

less mortality, 60 per cent. It is not difficult for an observant military surgeon to conjecture the true cause of the French ill success. There is but one thing which can produce so many deaths after amputations as M. Chenu describes, and that is overcrowding, or what amounts to the same thing, foul air and bad ventilation. Overcrowding, and consequent foul air, means putrefaction, erysipelas, hospital gangrene, pyæmia, and death. When surgeons lose 55 per cent. of their amputations of the arm, and seventy per cent. of their amputations below the knee, we know very well what that means. It is of no use to accuse the short rations, mouldy, "hard tack," or rough transportation; such men have assuredly been overcrowded or under-ventilated. They have breathed the effluvia of each other's wounds, until their whole systems were permeated with the germs of putrefaction, and were ready to succumb to every operation, however slight. American surgeons tried that out on the large scale early in the war, but fortunately, they had sense enough to learn from experience, and not to perpetuate their early blunders.

I have no doubt that the following is a true account of the matter. Frenchmen have very little comprehension of the amount of fresh air which wounded men require. Even Velpeau, that old giant of French surgery, was a wretched sinner against science in this respect. I well recollect walking the rounds of his hospital with him, and noticing that his wards literally stank with foul air. I was not at all surprised to notice in his hospital reports, that in the winter season (when windows are shut, and fresh air almost excluded) he had a regular annual epidemic of malignant erysipelas. When the men field-officers, and surgeons of an army are alike destitute of any idea of the danger of ill-ventilation, death will reap a harvest out of their ranks. The plains of Lombardy are full of villages and buildings of every description, erected for anything else but ventilation. I presume the wounded were crowded into these buildings, in the first place, as the nearest solid shelter. There they got their first poisoning. Then they were sent in ill-ventilated, crowded cars, by rail, to Genoa, and absorbed their second course of putrefacient germs. At Genoa, they were placed into, close, sea-going vessels, which are the most deadly and unventilable machines ever contrived for the destruction of wounded men, and taken a voyage to Marseilles, and thus drank their third course of putridity. If any of them did not die by this time, it was because they were proof against all ordinary causes of destruction. I presume that this, or something like it, was the true surgical history of the Italian campaign of Napoleon III. If the French surgeons, in their next war, will see to it that every wounded man, from the hour of battle to the day of his recovery or decease, breathes no air but that which is as fresh and pure as that in the sky, they will find that their statistics of amputations will compare favorably with those of any nation.—*Chicago Med. Examiner.*

—Professor Gluge has been elected Rector of the University of Brussels.

FORT WAYNE, IND., August 25th, 1869.

DR. N. S. DAVIS, Chicago, Ill.:

DEAR DOCTOR:—Having recently made use of carbolic acid for the destruction of maggots, inhabiting a locality which rendered their mechanical removal impracticable, with good results, and never having seen an account of the same application, I am moved to give an account of my experiment.

On the 4th inst., I was called to a case of *epithelial carcinoma*, in which the soft parts of the nose had been entirely destroyed by the insidious disease, which had also penetrated far into the nasal fossa, and rendered the poor sufferer an object of pitiful disgust by its terrible work; and now, as if this was not enough, she had fallen victim to the fly, and was verily food for the worms while she yet lived. The sight was indeed most sickening; for the left nasal fossa, laid open and gaping from the removal of the soft parts, was completely filled with maggots, of large size, some of them being half an inch in length, and all, with their accustomed activity revelling on human flesh. To add to the disgust, one would occasionally come wriggling out of the patient's mouth; and the left eye, the sight of which was gone, was also filled with these loathsome things; so that it would seem that the entire face was alive with them. Whether the nasal duct had been enlarged for their convenience, or whether they were of a separate deposit in the eye, I know not.

The patient was a Frenchwoman, about 50 years of age, and had been afflicted for a number of years; but this once being the only time I saw her, I can give no history of the case, and none is needed. At this time, she was greatly prostrated, and when undisturbed by attendants, she did not suffer much pain, and manifested but little consciousness, whereas, a day or two before the maggots were noticed, her suffering was intense. Now, the removal of these intruders by the usual means was rendered out of the question, by the extreme sensitiveness of every part of the patient's face, which forbade a touch even; and to make no effort for their removal, even though I knew her to be dying, would seem criminal to her friends. Consequently, I ordered an anodyne, to aid her in bearing the attempt, and for the destruction of the maggots; as a vermifuge, I ordered a solution of carbolic acid, 20 gr. to the 3; to be applied greatly reduced at first, the strength to be increased as it could be borne. The result of this was eminently satisfactory; two or three applications not only destroying and removing every maggot, but also otherwise cleansing and purifying the foul sore in a remarkable degree, which was followed by general improvement, so that the patient rallied, partook again of nourishment, and for three or four days seemed a great deal better.

A word with regard to carbolic acid, as a wash for indolent ulcers. A case of two years standing, very severe, at times threatening the patient's life, which had bade defiance to almost every thing—carbolic acid included, used very strong—is now yielding and healing kindly under a very weak application of the acid. Of a solution of 20 grains to the 3, only 15 or 20 drops are added to a teacupful of water, and this is applied twice a day.

P. G. KELSEY, M.D.

—Correspondence Chicago Medical Examiner.