

OUR LONDON LETTER.

Editor CANADA MEDICAL RECORD.

SIR,—This month a great variety of subjects has been discussed by the London medical public, and one could find endless opportunities for study and plenty of food for reflection among the proceedings of the various societies—medical, surgical and ethical—which are open to the practitioner.

The regular lectures of the College of Physicians and the usual course of the College of Surgeons have been especially interesting. I have not seen in print Mr. Howard Marsh's lectures, now being delivered at the Royal College of Surgeons, on some points connected with the surgery of tuberculosis, but perhaps the most interesting part of them is his treatment of hip-joint disease. He pins his faith upon complete rest, both of the diseased parts and of the patient, in combination with good feeding, ventilation, etc., for a sufficiently long time to bring about a cure, and he not only urges this plan of treatment in the incipient and second stages of the disease but even in those long standing cases where erosion of the head of the bone and acetabulum has occurred, and where sinuses have formed about the joint—the true third stage—as opposed to the usual treatment by excision. He produced a large number (over thirty) of cases, in half of which this last state of things had been present, where a cure had been brought about and a serviceable limb preserved. Mr. Marsh threw out a challenge to those who advocated operative procedure to show as good results. The lecturer has had a very large experience of diseases peculiar to children and his opinion on such subjects as this ought to carry great weight. The next three lectures are to be delivered by Prof. M. Berkley Hill, on some affections of the genito-urinary organs.

At the College of Physicians Dr. Lauder Brunton has been giving the Croonian lec-

tures upon the relationship between chemical structure and physiological action. There was nothing new advanced, but a good many old facts were put in a strikingly new light. The nature of that mystery, the chemical force, was well handled by him in the second part of his first lecture. His illustration of the effect produced by rearrangement of the atoms in a molecule, or the subtraction of a single atom therefrom, reminds one of the repressed smile which passes round a church congregation when the clergyman makes an effective "hit" during his sermon. The illustrations referred to are not only good but they furnish a hint to other lecturers who deal with deep (and dry) subjects, that it does no harm to descend occasionally from the sublime to a lower level. "Slight alterations," says he, "in the composition of words, the introduction or abstraction of a single letter, will often completely change their meaning, and slight alterations in chemical substances will change their properties. Thus one sees in railway carriages the announcement to passengers "wait until the train stops," modified by some one scraping out the "t" so that it reads "wait until the rain stops," and then some one else scrapes the lower half of the letter "R," after which it reads "wait until the pain stops." I frequently see an example which is indeed a common one both in schools and colleges. On a certain door the words "class room" were originally painted, but certain ingenious students have amused themselves by obliterating first the "c" and then the "l" and turning the original word first into "lass room" then into "ass room." Just as the successive removal of these two letters completely altered the meaning of the original word, so the removal of letters symbolic of two elements from a chemical formula will completely alter the nature of the substance represented by it." Speaking of ptomaines being the cause of diseases as opposed to the early notion that it was the microbe itself and