acquired from personal attendance upon insane patients, especially when that mode of study is pursued under the guidance of experienced teachers, and those accustomed to instruct their junior brethren, in the wards of an hospital. From these remarks, it follows that the most useful method to adopt for improving the knowledge of medical men in mental diseases would be, in the first place, to open the doors of our great public hospitals for the reception of the insane, as, for instance, St. Luke's, Hanwell, and Bethlem, to medical students under proper regulations, should they feel desirous of investigating insanity, in the extensive fields for study which these institutions contain. It would likewise prove of much use if the medical corporations, prior to granting their diploma, were to exact attendance at such hospitals for a limited period, and also attendance at lectures on the nature, pathology, and curative treatment proper for that class of maladies."

The talented physician of the Hanwell Asylum proposes to deliver a course of lectures on insanity to the London students; if these lectures be given in the metropolis full opportunity of oral instruction will be afforded; but lectures are of little use unless united to clinical observation. The Hanwell Asylum is, we fear, too far distant from town to be made available as a clinical hospital of mental affections. We have, however, institutions in the metropolis which are perfectly suited for the purpose. Bethlem Hospital contains from 310 to 340 patients, most of whom labour under forms of insanity which are regarded as curable; the wards are extensive; and the medical officers of the establishment are men of extensive experience and acquirements in this particular department. Nothing, in short, as Dr. Webster observes "is really wanting at Bethlem Hospital to make the establishment in every way useful to the public, but a more free admission of medical students to the wards of the hospital, whereby the ultimate benefit accruing to society may be extensively disseminated."

We sincerely trust that the governors of Bethlem and St. Luke's, to whom the observations of Dr. Webster are chiefly addressed, will take the subject into their serious consideration. The objections against the admission of pupils into the wards of lunatic asylums are few, while the advantages to be derived are immense. Individual inconveniences should give way before considerations of public utility, and fully convinced are we that in no department of medical policy is there more room for improvement of a practical nature, and of extensive application, than in the education of medical men with a view to the proper treatment of mental disease.

In another part of the Journal will be found a Report from the Poor-law Committee of the Provincial Association, on the general order of the poor-law commissioners relative to parochial medical relief. The central council of the association have adopted the

suggestions of the poor-law committee, by communicating with the Home Secretary on the points mentioned in the report. It is much to be feared, however, that the question of medical relief has not been noticed by Sir James Graham in the bill which he introduced on Wednesday last for the continuation of the poor-law commission. The bill has not yet been printed; but in the analysis given by some of the political journals, we have in vain sought for proof that the just and temperate demands of the medical profession have received a thought from her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Home Department.

ROYAL MEDICAL AND CHIRURGICAL SOCIETY.

April 26, 1842.

Dr. MERRIMAN in the Chair.

A Case of Dislocation of the Knee, with Observations.
By HOLMES COOTE, M.R.C.S.

The object of the author in the relation of the case here presented, and in the observations which follow it, is to insist upon the practical inference, that in dislocation of the tibia forwards (or of the femur backwards) the injury to the ligaments, and other soft parts about the knee joint, is not necessarily such as to render the recovery of the limb in a perfectly useful state a forlorn hope, as it has been represented by writers of high authority, some of whom have almost regarded amputation as *primâ facie* necessary to save the life of the patient.

Boyer, among others, observes that "complete dislocations are rare, because the surface of the condyles of the femur is of so great extent, that, necessarily, ligaments, tendons, and all other soft parts, would be enormously torn; a circumstance that could not happen, unless the power producing the accident acted with extreme force," &c. Delpech speaks of these accidents in the same tone, as very serious, in the degree of laceration which must attend them, but is disposed to recommend caution in adopting the conclusion of some other writers, that amputation of the limb is necessary.

In the case related by the author, the reduction was easily effected, and the injury of the soft parts must have been slight, as the patient was on his legs, and able to run, in sixteen days. He enters at some length into the anatomical examination of the ligaments of the joint, for the purpose of showing that dislocation may take place without any material laceration of them. Some interesting remarks follow on the time required for the reunion of lacerated tendons and ligaments, partly founded on observations of the progress of cases in which the former have been divided on account of distortions; and the paper concludes with some considerations on the treatment applicable to distortions of the knee.

A Case of Fungus Hæmatodes. By S. W. J. MERRIMAN, M.D., Physician to the Westminster General Dispensary, Gerrard-street, Soho.

A delicate boy, seven years old, suffered for some months from debility, and anomalous rheumatic pains.

Two very painful tumours were then observed, one arising from the occiput, the other from the forehead: constant pressure on these tumours tended to diminish the pains: the tumours grew rapidly in size, spreading in various directions, by which the left eye was nearly thrust out of the socket; œdema supervened in the lower extremities, and death ensued in about ten weeks from the appearance of the tumours. The post-mortem examination showed these to be of a medullary nature: arising from the diploë, the internal table of the skull was scarcely at all affected, but the external was thickened, and covered, wherever the tumours had spread, with bony spiculæ shooting up into the morbid growth. Some of the ribs were also affected with the same disease, and many axillary, lumbar, and inguinal glands were converted into a similar bloody brain-like substance, but, generally speaking, the viscera were healthy. In conclusion, the author notices the boy's mother, who has nearly lost the use of her wrist and knee-joints by a species of chronic rheumatism, acting in a peculiar manner, and producing no distortion.

A Case of Congenital Cataract, where sight was acquired by couching at the age of twenty-three years.
By R. A. STAFFORD, Surgeon to the St. Marylebone Infirmary.

The disease in the case here related was of the capsulo-lenticular variety, and the operation was performed by depression, the lens and capsule being carried downwards and backwards into the vitreous humour out of the field of vision. The patient's recovery proceeded very satisfactorily, and in the course of it, phenomena were exhibited differing in some material respects from those described as having occurred in the cases narrated by Mr. Cheselden and Mr. Ware, in the Transactions of the Royal Society.

Among these phenomena, all of which are minutely detailed by the author, the most remarkable was the power gained by the patient, a very short time after the operation, of accurately estimating distance. The author believes that his patient was more advanced in age at the time of the operation than any other upon whom the operation for congenital cataract had previously been performed with success. Mr. Cheselden's patient was 13, and Mr. Ware's only 7.

ACADEMY OF MEDICINE, PARIS.

April 26.

ABSORPTION OF POISONOUS SUBSTANCES.

M. Orfila announced to the academy the results of numerous experiments, which prove—

1. That sulphuric, nitric, hydrochloric, and oxalic acids, diluted with water, are absorbed and may be detected in the urine.

2. That the same acids, in the highest degree of concentration, are also absorbed as they become diluted by the fluids of the intestinal canal, the exhalation of which they occasion.

3. That the absorption of the salts of lead, bismuth, tin, zinc, and gold cannot be denied, since the metallic basis is found in the liver and urine of dogs poisoned with these salts. They may all be easily extracted by the same process—viz., carbonising the viscus with

nitric acid, and treating the product with nitromuriatic or nitric acid.

4. That the salts of mercury are likewise absorbed, and carried with the blood into all the organs; this may be proved by treating the viscera of an animal poisoned by mercury, with nitro-muriatic acid, and then passing through the solution a current of chlorine gas; or, still better, by carbonising the viscera with a strong acid in a closed vessel, and treating the product with boiling nitro-muriatic acid.

5. Portions of ioduret of sulphur, nitrate of potass, alum, ammonia, and chlorine, have also been found in the urine, viscera, and especially in the liver of animals poisoned with these substances.

VACCINATION.

M. Gauthier de Claubry read the conclusions of the Annual Report for 1840. The number of vaccinations amounted to 525,509 in 836,789 births, or to five-eighths of the whole number born. Of 45,060 vaccinations, the results of which were mentioned, 881 failed. In two cases there was a general eruption of pustules over the body, the fluid from which produced regular vaccinia.

Epidemic variola attacked 14,470 persons, of whom 1,668 died; in 24 cases small-pox occurred a second time, and three of those thus attacked died. The great majority of persons, whether recently or for a long time vaccinated, escaped epidemic small-pox; some had modified small-pox, which was generally mild and of short duration. Of 406 persons attacked after vaccination, only 6 died. Revaccination was performed in 2,214 cases; 1,704 failures; 227 false vaccinia; 270 secondary cow-pox, apparently regular; 3 persons who had been successfully revaccinated were attacked with varioloid. The average cost of vaccinating each infant during the year 1840 was *threepence halfpenny*.

The following are the conclusions of the report:—

1. The regular vaccine is a preservative against small-pox; the protection, however, is not absolute; for a small number of those vaccinated are subject to an eruption commonly known under the name of varioloid.

2. The latter disease is generally mild, and free from danger; it destroys 1 patient in 100, while the mortality of small-pox was 1 in 8½.

3. A first vaccination destroys the tendency to a second attack of vaccinia as well as of small-pox; still, in some persons the aptitude to receive the disease returns after a longer or shorter period. Again, certain persons who have had small-pox may contract a regular vaccine, but this does not prove that they are apt to have small-pox again.

4. The most perfect revaccination does not guarantee the individual against having a varioloid at some future time.

5. In general, small-pox attacks persons only once; but some may have it a second time, and the second attack is just as severe as the first one.

May 3.

INFLUENCE OF BURIAL-GROUNDS ON PUBLIC HEALTH.

The Minister of the Interior required the academy to furnish answers to the following questions:—

1. Is the presence of burial-grounds in cities capable of acting injuriously on the health of the public?