounded bloodvessels, removing clots and foreign bodies, and cleaning the peritoneal cavity. Dr. Barnard's views were at the time attacked by M. Reclus in his *Clinique Chirurgicale de l'Hôtel-Dieu*, and it would appear from a dis-

cussion at the Société de Chirurgie, held on the 29th ult., that this surgeon has not changed his opinion. Amongst the speakers, M. Reclus was supported by only one *confrère*, M. Berger, while the opponents of the opium and expectant treatment were MM. Terrier, Pozzi, and Lucas-Championnière. M. Terrier, in citing three cases of abdominal knife wounds (in one of which laparotomy revealed no lesions, and the patient made a rapid recovery), prophesied that the *réactionnaires* would end by coming over to the opposite camp.

An Improved Hypodermic Needle.

How often does it happen that when one wishes to use the hypodermic syringe the needle is found impermeable, and consequently useless. Steel needles are in effect very liable to oxidise and rust, and are, moreover, difficult to disinfect. Many attempts have been made to replace them by needles composed of gold or platinum—metals which have unfortunately the inconvenience of being costly, of becoming blunt, and of easily bending. M. Debove has recently had manufactured for him needles made of an alloy of platinum and iridium—a combination which is very hard, and which does not oxidise. These needles resist the heat evolved by the flame of a spirit lamp (disinfection), and the passing of a wire through the bore in order to maintain its patency is unnecessary. Add to these advantages the fact that they are hardly more costly than the steel article—indeed, being more durable, the ultimate cost is probably less—and practical men will appreciate the advance made in this direction.

A New Antiseptic.

At the Académie de Médecine, on April 28th, M. Polaillon read a paper contributed by Dr. Berlioz of Grenoble on a new antiseptic agent called "microcidine," which is composed of 75 per cent. of naphtholate of sodium and 25 per cent. of naphthol and phenyl compounds. It is a white powder obtained by adding to fused β -naphthol half its weight of caustic soda, and allowing the mixture to cool. It is soluble in three parts of water, and the solution, which is cheap, is said to possess considerable antiseptic powers, without being toxic or caustic or injurious to instruments or linen. The antiseptic properties of microcidine, while inferior to those of corrosive sublimate or naphthol, surpass those of carbolic and boracic acids ten and twenty times respectively. Microcidine is eliminated by the kidneys, and is antipyretic. M. Polaillon has experimented with this new agent largely in his wards as a dressing to recent and other wounds, utilising as a dressing, after a preliminary cleansing of the raw surface, with a 3 per cent. solution, gauze soaked in the same, and covered with a layer of oiled silk and a thick pad of cotton-wool. The results are reported to have been excellent.

A Comparison of the Medical Population of Paris, Vienna, and Russia.

La France Médicale gives in its current number some interesting figures in reference to the above subject. It appears that Vienna, with a population of 800,000 for the town proper, and 400,000 for the suburbs, counts 1315 and 177 doctors for these respective divisions—i.e., 1 per 600 inhabitants of the town, and 1 per 2250 of the suburban population. In Russia, there were in July, 1890, 12,112 male and 700 female practitioners, 2629 of the former being attached to the army and navy. This gives a proportion of one practitioner for 100,000 inhabitants. Paris is poorer in doctors than the Austrian capital, for, with a population of 2,300,000, there are only 2200 medical men, being about 1 per 1000. As might be expected, the rich *arrondissements* possess more doctors than the poor but more populous districts.

International Courtesies.

The delegates appointed by the General Council of the Faculties to represent France at the *fêtes* to be held at Lausanne next month to celebrate the conversion of the Faculty of that town into a University are MM. Planchon, Director of the Ecole de Pharmacie; Brouardel, Dean of the Paris Faculty of Medicine; Lannelongue, Richet, and Strauss, Professors at the same Faculty; the Dean of the Faculty of Law; and M. Liard, Director of Higher Education. The Seine Sanitary Board has, in its turn, nominated as its representatives at the forthcoming International Congress of Hygiene in London the following gentlemen: MM. Lancereaux, Brouardel, Rochard, Léon Colin, Nocard, Schützenberger, Bezançon, Léon Faucher, Jungfleisch, and Voisin.

Paris, May 4th.