

sweeten the water and fertilize the earth. To purify the air of human habitations it was found necessary to abolish cess-pools: hence the construction of large drains for the purpose of remedying the evil; but while the annoyance to our local habitations was to a certain extent ameliorated it has been found to be a grand mistake, not only in a sanitary point of view, but economically, as we are simply getting rid of a large amount of animal and vegetable matter which can be utilised, and which, under present circumstances, destroys the purity of our rivers, impoverishes our land, and, at the same time, renders pestiferous the air we breathe.

Death has been busy in the ranks of the profession. The celebrated Louis, of Paris, is no more. He died at the advanced age of 86 years. In London, England, Frederick C. Sky closed his mortal career on the 15th August, and more recently comes to us the announcement of the death of Alfred Poland, of Guy's Hospital.

CONFESSION NO PROOF OF GUILT.

The *Lyon Médical*, of April 28, 1872, refers to the case of girl aged twenty, supposed to be seven months pregnant. After an attack of hemorrhage her size seemed to have considerably diminished, and the girl, being closely questioned on the subject, said that, becoming aware of the discharge, she repaired to the closet, where she stayed ten minutes. She added that all had escaped, but that she had not time to look, as she was being called by her mistress. A midwife and the parish surgeon both declared that the girl had been recently confined. She was now again assailed with questions, and told that, for her own sake, she had better make a clean breast of it, as no fœtus had been found in the closet. Perhaps, it was suggested, she had thrown it into the pigstye. The poor creature at first denied such a thing, but at last confessed that it was so. A search was made, but no child was discovered. She was tried for concealment of birth, on her own confession, and sentenced to six months' imprisonment. The girl had not been taken into custody in consideration of her free confession, and she quietly proceeded to the gaol. When admitted it was found that she was far advanced in pregnancy, and soon gave birth to a healthy girl. By the French law she could no longer appeal, as more than ten days had elapsed since the verdict; but the judge, having the power of appealing within two months, did so, and the girl was acquitted.

This case shows that confession, which is looked upon as the clearest proof of guilt, cannot always be relied upon. And what shall we say of the surgeon and the midwife? The examination was probably hurried and incomplete, and the conclusion arrived at on seeing the signs of recent abundant hemorrhage. This case, even in a simple obstetrical point of view, is full of valuable hints.