THE MONUMENT TO WILHELM MEYER.

ADDRESS OF SIR FELIX SEMON.

ON October 25th, the birthday of the late Dr. Hans Wilhelm Meyer, the "discoverer of adenoid vegetations," the beautiful monument erected in his honour by international contributions was unveiled at Copenhagen. The monument, of which the illustration on page 1441 gives a very good idea, consists of the bronze bust (more than life-size) modelled by a personal friend of the Danish physician, the Finnish sculptor Runeberg. It stands on a tall oblong pedestal of polished red granite, which in front bears the inscription:

Laegen¹ Hans Wilhelm Meyer,
Fredericia 25 October, 1824.
Venezia 3 Juni, 1895.

and on the back:

Dette Mindesmaerke
Reisted 1. Aaret 1898
ved Bidrag fra Danmark
og Udlandet.²

Below this inscription follow the names of the contributing countries:

Australia, Austria, Batavia, Belgia, Britannia,
Civitates Foederatae Americae Septentrionales,
Dania, Gallia, Germania, Helvetia, Hispania,
Hungaria, Italia, Norwegia, Polonia, Russia.

The pedestal in turn rests on a base of rough grey granite, which consists of a number of steps leading up to the bust. Whilst so far the monument follows generally accepted lines, a distinguishing and very poetic element is added to it by an extremely graceful female figure in bronze, more than life-size, representing the goddess Hygiea, who, mounting the steps and resting her left hand on the staff of Æsculapius, holds up in her right hand the palm of honour to the departed benefactor of mankind. The effect of this natural and original idea—which does the highest honour to the artist, Professor Bissen, a leading Danish sculptor—is at once solemn and pathetic.

The monument stands on the Geflon Plads, a square in the centre of one of the new boulevards which make Copenhagen one of the most beautiful of modern capitals, and the face of the bust looks very appropriately towards the institution for the deaf and dumb. In a few years, when the numerous new buildings in the immediate neighbourhood of the monument have been finished, and when the young trees around it throw their shadows over it, nothing more beautiful or more refined than this monument will be seen in a city distinguished by its fine examples of the sculptor's art.

The inaugural ceremony took place on Tuesday, October 25th, at 2 P.M. The Committee had invited Sir Felix Semon, of London—the initiator of the proposal to erect a monument to Meyer—to deliver an address on the occasion, and to hand over the memorial to the custody of the Municipality of Copenhagen, and Sir Felix complied with the request.

At the appointed time a very large and distinguished audience, which included the Mayor of Copenhagen, Mr. Ollgaard, representatives of the University, the family and friends of Dr. Meyer, Professor Bissen, the sculptor of the Hygiea, a large number of members of the medical profession and of the general public of Copenhagen, assembled. It had been the wish of the Committee to invite Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, who most graciously had accorded her patronage to the movement in Great Britain and Ireland, to grace the ceremony by her presence; but the recent lamented death of her august mother, the Queen of Denmark, of course made it impossible for her to carry out this intention, and equally prevented the attendance of other members of the Royal Family of Denmark.

The monument, which at the commencement of the ceremony was veiled from head to foot, was surrounded by a number of high flagstaffs, from the tops of which floated, together with the Danish flag, the flags of all nations which had contributed towards the memorial. In front of it a large stand was erected on which the widow and children of the deceased, the Mayor, and other specially-invited guests took their seats.

¹ Dr.

² This monument was erected in the year 1898 from contributions from Denmark and abroad.

The ceremony commenced by the singing of a cantata specially composed for the occasion by Herr E. v. d. Recke. After this Sir Felix Semon ascended the tribune, and delivered (by request of the Committee, in English) the following address:

Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,—The Executive Committee of the Wilhelm Meyer Memorial have delegated to me the signal honour to hand over the monument, erected by international subscriptions in his honour, to the care of the Copenhagen municipality. In fulfilling this pleasing task I much regret my inability to address you in the Danish tongue, and for this reason alone I must not trespass long upon your patience. At the same time this occasion is such a very unusual one that I may be permitted to say a few words pointing out its meaning and importance.

We are assembled here to-day to unveil a monument erected in honour of the late Dr. Hans Wilhelm Meyer. A monument in honour of a physician—that in itself is a very uncommon thing. To be immortalised by the sculptor's art in bronze or marble in a public place, has usually been reserved, from times of old, to some few classes of the community only. Great rulers, benevolent or warrior princes, distinguished statesmen, victorious generals and admirals—these are the privileged mortals in honour of whom most frequently monuments have been erected; more rarely has such a reward fallen to the lot of great artists, poets, painters, musicians, sculptors; still less frequently have men of science, philosophers, law-givers, inventors, and other leaders of intellect thus been distinguished; few and far between are monuments erected in honour of members of the medical profession. Nor is the reason of this far to seek. Slowly and by labour of many is the edifice of scientific medicine being erected. The brain work of the lifetime of a physician usually means hardly a single brick in this ever-growing structure. Even if of uncommon importance, his achievements rarely pass outside a comparatively narrow circle within his own profession; not often is his fame of a really universal character amongst his own compeers; still less frequently does it appeal to the imagination, to the gratitude of the community at large. Thus the ordinary fate of the scientific physician, even if in his day he has been successful in promoting, by teaching and writing, the welfare of mankind, as a rule is not of a largely resplendent character. A few complimentary obituary notices, the grateful recollection of some friends and pupils, not as a rule lasting longer than into the immediately following generation, finally a resting place for his name in those corners of medical literature in the development of which he has been most active—this is the summary of the life-work of most leaders of the medical profession.

What, then, has been the conspicuous merit of Hans Wilhelm Meyer that he should have been singled out for so unusual an honour as the one which is going to be paid to his memory to-day? The answer is easily given. It is now just thirty-one years since he was one day consulted by a girl, aged 20, who suffered from deafness, whose voice was most peculiar, and the expression of whose face was almost idiotic. Treatment directed to the ears and to the throat failed, and it was not until the puzzled observer one day introduced his finger into the space between the nose and throat that an unexpected solution was met with. Instead of penetrating into an open cavity, the finger was arrested by a large, soft, easily bleeding mass, a condition the existence and nature of which in those days formed a *terra incognita*. Meyer succeeded in removing this mass by operation, with the result that the deafness was materially improved, the voice became natural, and the idiotic expression of the face disappeared.

Gratifying as this result was in itself, it was however only then that Meyer's real merit commenced. Schopenhauer has truly said that not he is finder of a thing who lifts it from the ground and drops it again, but he who, takes it up and recognising its value, keeps it. If Meyer had regarded his experience in the light of a mere pathological curiosity, again years and years might have passed before the importance of the subject was realised. But with the true instinct of the scientific observer who develops what is ultimately to become an important truth from small beginnings, Meyer did not drop the clue which a casual observation had placed in his hands. He began studying the

subject in all its bearings; he examined the masses he had removed with regard to their structure, and finding them to be glandular in character gave them the name of "adenoid vegetations"; he investigated the results which obstruction of the space between the nose and throat exercises upon respiration, hearing, articulation, facial expression, general, mental, and bodily development; he examined 2,000 Copenhagen school children with regard to the frequency of this affection; he made himself the apostle of his own teaching by proclaiming it not only in his own country, but also in scientific publications abroad. In one word, to such an extent did he realise the true significance of his discovery that he left to his successors merely the addition of more or less important details, whilst the foundation of the edifice erected by him has remained unchanged from the time of his own first publication on the subject.

Nevertheless it cannot be said that this teaching at first made very rapid headway. When in 1881 he introduced a discussion on the subject at the International Medical Congress of London it came almost—I well remember—as a novelty to many of his audience, although that was mainly composed of specialists, and it was only in the next decade that the true importance of the subject was realised throughout the world. It was at first not easy to convince the bulk of the medical profession, the parents of the mostly juvenile patients, and the schoolmasters that a discovery had been made which, like few others in medicine, was of the utmost practical importance concerning the development of a healthy mind in a

healthy body of the rising generation, and it needed the irrefutable proof of the surprising improvement seen in the subjects of successful operations to make this conviction a universal one. But truth, though slowly, ever forces its onward way, and when Meyer three years ago closed his eyes he had the satisfaction of knowing that the value of his discovery had at last been universally recognised. Already then the number of those who through the timely removal of the obstructing glands had been saved from lifelong deafness or from the lasting results of obstructed nasal respiration amounted to many thousands, and the benefits achieved through Meyer's merits will continue to accrue in future times to hundreds of thousands and to millions.

The proposition made immediately after his death to erect a statue to him at Copenhagen under these circumstances met with the most sympathetic reception; committees were formed in almost every country in which scientific medicine is established; in Great Britain the movement was particularly favoured by the patronage which Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales most graciously extended to it; physicians, surgeons, specialists, general practitioners, grateful parents, former patients showed themselves anxious to contribute their mite towards a truly international monument of gratitude of his contemporaries towards the deceased great bene-

factor of the human race, and the result we see to-day before us, in the shape of this beautiful and touching monument, which will carry the names of the artists, Messrs. Bissen and Runeberg, to every quarter of the globe.

It is true that in the general chorus of approbation a few dissentient voices have been heard. "What after all," it has been said, "has been Meyer's extraordinary merit? He put his finger up behind a patient's palate, and found an obstruction which he removed, and which turned out to occur more frequently than could at first have been supposed." Very true, but need I remind my audience that the same specious argument has been used against the claims of Christopher Columbus? America had been there all the time, only waiting, as it were, for the bold sailor who dared to go westwards until he struck a new continent. But Columbus did it! The naso-pharyngeal cavity had been there waiting for its explorer ever since man in his present shape has been in existence; pathological obstruction of this cavity has been as old as the records of the sculptor's art allow us to go back. In the last paper on the subject, which Meyer wrote a few months before his death, he showed that the facial expression of some Greek statues and busts which have come down to our times left no doubt that the originals had been suffering from "adenoid vegetations;" mediæval portraits of historical personages prove the same fact. Any physician might have conceived the idea of investigating the subject as Meyer did in 1868, but it was left to Meyer to do it, and having done so to realise the importance of his discovery, whereby he became, without exaggeration, a true benefactor of the human race. That is why we are assembled here to-day, that is why we do honour to his memory.

Gentlemen, the country of Denmark has been rich in producing men of eminence in almost all branches of human activity. If in many instances the nature of their distinction is better known to their own compatriots than to the world at large, this is but natural, and is an experience which is repeated in every country under the sun. There are some Danes, however, whose names are household words throughout the civilised world, whose reputation is not a local but a universal one, and who, whilst their countrymen may be justly proud of them, belong, as it were, to mankind at large. Need I mention the names of Tycho Brahe, of Bertel Thorwaldsen, of Hans Christian Oersted, of Hans Christian Andersen, of Niels Gade? To those great names I think may be reverently added the name of Hans Wilhelm Meyer, one of the greatest benefactors to mankind medicine has known.

Mr. Mayor, in the name of the subscribers to this monument, who have gladly contributed towards this external sign of gratitude erected in memory of your great compatriot, I have the honour to deliver the monument of Hans Wilhelm Meyer to the safe keeping of the municipality of Copenhagen.

When the speaker addressed his concluding words to the Mayor, a sign was given and the veil fell from the monument, revealing the well-known features of Dr. Meyer and the beautiful figure rendering him so touching a homage.

The Mayor then ascended the tribune, and in the name of the City of Copenhagen expressed his warmest thanks to Sir Felix Semon and the subscribers for their gift, which he promised the municipality would faithfully keep for all times. He endorsed all Sir Felix had said about Meyer's great merits, and expressed his conviction that whatever further strides otology might make, Meyer's name would for ever remain one of the most honoured ones on its records.

Dr. Ernst Schmiegelow, the President of the International Executive Committee, added his and the Committee's thanks to those just expressed by the Mayor. He more particularly wished to thank the foreign subscribers for the compliment which they had paid to Danish medical science, and, indeed, to the whole Danish nation, in the person of Hans Wilhelm Meyer.

The ceremony concluded with the singing of the second part of the cantata; but the guests lingered for some time gazing at the beautiful work of art on the pedestal, on which meanwhile a number of splendid wreaths had been deposited.

In the course of the day a number of congratulatory telegrams and letters reached Dr. Schmiegelow, notably from the Dutch Otolaryngological Society, from the Amsterdam Medical Society (sent by Professor Guye, Drs. Voute and Burger), from Professor Uchermann (Christiania), from Dr. Delie (Ypres), from Mr. Creswell Baber (Brighton), and from others. Professors B. Fraenkel (Berlin) and Guye (Amsterdam), the Presidents of the German and Dutch Committees, had intended to be present but were prevented at the last

moment. Instead of the former, Dr. Edmund Meyer, of Berlin, the Treasurer of the German Committee, attended.

The festivities, which in every respect were most successful, were brought to a fitting conclusion by a dinner, given the same evening by Dr. Schmiegelow to the foreign representatives, the son of Dr. Meyer, the Mayor of Copenhagen, the sculptor, the members of the Committee, and a number of distinguished representatives of Danish Medical Science, amongst whom were Professors Gram, Hirschsprung, Salomonsen, Haslund, and many others.

It is an interesting circumstance, from an historical point of view, that almost immediately before the beginning of the ceremony, an opportunity had been given by Dr. Holger Mygind, the Treasurer of the Committee, to Sir Felix Semon to examine the very patient on whom Meyer, thirty-one years previously, had made his great discovery.

TYPHOID FEVER IN BELFAST.

DECLINE OF THE EPIDEMIC.

We are pleased to note the steady, if somewhat slow, decline of the epidemic of typhoid fever in Belfast. The number of cases notified in the week preceding the last report was 125, the numbers in the previous six weeks was 149, 151, 172, 164, 247, and 270 respectively. The death-rate of the city at the last return had fallen to 24.6 per 1,000, which is about the normal rate in Belfast.

DEFECTIVE DRAINS.

The Public Health Committee has been showing considerable energy and taking steps which promise well for the future. That the practical difficulties to be encountered are somewhat formidable is shown by the following report presented to the Joint Improvement and Public Health Committee of the Corporation.

Gentlemen,—In accordance with your resolution of September 20th, 1898: That a systematic test of all the drains in the city be made and that the head officers of the Public Health and Improvement Committees report what additional officers are necessary for this purpose, and that such officers be appointed, and a weekly return of the drains so tested be made to the above Committees,

We beg to submit for your consideration the following report:

The enforcing of this resolution would effect one of the most sweeping changes ever proposed by any committee of the corporation. In our opinion this resolution practically amounts to the sanitary reconstruction of the drainage of the great majority of the houses within the city. At present houses are tested by permission of the owner or tenant, who supplies the necessary labour for opening and closing the ground, and provides for the removal of materials interfered with. It may be a legal question if the officers of the corporation can enter into private property without permission and test the drains, unless they have reason to believe there is a nuisance on the premises; in that case entry may be made under a magistrate's order. Each tester would require an assistant and workmen for opening, closing, and making good the ground, and renewing the material damaged. Assuming that Belfast contains at present about 70,000 houses, and that one inspector and an assistant can thoroughly test and report on the drainage of six houses per day, so as to be available for legal evidence, thirty-nine inspectors, with their assistants and workmen, would be required (exclusive of expenses involved in conveying testing apparatus, etc.) to do the work in a year. This staff would be solely employed at drain testing, and would not include the large number of officials and workmen that would be required to carry out the reconstruction of old drains. All inspectors required for this work should be trained practical men, placed under the personal superintendence of an efficient engineer trained in sanitary work.—We are, Gentlemen, your obedient servants,

J. C. BRETLAND, City Surveyor,
CONWAY SCOTT, Executive Sanitary Officer.

We trust this adverse report will not induce the Public Health and Improvement Committees to shrink from the task to which they have set themselves. To most impartial readers this report will afford the strongest proof that the resolution to test the drains of the city was a most necessary and salutary decision. The City Surveyor and the Executive Sanitary Officer do not venture to assert that this examination is unnecessary, but only that it would be laborious and expensive. They hint in no obscure terms that if such an examination be made, its logical outcome will be the reconstruction of a large proportion of the old drains of the city. What is this but to admit that the drainage of the city is seriously defective? No doubt the proposed examination will take much time and a very large expenditure of money; but Belfast is a wealthy city, and can well afford to spend a good many thousand pounds on measures which will bring its death-rate down to the average of other great cities, and remove the stigma which rests upon it of being an insanitary city. Nothing is, in the long run, so expensive as bad sanitation.