

tions were impeded principally by the oedematous state of the soft parts, Mr. Holt was induced to believe that the osseous affection was confined to the os calcis. This diagnosis was, however, not fully relied on, as it was rather difficult to examine the parts accurately, owing to the considerable swelling of the posterior part of the foot, and, as the patient's health was, besides, in a very weak state, Mr. Holt preferred delaying any active interference until some improvement in the general condition of the boy had taken place. He was therefore put upon good diet, the limb placed in the situation best calculated to favour the return of the venous blood, and the part kept warm and moist by bread poultice.

These measures were attended with considerable benefit; in about two months, both the appearance of the foot, and the general health, had materially improved. A consultation was now held, and it was decided, the disease being ascertained to be principally seated in the os calcis, that that bone should be cut down upon, and either wholly or partially removed.

The patient was put under the influence of chloroform, and the bone brought into view by a T incision, and a little dissection. The soft parts were still considerably thickened, but the flaps being dissected back, Mr. Holt removed, with the bone forceps and gouge, as much of the calcaneum as had suffered caries. The wound was kept open by a piece of lint, as it was expected that some portions of bone might still come away when suppuration was fairly established.

The further progress of the case was very satisfactory; the limb was kept at rest; the patient had a nutritious diet; his bowels were duly regulated, and in about two months after the operation, he was so well that he began to use his foot. The wound had been allowed to cicatrize, as, contrary to prevision, no more necrosed bone was thrown off. The boy was discharged, with the advice not to bear his weight upon the foot yet, but to use a crutch for a little time. The influence of the open air will no doubt still more invigorate his health; and it is extremely likely that the patient will eventually be enabled to walk tolerably well with the affected foot, as the thick tissues about the heel will gain more and more in hardness, and eventually supply the place of the portion of the os calcis which has been removed.

It will, of course, strike every surgeon that in excision of bones the ultimate result will be obtained in a comparatively short time, when only a small wound is made, and an inconsiderable portion of bone removed; but that cicatrization and consolidation will be the longer in being established as the wound has been larger, and a greater amount of bone taken away. The chances of success are likewise greatest when the ablation of bone, as in Mr. Holt's case, does not interfere with a joint; for when only a part of the bone is taken off, granulations will spring up on the divided osseous surface, and there will be an active tendency to the reproduction of the removed portion of bone, which may be so vigorous as almost to restore it to its original size. It must, however, be confessed, that one of the causes of the tardiness of cure in operations of the above kind, is the fact, that most of those who require it (traumatic cases excepted) are of a strumous habit, and their tissues slow in the work of repair.

EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

A PUBLIC meeting was held at the Hanover-square Rooms on Tuesday evening last, for the establishment of this Society, the formation of which has been in progress for the last six months, under the management of Mr. Tucker, (with whom it originated,) together with other zealous promoters of the scheme.

Lord Ashley occupied the chair, vacating it in an advanced stage of the proceedings, after which it was occupied by Dr. Babington, the president-elect of the Society. The meeting was most respectably and numerously attended, nearly 200 gentlemen being present, among whom we observed many of the most distinguished members of the profession. The interest excited in the objects of the Society appeared to be unusually great, and the meeting would doubtless have been much larger, but that there happened to be a dinner of the Apothecaries' Society the same evening. The speeches delivered on the occasion were eloquent and appropriate, and were listened to with mute and undivided attention on the part of the audience. The whole of the proceedings were conducted with the utmost propriety, and a spirit of harmony and cordiality prevailed, not less gratifying to the promoters of the Society than honourable to the profession. The meeting was, in fact, an appeal from the profession to the public for help and encouragement in effecting a mighty effort for

the public weal. The necessity for further investigation into the nature of epidemic visitations, together with the imperfection of our present knowledge of the subject, was candidly admitted by the professional speakers, and even forced upon the attention of the laity, who, on their part, received the appeal with sympathy, and responded to it in a most grateful tone of encouragement and generosity.

The CHAIRMAN opened the business of the meeting in an eloquent oration, which he commenced by alluding to the appalling fact, that upwards of 12,000 persons died annually in the metropolis of epidemic diseases, and that they appeared to be depending upon causes always more or less in operation, and probably, to a great extent, preventible, provided the conditions of their prevalence were better understood and more carefully anticipated. The object of this institution was to remove this opprobrium, an object which commends itself to all minds in all nations; for it was not a mere question of theory or taste, but the discovery of truth, and the application of that truth to the great benefit of mankind. He regarded it, not only in its medical, but also in its moral and social bearing. Epidemics and their existing causes, bad drainage, deficient supplies of water and ventilation, and the overcrowding of habitations, tended to produce widows, orphans, pauperism, licentiousness, and intemperance. His lordship alluded to the tendency of the day to the aggregation of large masses of the people to carry out the application of the advancing science of the times to useful arts and commerce, thus, in the present state of things, augmenting the influence of epidemic diseases. One object of the Society would be, to inquire how this aggregation of masses might be rendered innocuous. His lordship concluded by urging the Society to proceed in a right spirit, not for the sake of eulogy, but desiring, with one heart and mind, to effect a true and lasting benefit upon mankind. [We are sorry our limits will not allow a more detailed report of this interesting speech.]

The following resolutions were then proposed, and carried unanimously—viz.,

1. That a Society be forthwith established for the investigation of epidemic diseases, to be called the "Epidemiological Society," and that all gentlemen interested in its objects shall be eligible as members.
2. That the Society shall be governed by a president, vice-president, council, and other officers.
3. That Dr. Babington be requested to accept the office of President of the Society.
4. That the following gentlemen be requested to act as vice-presidents—viz., Thomas Addison, M.D.; Richard Bright, M.D., F.R.S.; Sir B. C. Brodie, Bart., F.R.S.; Sir W. Burnett, Kat., K.C.H., F.R.S.; Sir C. M. Clarke, Bart., M.D., F.R.S.; Rev. Thomas Dale, M.A., Canon-Res. of St. Paul's; H. D. Grainger, Esq., F.R.S.; Sir Charles Hastings, M.D., Worcester; J. Haviland, M.D., Regius-Professor of Physic, Cambridge; Sir James McGrigor, Bart., K.C.T.S.; John Nussey, Esq.; John Propert, Esq.; G. L. Roupell, M.D., F.R.S.; Thomas Southwood Smith, M.D.; Colonel Sykes, F.R.S.; Thomas Watson, M.D.

5. That the following gentlemen do constitute the council—viz., Jacob Bell, Esq.; James Bird, M.D.; Golding Bird, M.D., F.R.S.; A. Bryson, M.D., R.N.; G. Busk, Esq., F.R.S.; W. B. Carpenter, M.D., F.R.S.; R. Greenhalgh, Esq.; W. W. Gull, M.D.; E. Headland, Esq.; A. Helsham, M.D.; T. Hunt, Esq.; W. Jenner, M.D.; R. Gordon Latham, M.D., F.R.S.; H. B. Leeson, M.D., F.R.S.; J. O. McWilliam, M.D., F.R.S.; J. Marson, Esq.; E. Parkes, M.D.; W. Percivall, Esq.; E. C. Seaton, M.D.; F. Sibson, M.D., F.R.S.; E. Sieveking, M.D.; J. Simon, Esq., F.R.S.; J. Snow, M.D.; C. E. Walsh, Esq.

The following are some of the more interesting points alluded to by the several speakers.

Dr. BABINGTON wished to correct an error which had appeared in a portion of the periodical press, to the effect that he was the founder of the Society. He must disclaim this honour. The merit of originating the Society was exclusively due to Mr. Tucker. He (Dr. Babington) had only, in common with others, cheerfully given a helping hand, when solicited to do so by Mr. Tucker, and he felt it incumbent upon him thus publicly to state the fact. The subject was not new; from the time of Hippocrates to the present, epidemics had engaged much of medical attention. They were rife in the middle ages, but still more so of late. There were, however, new circumstances connected with them. The physical sciences had made great advances of late. Animal chemistry, human and comparative physiology, meteorology, and microscopic anatomy, might be considered as new sciences, all bearing an application to the theory of epidemic diseases. And it must be impossible for one man, or for a number of men, separately engaged, to work

out the many problems presented to their attention. It has been said that great discoveries have been made by individuals, not by a body of men. This is not wholly true, and, if it were, the Society does not contemplate interfering with the exertions of others, otherwise than by facilitating their labours in every possible way. It is then referred to the recent discoveries in magnetism, to Reid's theory of storms, and other important results of combined observations, which could not, by any possibility, have been discovered by one man, or by voyagers in one ship. In the study of epidemics, there is a vast field for inquiry. Their causes, the question of contagion, (a question which one individual despairing of ever seeing settled, and declined to join the Society on that account.) the incubation of diseases, the period of a building remaining infected after the removal or recovery of a patient, and the method of treatment or cure. Indeed, through our ignorance of these subjects opprobrium has fallen on our art. But we may hereafter be enabled to obtain greater insight into all these things. The question of the treatment of yellow fever was once in the same predicament. The propriety of bleeding was much disputed. It is now known that bleeding is always fatal in this disease. If only some such negative fact were discovered of cholera, it would guide us at least to avoid doing mischief, and point indirectly to some positive discovery. One good must certainly result from the formation of this Society. The public will feel that medical men are alive to the subject, and sincerely anxious to apply their minds and their means for the public benefit. But they do expect the public to respond to this. The medical members not only give their time and their talents, but their annual guinea to the Society. But this will not be by any means sufficient to carry out the necessary researches. Accordingly, any gentleman interested in the objects are eligible as subscribers, and their subscriptions need not be limited to that sum. Also donations from the public to any amount will not be refused; and if necessary, it is hoped, grants from Government for some of the specific purposes contemplated by the Society will be forthcoming as they have been on other occasions.

Dr. Addison joined cordially in the congratulations of his friends, that this Society commences its operations under such happy auspices as the sanction of the noble chairman. He was only giving utterance to a sentiment common to all present, when he said that the mere presence of Lord Ashley, on the occasion, proved at once that the object of the Society was the welfare and happiness of mankind. Nor was the Society less happy in the fostering care of a physician, who, if not the founder of the Society, will ever be identified with its origin. His friend Dr. Babington had not only devoted his especial attention to the subject, but he was as much esteemed as well known, as an honourable, upright, and exemplary member of the profession. The best and only reward the institution promises to its supporters is the sympathy of the benevolent, the applause of the good, and the unaffected gratitude of all parties. The investigation of epidemics has been limited in a great measure, hitherto, to the exertions of individuals; but it is far beyond their scope. And if the Society opens the remotest prospect of so understanding their diseases as to prevent or mitigate their ravages, it is well worthy of being established.

Dr. GOLDING BIRD reiterated the opinion that all who have had any experience in these investigations must know that no individuals can possibly be equal to the task. Individuals are prejudiced, and are apt to describe facts as they appear to them, or rather, as they wish them to appear; and one advantage of the Society is, that facts are submitted to others, and are subjected to a strict ordeal before they are placed on record. Thus we shall have a large mass of observation which can be depended on. None of the occurrences connected with epidemics happen by accident. They obey fixed laws. Astronomy presents apparent accidents, but further observation shows that they are only apparent. So the ordinary deviations from health must depend upon causes susceptible of investigation. The discoveries which we hope to make may not be so sublime or so magnificent as the discovery of a new planet; but they may tell more to the relief of suffering and the moral and social benefit of mankind.

JOHN PROPERT, Esq., said that these discussions might be tedious and sickening to some minds, but when the good of mankind was the object, he was sure that Lord Ashley would be the last man to be weary or disgusted. He cordially approved of the constitution and government of the Society.

R. D. GRAINGER, Esq., hailed the establishment of this Society as one of the most important movements recently made for sanitary purposes. The necessity for investigating

these diseases arose, not merely from the difference of opinion in the profession, but from the alarming increase of epidemic diseases. For seven or eight years there had been a steady increase, particularly in one class—diarrhoea. In the year 1846, the mortality from this cause was seven times greater than in 1838; and in the year 1848, the deaths from various epidemics exceeded, by 4000, all the deaths from cholera; and in the year 1849, in the heart of the richest neighbourhood in London, the value of human life had become lower than in any civilized locality in modern times. He congratulated his brethren on the formation of a Society, the chief duties of which would be, to collect, arrange, and record facts—things beyond all price. At this time there is a storehouse of facts, which only require arrangement and examination to be applied to useful purposes. He alluded to the certainty of the organic laws. The true theories of disease are not merely guesses in the midst of uncertainty—they are laws to be demonstrated by facts; but the discovery of these can only be accomplished by division of labour.

Dr. Sisson congratulated the Society in glowing terms on the peculiar fitness of Dr. Babington for the office of president. An important advantage was, that in Dr. Babington we had a mind trained in looking at the subject in all its breadth. His attention had not been limited to one or two features or one or two visitations; he had traced the sad history from the middle ages to the calamitous year 1849; he had studied its ravages, not only in one country or district, but from east to west—not one epidemic had engaged his attention, but all. He had looked at them, not as arising from one cause, but as connected with all those influences which surround the whole world of physical agencies. Epidemics were not confined to the human race nor to the animal world: vegetables were alike exposed to them, and the potato-blight preceded the cholera. The subject was full of difficulties, but must not remain unexplored. Much necessity existed for such a Society as this.

CHARLES HANKINS, Esq., had great pleasure in presenting himself before the meeting as an unprofessional man. Mr. Grainger had said that the medical profession had lacked encouragement in their investigations. He (Mr. Hankins) was sure they deserved encouragement, and he trusted the public would be ready to assist; and when they knew who the officers of the Society were, they would feel confidence in men who will not ignorantly or hastily adopt views or theories not well supported by facts. The president and the list of vice-presidents and council were a guarantee to the public. They inspired him with a full assurance, that under their government the objects of the Society would be fully carried out.

WILLIAM ROGERS, Esq., spoke with great energy and feeling in favour of the Society, urging its members to zealous co-operation. Sir H. Davy had said, that one fact was worth a thousand theories, and it would be the business of the Society to note the uniform recurrence of a fact; but this required the observation of many. Communication was the life and soul of study, and there was nothing which the Society might not expect to achieve. He tendered his annual guinea with great pleasure, and hoped the Society would meet with public support.

Dr. Roupell, C. J. B. Lord, Esq., Charles Cochrane, Esq., Dr. James Bird, and Dr. Allison, addressed the meeting, but our space will not permit any further allusion to their speeches.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

THE BIOGRAPHY OF DR. MARSHALL HALL.—THE MEETING AT REIGATE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—On perusing the interesting biographical sketch of Dr. M. Hall, I perceive that there is an omission respecting that celebrated physician, which I must beg of you to allow me to supply. Dr. Hall was an active member of the council of the British Medical Association, one of whose principal objects was the establishment of a FACULTY OF MEDICINE, which should comprehend (not confound) the various classes of the profession, and some of the greatest ornaments of the profession joined the Association for this purpose—viz., Grant, Grainger, Granville, Farr, Liston, Pilcher, Dundas, Thomson, &c.