

dated June 9th, in alluding to a fatal case of typhus fever that had occurred in a house up one of the narrow passages leading out of King-street, remarks that "these premises are utterly unfit for the habitation of a family of seven or eight persons as at present occupy it; indeed, I might say of a family at all. It consists of two small rooms, one above the other, built against the back wall of the house behind, with no means of ventilation, save by a small pane of glass in the window opening on hinges. There is no privity accommodation whatever. Fancy a boy ten years old lying ill of typhus fever in the one little room upstairs, with no means of ventilation save the little pane of glass on hinges, inhaling all day the air made poisonous by his own excretions! And what must have been the condition of the room when the rest of the family at night betook themselves to it for repose?"

From my own experience, Sir, I could give you many other cases equally bad and incredible, but perhaps these are sufficient for the present. But what are we to say or think of an authority that permits such a state of affairs to exist in its midst without taking one single step to abate or remedy it? They cannot plead ignorance, because the report of Mr. Spear brings conviction home to the mind of every intelligent being that, in this and all other respects, the sanitary condition of the town is a disgrace to any community claiming the least affinity to civilisation; and yet I am quite convinced that, unless compelled by the Local Government Board, nothing will ever be done by the local authority to carry out the recommendations of Mr. Spear.

Your obedient servant,

Maryport, July 27th, 1882.

W. B. MATHIAS.

P.S.—As an instance of the manner in which disinfection was carried out by the sanitary authority, I may relate what took place in a miserable back dwelling in one of the passages between Cashmere-street and Queen-street, whence a case of typhus fever had been removed to the infirmary, and which terminated fatally a few days after. I asked the woman if the house and furniture had been disinfected, and she replied, "Oh, yes." "What was done to it?" "Well, the inspector gave me some lime and lent me a brush and told me to whitewash the walls, and I did." "Did anyone help you?" "No." "Were the bedclothes washed and disinfected?" "No, how could they when we were using them" (it was scarcely necessary to have asked that question, as their appearance sufficiently attested the fact of their non-acquaintance with soap and water since they left the shop); "but I put the mattress out in the air for a good bit, and made it as sweet as a nut." Thus it will be seen that those things in the house, such as the furniture, and above all, the bed and bedding where the infection is sure to be the most tenacious, were absolutely left in the same condition as when the fever case was removed from them.

SALICYLIC SILK.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Mr. Lockhart Gibson, in your issue of to-day, gives the results of cases treated in Mr. Chiene's wards by means of salicylic silk. He states that the method of treatment adopted "differed from that used in Leeds in this essential—viz., in the use of no mackintosh." In this he is mistaken. Since I first brought this dressing before the notice of the profession, some eighteen months ago, I have used no other dressing in antiseptic cases, and have always used it without the mackintosh. I have reason to know that the practice of the surgeons of the Leeds Infirmary has been the same. Indeed, the chief advantage of salicylic over carbolic acid dressings lies in the fact that they can be used without the mackintosh; the wound is thus kept comparatively dry, putrefaction is less likely to occur, and early healing is induced. The only difference between the Edinburgh and Leeds practice seems to be that in Edinburgh the dressing is completed by covering the silk with a large pad of gauze; while in Leeds we dispense with the gauze pad, and substitute for it one of silk enclosed within two layers of gauze. This is a matter of little moment, but our plan has the advantage of economy, and a larger experience has shown it to be equally efficacious.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Leeds, July 29th, 1882.

A. F. MCGILL.

GLASGOW.

(From our own Correspondent.)

THE usual graduation ceremony at the University took place on Thursday, July 27th. Of the 109 aspirants to academical degrees in medicine only seventy-six were successful. Professor Charteris' valedictory address to those who had just been "capped" was full of interest and instruction; it took the form mainly of plain and practical advice regarding the various careers open to those just licensed to practise medicine, and was evidently listened to with enjoyment and profit. He pointed out the advantages likely to be derived from a residence at one of the foreign schools of medicine, though he was inclined to think that these were not so great as is generally supposed, maintaining that in the application of the theories and facts of science to the treatment and prevention of disease the English are vastly ahead of the continental nations. He then very properly warned the graduates against continuing long in the mercantile marine service should they have occasion to go to sea as ship surgeons; and concluded by indicating the qualifications necessary for success in the various branches of modern practice.

It is generally understood that our Royal Infirmary is about to lose the services of Dr. M. Thomas as superintendent. Dr. Thomas has fulfilled the duties of this very trying position for many years now with general satisfaction.

SCOTTISH NOTES.

(From our Correspondent.)

PROFESSOR STRUTHERS was in his war-paint last week. The fighting attitude is not an unusual one with him, as some of his colleagues very well know. His hits are hard, for the most part well considered, and with an almost certain delivery. He had a congenial subject on which to address his students at the end of the summer session, and had no difficulty in proving to their satisfaction how fortunate they were to come so far north for their instruction. He showed that while in regard to the Arts course the Scottish Universities were perhaps behind those of England and Germany, such could not be said of the medical. Those connected with medical education in England believed that whatever exists there is by far the best, whereas in his opinion there was no country in Europe so far behind as England—their system of medical education was positively the worst. The medical teaching in Scotland was excellent, and if Cambridge did but a tenth part of what is done in Aberdeen in this connexion, the world would hear of it. Hard work is the characteristic of the Aberdeen Medical School. Certainly, when Dr. Struthers looks around at his splendid facilities for teaching, and feels how much these are undoubtedly due to his own exertions, when he considers his own devotion and constant assiduity as a teacher, he may well feel proud and complacent. In each of the Scottish Universities the teachers of the purely scientific branches are men whose energies and lives are devoted solely to one subject, and they may be excused for their occasional hint at the opposite conditions which obtain further south. Again, our Gairdners, Pirries, Maclagans, &c., devote their best efforts to teaching, and only lay aside their gowns when, from old age, they feel that they are no longer fit to do justice to their students. Throughout life their highest honours come from teaching, and success in practice is not allowed to detain them from their classes or their wards. All this is highly favourable to good teaching; but Professor Struthers is perhaps wrong in assuming that the English do not admit the excellence, as for many years an entirely disproportionate number of students come from that and other English-speaking countries—the best proof of the real opinion held on the question. The prize-lists of the Aberdeen University show another element of strength which the teachers fully acknowledge: I notice that in one class the first four men have their M.A. degrees. This is material easily wrought.

During the past few weeks several prosecutions—the first in Scotland—have occurred under the Factories Act. Medical men have long known that young women frequently made complaint of the lengthened hours during which they were called to work on but slight necessity.