

THE CANADA MEDICAL RECORD

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MONTREAL, MAY, 1894.

THE UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE OF THE FUTURE.

The necessity of having one language that would pass current among scientific or learned people all over the globe was discussed at a recent meeting at the New York Academy of Medicine, when one gentleman read a paper on the advantage of Greek as a universal language. While we cannot agree with him on either of the dead languages Greek or Latin, we are heartily in favor of either French or English, as, practically speaking these two languages are in daily use throughout the world. English of course is already an almost universal language, it being the language of North America, the British Isles, Australia, New Zealand and a large portion of India. All that would be required to make it entirely universal would be for the government of each country to exact that English be taught in the public schools, in addition to the mother tongue: thus in Russia, English and Russian; in Germany, English and German; in France, English and French; in Italy, English and Italian, and so on. We could thus meet as scientists of any profession and have a common language, familiar to all. English is not only the most used language in the world, but it is the language of commerce, and thus is understood wherever the ships of Great Britain or America trade. It is the language which could be made universal with the least expenditure of effort, very different from the acquirement of

Latin or Greek, which would be a herculean task. The necessity for some such arrangement was very forcibly demonstrated at the recent Congress in Rome, where we see by our exchanges that only papers read in Italian received a hearing. We presume the same thing will happen in Russia, so that these International Congresses will degenerate into national ones, and thus the principal object, namely, the interchange of medical thought, will be completely lost sight of. Instead of having four official languages, we trust that the next Congress will only have two, namely, English and French.

BOOK NOTICES.

LECTURES ON AUTO-INTOXICATION IN DISEASE, OR SELF-POISONING OF THE INDIVIDUAL. By Ch. Bouchard, Professor of Pathology and Therapeutics, Member of the Academy of Medicine, and Physician to the Hospitals, Paris. Translated, with a Preface, by Thomas Oliver, M.A., M.D., F.R.C.P., Professor of Physiology, University of Durham; Physician to the Royal Infirmary, Newcastle-upon-Tyne; and Examiner in Physiology, Conjoint Board of England. In one octavo volume; 302 pages. Extra cloth, \$1.75 net. Philadelphia: The F. A. Davis Co., publishers 1914 and 1916 Cherry Street.

Death frequently carries off in a few hours or days individuals who are in the prime of life and in apparent good health, and at whose post-mortem the most careful examination fails to reveal alterations of structure such as can explain the fatal stroke. Epidemics, not of a specific character, but traceable to poisoned water or food, have unexpectedly appeared in certain neighborhoods; or members of a marriage party have died without much warning, death being attributed, and very properly, to some article of diet partaken of at the wedding-feast. These are the cases that have aroused public opinion and awakened professional interest in a subject toward the elucidation of which the pathological chemist has vied with the bacteriologist.

Bouchard, in his "Auto-Intoxication," clearly indicates to us that man is constantly standing, as it were, on the brink of a precipice; he is continually on the threshold of disease. Every moment of his life he runs the risk of being overpowered by poisons generated within his system. Self-poisoning is only prevented by the activity of his excretory organs, chiefly the kidney, and by the watchfulness of the liver, which acts the part of a sentinel to the materials brought to it by the portal vein from the alimentary canal. Disease is not something