

therapeutics. He deplors the absence of French books in the libraries, and the preponderance of "other"—which, being interpreted, means German—influences in Scandinavian science. One reason for this, according to M. Huchard, is that French publishers seldom send books to foreign parts except when they are asked, and it may be added, paid for, whilst the Germans scatter their works broadcast with a wise liberality. Of twenty-three books advertised in a Danish medical journal which M. Huchard examined, twenty-two were German and only one French; this was a work by M. Huchard himself, of which he had asked the publishers to send copies to the three Scandinavian countries. He points out further that while Germany sends her teachers into all countries of the world, the Deans of French Faculties do not see beyond the four walls of their schools. It would be well, in M. Huchard's opinion, if five *agrégés*, with a salary of £400 a year each, were sent to spread abroad the light of French science. The practical outcome of M. Huchard's mission is that the principal Scandinavian physicians have agreed with him to organise trips for medical study in Northern Europe. An organising committee for the purpose will be formed in Paris and reception committees in Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Christiania. It is intended that these trips shall begin in May, 1901, and become an annual institution. In this way French doctors will be able to visit the Northern countries not as simple tourists, but as medical men who will be welcomed by professional brethren and shown everything in the way of scientific edification that the countries visited have to show. The scheme, if it can be carried out, can hardly fail to be useful to France itself, not less than to the countries to which she wishes to send missionaries. There is no civilised nation so wrapped up in its own virtue, in a scientific sense, as France, and valuable as is the work done by her sons it will still be of advantage to them to learn something of what is being done elsewhere. An Athenian—or Parisian—blockhead is, as Dr. Johnson well said, the worst of blockheads.

#### THE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION SCHEME AT ABERDEEN.

At the meeting of the University Court on December 12th, under the presidency of Lord Strathcona, the new Lord Rector, the question of the University extension scheme was again considered, and there seems to be good reason to hope that the important additions to the buildings at Marischal College may be carried to completion in the near future. That the Church of the Grey Friars is the historical reminder of the origin of the College, since it was its inheritance, with the conventual buildings, by the Earl Marischal that determined the foundation of the College on its present site by him is well recognised. Sir William Geddes, in alluding to this fact, echoed the feeling of regret of all lovers of antiquity that this interesting relic should be lost. But at the same time the great advantages of the scheme which has now been adopted by the University Court—a scheme which, though it entails this loss, will allow of the future growth of the buildings on convenient lines, as well as permitting of a really fine frontage to the College—are certainly sufficient to counterbalance such a regret. The adoption of the scheme was moved by Lord Strathcona and seconded by Lord Provost Fleming; and the hopeful way in which the possibility of providing sufficient funds—some £70,000 to £80,000, it is reckoned—to carry the scheme into effect was alluded to suffices to raise the expectation that the deadlock in the protracted schemes for completing the buildings may shortly be removed.

#### THE TYPHOID OUTBREAK IN DUBLIN.

THE Local Government Board of Ireland has just sent to the North Dublin Rural District Council its decision regarding the inquiry held into the circumstances of the

recent outbreak of typhoid fever in Dublin. It points out that the first case at Castleknock was not recognised; that on August 17th a second case occurred in the person of a dairykeeper named Duffy, and that Dr. Cullen did not recognise the disease until September 2nd. During September 100 persons appear to have been attacked in the district and twelve or thirteen died. The dairy supplied the sergeants' mess at the Royal Irish Constabulary Depot, the canteen, the Besborough Police Barracks, the Morgan schools, and a convent, in all of which places cases of enteric fever occurred. The milk was found to contain the bacillus coli communis. The Commissioners deal with the evidence affecting the various officials concerned. They come to the conclusion that the epidemic might have been checked if Dr. Cullen had fulfilled his obligations under the Notification and the Public Health Acts, and they require him to tender his resignation as medical officer of the district. They also request the District Council to require the sub-sanitary officer to resign. As to the inspector of dairies, who is also inspector of dairies to the Dublin Corporation, the Board expresses the opinion that he should be required to resign the district appointment.

#### JUDGE FRENCH AND DOCTORS' FEES.

HIS Honour Daniel O'Connell French, Q.C., is a judge (of county courts), and we doubt not, like his learned brother in *Trial by Jury*, "a good judge too." But even judges have what in less legally sacrosanct personages would be called their prejudices, and we fear that Judge French is no exception. At any rate, we may say with all respect that he has peculiar views on certain subjects. In a case tried before him the other day at Bow County Court he is reported (in the *Sun* and *Evening News*) to have declared that a bill for £3 13s. 6d. rendered by a practitioner for attendance on a domestic who had been injured at a railway station was "preposterous." The visits were charged at the rate of two shillings each. His Honour ruled that "a shilling a visit is quite enough for attending a servant girl." A judge who allows himself to use such language can hardly complain if we characterise this deliverance as improper. Judge French has no sort of right to lay down a scale of fees for the medical profession in regard to attendance either on servants or county court judges. In the case in question the patient had brought an action for damages against the Great Eastern Railway Company, and it is simply preposterous—we thank Judge French for teaching us that word—that a scale of fees which might be applicable to the case of a poor girl should be held to be equitable when payment is claimed from a rich company. We shall be interested to learn of any other cases in which Judge French has denied to medical men the courtesy and fair treatment which they have, equally with the rest of the world, the right to expect and receive in a court of justice.

#### AN ARMENIAN PHYSICIAN OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY.

IN a communication read not long ago before the Académie de Médecine of Paris Vharam H. Torkomian gave an account of Mekhitar of Her, in Persian Armenia, an Armenian physician of the twelfth century. He was born in the second quarter of the century, studied first among the Persians, then among the Greeks, but mostly among the Arabians, and acquired an extensive knowledge not only of medicine, but of philosophy, and astronomy. He was private physician to Nerses the Great, called Chenorhali, or "Full of Grace," an Armenian archbishop who was one of the most illustrious poets and writers of his time. The physician lived in the greatest intimacy with the prelate, who dedicated several poems to him. The works of Mekhitar are lost, with the exception of one which found its way to France in the early years of the eighteenth century, when, on the initiative of Cardinal Fleury, a number

of Armenian manuscripts were bought in Constantinople for the Royal Library of Paris. Among them was a copy made in the seventeenth century of a work written by Mekhitar in 1184 at the request of Archbishop Krikor who at that time occupied the episcopal throne of Cilicia as Catholicos of the Armenians. The work bears the curious title *Consolation of Fevers*, which it is explained by the author is intended to convey the idea that the book consoles the doctor by instructing him and the patient by curing him. It is divided into 46 chapters. Fevers are classed in three groups: (1) fevers with and fevers without mould formation, (2) acute fevers and synochal fevers, (3) fevers with recurrence and fevers without recurrence. Fever is described as having its starting point in the heart and extending by way of the arteries over the whole body. The body is composed of three parts. The first of these comprises the three souls, that is to say, the natural soul which has its seat in the liver; the soul of life, the seat of which is the heart; and the soul of the emotions, situated in the front cavity of the head. The second comprises the four humours, to wit the blood, the bile, the *atrabilis* (black bile), and the sputum. The third comprises the hard parts, such as bones, ligaments, muscles, etc. Hence there are three kinds of fever. That which affects the three souls is called "ephemeral," as it lasts only a day. That affecting the humours is called "mouldy fever," for mould entering the humours burns them and thus produces heat. The fever which attacks the hard parts of the body is called consumptive, as it produces wasting wherever it finds an entrance. The causes of fever are external and internal. The former includes hot air, cold, sulphurous waters and astringent waters. Among internal causes are emotions, fatigue, care, hot drinks, and indigestible food. Mekhitar also describes fevers with cough, fevers arising from inflammation of the chest, small-pox, wounds, etc. The treatment of all these varieties of fever is given, but M. Torkomian reserves this for a further communication. The work, which is written in old Armenian, was printed from the copy in the Paris National Library—which is the only one known to exist—in 1832, by the Fathers of the Mekhitarist Congregation of Venice. Mekhitar probably died at the end of the twelfth century or the beginning of the thirteenth. His works, which were highly esteemed by his contemporaries, were looked upon as authorities by the Armenian medical writers who lived in the following centuries. Among these are Amir, Dolvat, Assar, and Bouniat, whose writings are included in the collection of Armenian manuscripts in the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris. Mekhitar's book contains ideas which seem to foreshadow certain doctrines of the present day, and his teaching contributed greatly to the evolution of medical thought in Armenia in his time, which was one of progress and prosperity for his country. M. Torkomian promises a further work on the subject.

#### THE LATE PROFESSOR CUMING, M.D.

A MEETING of friends of the late Professor Cuming was held at Queen's College, Belfast, on December 5th. It was unanimously resolved that some means should be taken to secure a permanent memorial of him in the College, and it was decided that this should take the form of a portrait to add to the historic series in the examination hall. An Executive Committee was formed, with President Hamilton (Chairman), Professor Lindsay and Dr. James Graham (Secretaries), and Professor Purser (Treasurer). Subscriptions—not to exceed two guineas—may be paid to the Treasurer at Queen's College.

#### ANCIENT SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS IN ATHENS.

A REMARKABLE collection of surgical instruments used in antiquity has just been restored to Greece through the intervention of the Greek Embassy in Berlin, and will

shortly be placed in a separate department of the Central Museum of Athens. The collection comprises several hundred instruments, the uses of which are for the most part doubtful or unknown. They are made of bone, glass, bronze, and iron, and belong to various periods, and were evidently mostly intended for operative purposes. Some are similar to instruments in use at the present day; for instance, there is a uterine speculum, not essentially differing from those of modern manufacture. Besides surgical instruments there are various vessels and utensils for the preparation and administration of remedies, and many feeding cups made of glass and bronze. The collection enables the student to form a pretty clear idea of medical practice in ancient Greece.

#### HOLIDAYS OF SCOTTISH PAROCHIAL MEDICAL OFFICERS.

THE difficulty experienced by parochial medical officers in Scotland to obtain leave of absence has long been felt, especially in remote Highland districts where they have no medical neighbours able to help, and where the expense of providing a substitute is out of all proportion to the emoluments attached to their office. In Ireland, as our readers are well aware, the Local Government Board has firmly insisted, in face of much opposition by individual Boards of Guardians, that officers are entitled to a holiday, and that the guardians must pay a reasonable fee to a substitute. There is every reason that a similar privilege should be given to the medical officers in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland who carry out their duties under many difficulties and disadvantages. We are glad to learn that it is proposed to bring the question before the Scottish Local Government Board with a view to the redress of a distinct grievance.

#### A FRENCH TUBERCULOSIS COMMISSION.

M. WALDECK-ROUSSEAU, the French Minister of the Interior, has just appointed a National Commission composed of forty-eight members, which is to investigate the practical means that should be adopted for the prevention of tuberculosis. M. Jules Siegfried, Member of the Senate, is Chairman, and among the Commissioners are Drs. Cornil, Pozzi, Theophile Roussel, Paul Strauss, Brouardel, Armaingaud, Bergerar, Bouchard, Chantemesse, Gallippe, Grancher, Landouzy, Lannelongue, Petit, Proust, Roux, Duclaux, Nocard, A. J. Martin, and Napias. The appointment of the Commission has not been hailed with enthusiasm by the French press, whether medical or general. The reason is, we gather, that nothing has so far come of the former Commission on the same subject which reported in 1896. The report which was drawn up by Professor Grancher was exhaustive in its range and definite in its recommendations. But they have not been acted upon, apparently for want of money.

THE Morison Lectures of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh for the present year were given by Dr. Byrom Bramwell, on the subject of Aphasia, on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday last, December 18th, 20th, and 22nd in the College Hall.

ON Thursday, December 14th, Professor Ogston bade farewell to the students in the surgery class in Aberdeen. He left on Friday for South Africa, and sailed from Southampton on Saturday. The lectures on Surgery at Aberdeen will be continued by Dr. Irvine Fortescue, the Assistant Professor. The duration of Professor Ogston's absence is uncertain, and he has consequently resigned the office of President of the Section of Navy, Army, and Ambulance at the annual meeting of the British Medical Association at Ipswich next year.