

THE CANADIAN MEDICAL TIMES.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL OF
MEDICAL SCIENCE, NEWS, AND POLITICS

KINGSTON, SATURDAY, AUGUST 30, 1873.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Communications and reports solicited. Correspondents must accompany letters, if intended to be printed anonymously, with their proper signature, as a guarantee of good faith.

TERMS OF PUBLICATION.

THE MEDICAL TIMES is supplied six months for ONE DOLLAR. Address orders and remittances to JAMES NEISH, M.D., Kingston.

POSTAGE ON THE MEDICAL TIMES.—The rate of postage on the Medical Times is Five Cents per quarter.

The isolation of the cholera-infected persons who landed in London from Hamburg seems to have been effectual in preventing the spreading of the disease. No fresh cases had broken out up to the 7th August, and at that date no authentic reports of any case of cholera in the United Kingdom had been made public. The presumptive lack of vigilance under which the Swedish emigrants made their way into the very heart of the metropolis has been severely criticised in certain quarters.

The Government of Saxony has consulted the Medical College of the State with regard to compulsory vaccination, and this learned body has just presented a report giving an array of facts bearing upon compulsory vaccination, recommending its practice and also of revaccination. Some of the statistics are drawn from the experience of the late Franco-German war, and are very telling. Most probably compulsory vaccination will soon become law in Saxony. During the late epidemic there was an immense mortality in this part of Germany among unvaccinated persons, and it is this which has drawn the attention of the government to the question.

The London meeting of the British Medical Association—held from the 5th to the 8th of August—was a most brilliant and successful one. The members have never on any previous occasion attended the meetings in such vast numbers. The attendance of distinguished foreigners made such a concentration of medical notabilities which has rarely been equalled. Sir William Ferguson's address from the president's chair, was upon the somewhat unexpected subject of pure water. The address in medicine by Dr. Parkes, of Netley Hospital, was a most interesting retrospect of the progress of medicine in the last forty years; that in surgery by Prof. Wood dealt with the antiseptic system, the radical cure of hernia, and other surgical topics. The success of the meeting has been mainly due to the fact of its having been held in the metropolis, as when the Association met in London eleven years ago it had then a very successful meeting.

We gather from the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal that, in June last, the Boston Society for Medical Observation passed a resolution to petition the mayor and city government, in the cause of morality and public decency, not to license such an exhibition as the "Gallery of

Anatomy," so-called, destroyed in the recent fire. To this resolution the mayor, in July, returned an answer that the proprietor of the gallery had not as yet applied for a new license for his exhibition, but that such an application would be met by a refusal whenever made. The mayor also stated that another applicant recently applied for a license for a similar exhibition and was refused by the board of aldermen. The suppression of these improper exhibitions in Boston is a wholesome example to other cities, an example which New York and Chicago would do well to follow. This "Gallery of Anatomy" exhibition was "a collection of anatomical models and dissections, with representations of skin and venereal diseases, most improper for public exhibition, and calculated to excite the morbid curiosity of the young, together with its peculiar forms of hypochondria. Vile pamphlets were on hand to induce those having or fearing disease to consult the proprietor. The harm which this single establishment must have done cannot be calculated." Our contemporary finally observes, "It is good to see the government take so effective a step in the interests of public morality, and it gives us much needed encouragement to continue our efforts for the suppression of quackery."

REPORT YOUR CASES.

Every intelligent member of the profession should feel personally bound to contribute to its advancement. In this direction the following remarks, from Dr. Tilt's Address before the Obstetrical Society of London, are in point, and should be heeded:—

"Every now and then there crop up in everybody's practice 'representative' cases—cases which well illustrate a mode of treatment, or confirm some theory, or show the fallacy of another. These are the cases we want, and there can be no excuse for not recording them; for although many of you are too busy to write papers, all can carefully note down the particulars of a case, and we ought all of us to bring ourselves to feel it as a crime to let a little trouble interfere with the careful recording of an important case. If we [this Society] did nothing in the course of each year but to well sift a considerable number of such cases, and to issue them, stamped, as it were, with the seal of authority, we should be labouring most efficiently toward the intelligent reconstruction of medicine; for its imperfection undeniably depends on the deplorable inaccuracy with which cases are collected, if one can call cases the shreds and tatters of half-ascertained facts that we so often meet with in medical works."

GENERAL MEDICINE.

ON SOME EFFECTS OF SMOKING
AMONG WOMEN.

By JAMES NEISH, M.D., Kingston.

In some parts of Canada it is not an uncommon thing to find women of the lower class addicted to smoking tobacco. The same class of women are often at the same time given over to the consumption of strong tea; and these two

agents acting together or separately give rise to a well-marked train of effects. Inordinate tea-drinking, as is well known, disposes to nervous affections, and causes an exaggeration of all ordinary nervous manifestations. Tobacco-smoking also gives rise to nervousness, and is more particularly chargeable with benumbing certain of the special senses, as of sight, and with injuring the nervous supply to the involuntary muscular system. It acts apparently more on the nervous system of organic and animal life than on the intellect, though the deficiency in the special senses which it produces is an inroad upon the perceptive faculties. Tobacco impairs the nervous tone of the stomach and alimentary canal and affects also the nervous energy which presides over the circulatory system. Some of these effects are strikingly manifested in women.

No doubt it is owing to the finer, more susceptible and delicate nervous organization of the female, as well as to conditions of life from which man is exempt, that these effects are so manifest. We do not, for instance, expect to find examples of the evils of drinking strong tea among men; and yet among the backwoods settlers of Canada and among many farmers tea-drinking is carried on to an excessive extent. Morning, noon and night is this beverage on the table, to the exclusion of coffee or chocolate, and to the exclusion more particularly of that wholesome and invaluable but too often despised fluid among farmers, the inestimable milk. Among these men we might notice that tea-drinking would declare itself in effects; but either owing to a natural ruggedness of constitution or to the tonic influence on the nerves of a life in the open air, the effects are unimpressed or are worked off. It is much the same with respect to tobacco. Some men smoke considerably apparently without deleterious effect. Let, however, a woman take to the pipe, and if she smoke to any inordinate extent the effects will be sure to follow in a much more obvious degree.

Naturally women are more subject than men to nervous affections. Hysteria haunts them. Chorea troubles girls more than boys. Neuralgia is more common with the sex than with men, and is apparently of much greater severity in their case. As has been hinted at, their organization has much to do with this. So also has their mode of life. Instead of leading an open air life their avocations are domestic and sedentary. The enervating influence of hot rooms debilitates them. As a general thing they spend the winter housed up in small rooms excessively heated by large stoves. This confinement to the house in an over-heated and contaminated air injures the general health, and leaves them devoid of that vigour, which, in the case of men working out of doors, enables them to throw off the bad influences of tea and tobacco.

I purpose in this paper to note certain effects of tobacco-smoking among women such as I have observed amongst those known to be smokers or in the case of women who have secretly smoked and acknowledged the practice when questioned respecting it on account of its effects being obvious or suspected.