

## **Reports of continental children's hospitals.**

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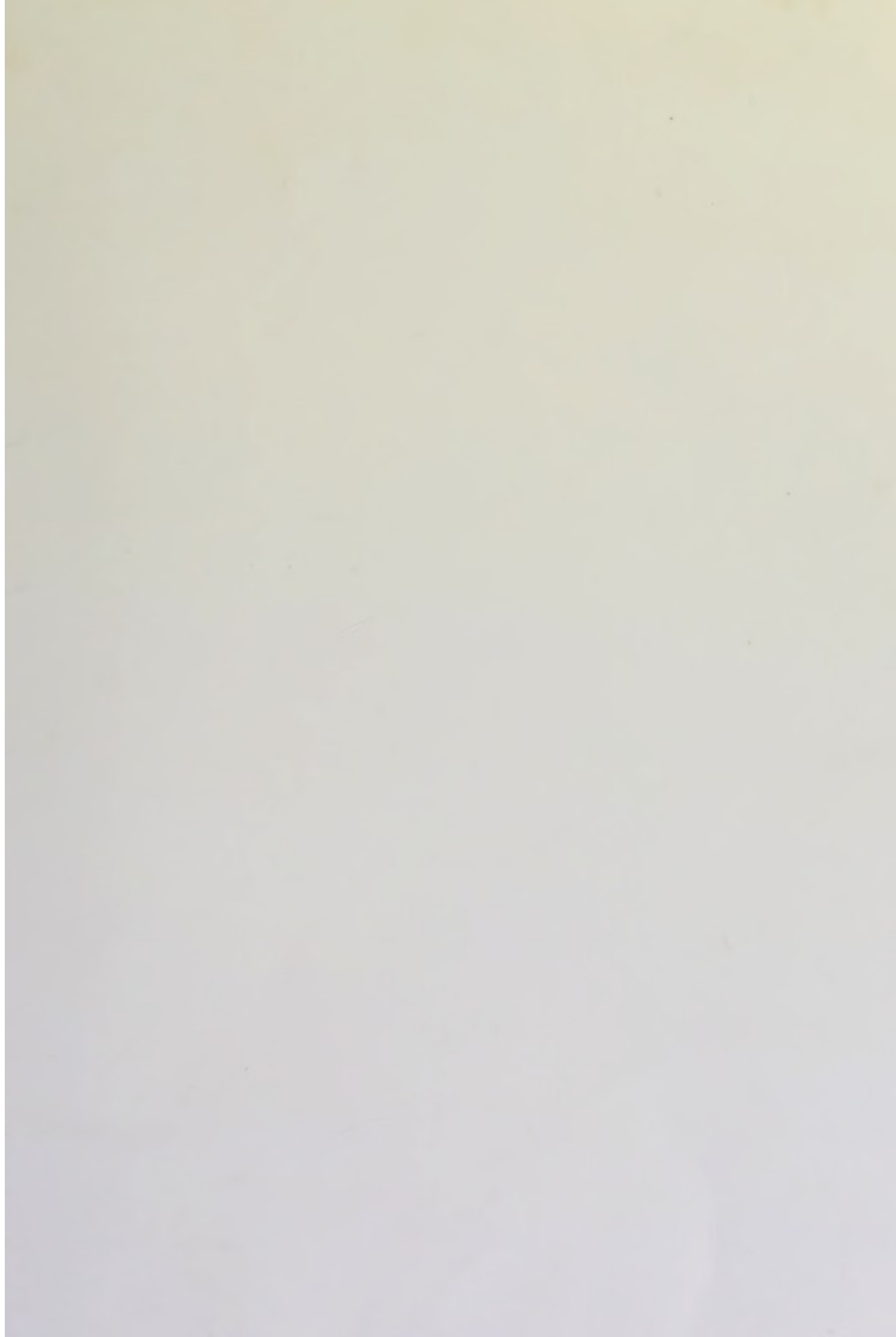
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Professor Bennet

# REPORTS

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OF

## CONTINENTAL CHILDRENS' HOSPITALS.

[REPRINTED FROM THE EDINBURGH MEDICAL JOURNAL, MARCH 1858.]

1. *Dreizehnter Jahres-Bericht des unter dem Allerhöchsten Protectorat Ihrer Majestät der Königin stehenden Elisabeth-Kinder-Hospitals.* Berlin, 1856.  
*Thirteenth Annual Report of the Elizabeth's Children's Hospital, under the patronage of Her Majesty the Queen.* Berlin, 1856.
2. *Dreizehnter Bericht über Dr Christ's Kinder-Krankenhaus zu Frankfurt am Main, das Jahr 1856 betreffend.*  
*Thirteenth Report of Dr Christ's Hospital for Children at Frankfurt on the Main, for the year 1856.*
3. *Vierzehnter Jahresbericht des Franz Josef-Kinder-Spitals in Prag, vom Jahre 1855.*  
*Fourteenth Annual Report of the Francis Joseph's Children's Hospital in Prague, for the year 1855.*
4. *Jahres-bericht des ersten allgemeinen St Annen-Kinderspitals für 1855.* Wien, 1856.  
*Annual Report of the original St Anne's General Hospital for Children, for 1855.* Vienna, 1856.
5. *Berättelse om Sjukvården vid Kronprinsessan Lovisas Vårdanstalt för Sjuka Barn in 1855.* Stockholm, 1856.  
*Medical Report of the Princess Louisa's Hospital for Sick Children, for 1855.* Stockholm, 1856.
6. *Administration Générale de l'Assistance Publique à Paris: Compte Moral Administratif de l'exercice 1855.* Paris, 1856.  
*General Administration of Public Assistance at Paris: Moral Administrative Report for 1855.* Paris, 1856.
7. *Rendiconto della Beneficenza dell' Ospitale Maggiore e degli annessi Pii Istituti in Milano, per l'anno 1855.* Milano, 1857.  
*Report of the Service of the Principal Hospital at Milan, with its associated benevolent Institutions, for the year 1855.* Milan, 1857.

It is now nearly two years ago, that, while adverting to the labours, more especially, of the institutions for the cure of Sick Children in London, Vienna, and Stockholm, we took the opportunity of urging upon those among ourselves, upon whom power and wealth have imposed responsibility, the necessity for keeping pace with the



surrounding progress in an important department of medical science and practice, that we might save ourselves from the discredit and damage of being held as loiterers behind the contemporary advancement in knowledge and humanity. More recently, in noticing the establishment of an Hospital for the Diseases of Children in Manchester, we reverted to the subject; and we are glad to observe that the organs of other great schools of British medicine are now alike recognising the want and soliciting its remedy. In the Dublin Quarterly Journal of Medical Science, and in the Glasgow Medical Journal, appeals have already been made, which show a full consciousness of the value and urgency of this claim upon the attention of the physician. We suppose that Ireland, where our brethren of the art are no voiceless waiters upon fortune, will make its customary demand upon the public treasury: while our Glasgow cotemporary, in its number for last July, knowing better the struggles requisite in our thriftier land, contents itself with wondering, in behalf of its respected school, that no advocate has taken up the cause of the poor sick children of that city, and prevailed with its wealthy merchants to build them an hospital; very laudably aspiring after the distinction of opening the first in Scotland, although we think that the alternative, after what has been accomplished elsewhere, must now be less to whom shall be due the credit of being the first, than upon whom must rest the opprobrium of being the last. The rivalry, however, is still an honourable one; and we would willingly see Glasgow take the foremost place in it, if it were only that we might then console ourselves by the certainty that Edinburgh would follow. Desirous of a great benefit, we are more anxious as to the promptness, than fastidious as to the order, of its accession.

The Reports of the Vienna and Stockholm Hospitals, which we previously noticed,<sup>1</sup> were those for the years 1852 and 1854: we have now before us those for 1855 of the same institutions. But, in addition, we have been kindly favoured with details of the recent labours of several similar establishments, connected with other great schools of medicine and centres of population. We would have willingly placed beside these some notice of the Children's Hospital at St Petersburg, established in 1834; of that of Pesth, founded in 1839; of the second, or St Joseph's Hospital in Vienna, dating from 1842; of the Moscow Hospital, established in the same year; of that of Turin, founded in the year following; of that of Grätz, in Styria, and an added establishment at Berlin, the Louisa Hospital, both in 1844; of that of Lemberg with a second in a suburb of Turin, and an institution at Copenhagen, all in 1845; one in Brünn, and another in Munich, both in 1846; one so recently as 1856, under high professional auspices, at Philadelphia in the United States; and still another, last year, at the watering-

<sup>1</sup> *Edinburgh Medical Journal*, May, 1856.



place of Hall, in Upper Austria, where an iodureted water has risen into reputation, for the recourse to which the establishment has accommodated 33 sick children. The materials for such a notice, however, as ample as we could desire them, are not at present in our possession. We think it enough, in the meantime, merely to notify, that even with these the number is not exhausted; and we thus point to that widely acknowledged necessity, which, alike in Scandinavia and in Russia, in the German states and throughout Austria, in France, Italy, and England, has made the study of the diseases of early age an object of growing concern to the man of science and the philanthropist. While to these honourable proofs that helplessness, with modern civilisation, serves as no plea for neglect, we might still add others of recent date, we purposely abstain from all individual mention of those merely subordinate arrangements, where, either by means of compartments in general hospitals, set apart for the reception of children, or by general or special Dispensaries, the subject has been approached with only partial advantage. Yet the agency, it must be admitted, of dispensaries for sick children, zealously and thoroughly developed, with assiduous home attendance, is of great value in a wide description of cases, and most of all in those of first infancy; and thus, indeed, forms an important, or even indispensable, accessory to the proper hospital. But the business and mechanism of a Children's hospital, on the other hand, have been found too little in harmony with those of a general institution, to render their union easily compatible, under one roof, or with the same class of adjuncts; and hence it is that the experiment, wherever made, has neither conferred equal benefits, nor borne the like scientific fruits.

The Elizabeth's Hospital at Berlin was founded in the year 1843, at the instance of the Queen, who has since been its friendly and considerate patroness. It appears that it was not till the year 1846, that the institution had so far overcome its initiatory difficulties as to have sixty beds adequately provided for the reception of the sick children; yet only, with the political turmoils of the next succeeding year, to be again so far reduced as to be able to offer but half the number for some time subsequently. Gradually, however, and we value a gradual progress in such matters, for it is usually into follies that men rush eagerly, the number of beds was again increased; and, at the date of the report before us, though the prosperity of 1846 could not as yet be once more fully realized, it was hoped to be able to place fifty beds at the disposal of the charity. Still, as we have seen, this has not prevented the establishment of another similar institution within the city, and the clamancy of the want has thus doubly sustained the trials to which its first acknowledgment had been subjected. The revenue for the current expenses is collected from a wide range of contributors, whose names and subscriptions occupy forty pages of the Report; the donation of a single silver groschen, or of a little more than a penny sterling, having the same



careful insertion as the munificence of the more wealthy benefactors. Gifts of articles of clothing, bedding, toys, supplies of medicine, bandages, fruits, and even infantine dainties for the inmates, are also duly specified, along with the names of the donors. It is pleasing to observe that, through resorting to the prudent, though always painful, and therefore often tardy, recourse of contracting the expenditure by narrowing the sphere of the institution, the effect of the high prices, and of those civic commotions which shook its resources, has been so successfully withstood: and that the last account shows a balance of two hundred dollars in favour of the revenue, with a debt of only five hundred dollars on a building, which, with a cheerful garden attached, has been acquired, and adapted to its purposes; not forgetting here, in the proper spirit of such a charity, a play-room for the little convalescents, in addition to the open-air play-ground allotted within the precincts. The Board of Management consists of a number of the nobility, members of the medical profession, clergymen, citizens, and others; and there is, besides, a committee of ladies who visit the establishment daily, to superintend its economy, and watch over the fulfilment of its rules and of the directions of the physicians. From an examination of the Reports of seven different years, which are besides in our possession, we find that, at an average, the ratio of the mortality to the number admitted has been 1 in 8.5, or about 11.7 per cent.; the greatest amount of deaths having been from strumous, generally tending towards tubercular, ailments.

It was to the benevolence of a physician labouring in a private sphere of practice, that the Children's Hospital of Frankfort owed its existence. By his will, dated in 1835, Dr Theobald Christ, having no direct heirs, devoted certain possessions towards what he terms this patriotic and humane object; and, having died shortly afterwards, it was determined in 1841 that Dr Stiebel, the physician first designated by the testator himself, should visit the different institutions exclusively restricted to the treatment of the diseases of childhood, existing in Berlin, Dresden, Vienna, Paris, etc., and report to the administration in what respects it would be advantageous to adopt them as models for the new establishment. Accordingly, in 1842, Dr Stiebel presented his report, along with the necessary body of statistical illustrations: by which it was held to be demonstrated that, even in instances where the institutions inspected remained incomplete in their arrangements, their usefulness was obvious; and in which it was recommended, that no merely temporary makeshift should be employed, by adapting any already existing building to the purposes of the Hospital, for this had not been observed to be effective elsewhere, but that, in carrying out the design, a special edifice should be at once constructed, with adequate sanitary and other provisions for its efficient service. Dr Stiebel further recommended a structure, accommodating, at the most, from 50 to 60 patients, as the best fitted for accomplishing the aims of such an institution. In a few weeks afterwards, the energetic administration,



as if valuing as a privilege the duties imposed upon them by Dr Christ's bequest, had resolved to act upon these suggestions; and speedily, warmly supported by the city authorities, acquired the necessary site, which afforded ample space for the proposed edifice and other subordinate accommodations, with a garden which was justly considered as an essential part of the plan. The locality looked towards the south, was advantageously sheltered, and in a quiet vicinity. In the following year, the foundation-stone was laid with public ceremony; and in the first Report, published two years afterwards, the building was announced as completed. When opened, the immediate superintendence of the patients was committed to two of the now widely known Protestant Sisters, from the celebrated establishment at Kaiserswerth, founded there, we believe in 1836, by the Pastor Fliedner. It was primarily notified that, as medical students at Universities had only rare or inadequate opportunities for the study of infantile diseases, the Committee of Management were desirous of adding greater value to their institution, by rendering it the means of advancing the knowledge of young practitioners in this important range of their practice. Meanwhile, as the bequest of the founder was not sufficient for the full attainment of their aims, they solicited the further aid of the benevolent; pointing out that, while human wealth and human capacity were unequally divided, neither could be said to render really happy, unless employed in the diffusion of happiness. Eight of the subsequent Reports are in our possession, the latest being that for 1856. Accompanying some of the more recent are little tracts by Dr Stiebel, inculcating some branch of the hygienic care of children, or exposing some noxious procedure or practice, and these, being written plainly and cordially, cannot have failed to be useful. From the Reports themselves, we learn that the mortality on the admissions has been nearly 1 in 6, or about 17 per cent.; strumous and tubercular diseases being still the most destructive. The greatest number of beds occupied, in any one year, appears to have been 38, but this seems to be considerably above the ordinary average. From a computation of three years, we find that the daily cost of each patient, all items of expense included, amounted to eightpence; though in 1855, considerable repairs having been effected, the sum was advanced to fourteen pence.

In the effort to maintain the revenue, the expenditure of which seems to have been throughout prudently restricted, the administration has been pleasingly supported by that peculiar form of benevolent expression which frequently marks the German character. A kindly and single-hearted charity appears with them rather as a spontaneous overflowing of the affections, than as a formal exercise of duty. Every occasion of joy, every little domestic happiness, every impression of tenderness, every touch of sorrow, softens the spirit, and seeks its utterance in terms which seem simple to our conventional notions, yet which, as the fulness of the heart finds its voice in solid beneficence, should warmly challenge our sympathy and respect. An



anonymous donor bestows his or her contribution, in token of thankfulness to God for the recovery from sickness of a near relative : while Frau Schnapper, not withholding her name, shows still more enduring gratitude, by causing her donation to record the anniversary of the restoration of her son from a previous illness. On July 1st, a lady, Frau Rosa Kaula, presents a gift on the event of her child having completed his first year ; while alas ! little more than a month afterwards, another donation represents the occasion of his death, and the wish of the motherly heart to ward off the sorrows of other mothers. Frau H. U. offers her mite on the occasion of Francisca's first tooth ; and good-hearted Herr Heigd because his Henry has begun to walk : nor can Frau Jäger enjoy her Christmas, without a generous desire that the little inmates of the hospital might participate. Even the common transactions of social life, the lease or purchase of a house, the marriage of a daughter, the death of a husband or sister, the birth of a child, some solemn domestic anniversary, a concert by a celebrated singer (Madam Sontag), or the testamentary bequest of a considerate philanthropist, all appear as occasions of increasing the funds of the institution ; while donations of fruit, toys, articles of dress, books, delicacies, and of the more essential necessaries, with occasional contributions of skilful labour and its products, showing a true sense of the often-forgotten truth that the sickness of the poor has a claim upon more than the time and knowledge of the physician, are registered with every Report. It will thus not appear too much, if we claim for the Children's Hospital of Frankfort the possession of the proofs of a charitable, beneficent, and successful career.

The Francis Joseph's Children's Hospital at Prague owes also much of its origin, and very much of its successful maintenance, to a physician, Dr Löschner, who fortunately still survives to superintend the extensive efforts of which he has been thus, in a great measure, and by a rare zeal and liberality, at once the source and the agent. Established in 1842, the institution, before the close of 1855, had been the means of treating nearly 73,000 cases of the diseases of early life ; a large proportion of these (4688) having been admitted within its walls, while by far the greater portion (61,464) had received only the aid of an attached Dispensary, or were visited in their own homes, or had (6774) been merely vaccinated. The charity occupied, at first, only a hired locality. In 1854, however, a special building was secured for it, at an original cost of L.4000, partly defrayed by Dr Löschner ; but requiring an additional expenditure of L.1000 for adjustments, for which it seems to have been equally indebted to the same unwearying benefactor. Henceforward the Hospital was honoured with the Imperial patronage ; became a recognised public institution ; and, provided with all the requisite appurtenances for clinical teaching, entered upon the double function of a humane care of the diseases of childhood, and of medical instruction as a constituent part of the justly eminent school of Prague. The beds are now eighty in number, and afforded accommodation throughout 1855



to 1010 patients; while, beyond these, 6219 were treated in their domiciles or at the dispensary, and 605 were vaccinated. It is no wonder that, with every year, the attendance of those in training for medical practice, as well native Austrians as physicians from abroad, should be reported as uniformly augmenting. As to the practical results, we are in possession of detailed Reports for only three consecutive years, but from these we glean that, of the cases treated in domiciliary or dispensary practice, the ratio of mortality showed an average of 6·34 per cent.; the maximum having been 7·33 per cent., in 1855. Of the far severer description of cases treated within the hospital, where those patients only are admitted whose domestic circumstances are wholly unfavourable, through wretchedness of accommodation, habitual neglect, or the bitterest want, the average mortality was 16 per cent.; the maximum, 22·10 per cent., having been also attained in 1855, while the preceding years averaged only 12·96 per cent. The cause of this high mortality in 1855 is explained by a reference to the table, where we find 45 deaths recorded from cholera, and 33 from scarlet fever, both of which had prevailed epidemically. Such items as 32 deaths from tuberculosis, 24 from rickets and its accompaniments, and 11 from tubercular meningitis, also all within the hospital, are nearer indications of what seem the more ordinary sources of mortality; just as they bespeak manifestly the existence of those faulty hygienic relations which an hospital for sick children is the best fitted to illustrate, and thence, for the diffusion of knowledge never falls valueless, more or less completely to lighten and remove. A humane provision in the hospital supplies the more necessitous of the children with adequate clothing, where this is wanting on their recovery and relinquishment of its shelter. The average daily cost of each patient admitted is about tenpence. To meet the charges, we have again here, as at Berlin and elsewhere, besides the indispensable exigency of money, notices of gifts of articles of dress, bedding, meal and flour, wood, toys, books, mineral waters, different utensils, and other objects for the recreation or subsistence of the inmates. And here we cannot but revert to the munificence of Professor Löschner, who seems to have devoted nearly L.3500 of his own funds to the purposes of the institution; while we acknowledge, at the same time, our singular envy of that happy fortune, which has favoured him at once with the means and the spirit for so distinguished a liberality. It would pain us to learn, that the Children's Hospital of Prague did not continue to maintain its honourable position, among the proofs and the agencies of human benevolence.

The St Anne's Hospital for Sick Children, in Vienna, still under the care of its assiduous founder Professor Manthner, and now elevated into a constituent part of the renowned medical school of the Austrian capital, continues, we are glad to observe, to be the eager resort of the Viennese mother, for the relief of those sufferers whom she at first hesitated to commit to a charge which has since



won upon her gratitude, and secured her confidence. The year 1855 was one of severe trial for the institution. Epidemics of Asiatic cholera, of small-pox, and of a malignant form of measles, prevailed in the city, and increased the throng of applicants for admission, while they largely aggravated the mortality. Of 1166 in-patients, 200, of whom 86 appear to have been foundlings or orphans, were of the age of from 14 days to a year, and 363 others were under three years; the deaths, on the aggregate, rising as high as 33 per cent., but nearly a half of this being due to epidemic influences. For an average of 19 years previously, the ratio of mortality had been 24.50 per cent., nearly a fourth of the fatalities being classed under atrophy. The average cost of each patient had been formerly about 34s.; but, during this year, owing to the larger concourse of inmates, part of the permanent expenses being thus diffused over a greater number, and through a more rigid yet not a stinting economy, the outlay was reduced to less than 23s. for each. Computing the mean period of residence of each patient, the daily cost was about sixteen pence. The clinical course was followed by 49 physicians, seeking this opportunity of completing their practical instruction; and 78 midwives were initiated, in a more popular course, into the management, as well of healthy as of sick children. The out-patients numbered 4146, many of whom would have been received within the hospital, had the resources of the institution been commensurate to the demands which were made upon them. Of this, generally, infinitely less serious class of cases, the mortality was only 6.6 per cent. During the summer months, 26 scrofulous children occupied the branch-hospital at Baden, for the benefit of the mineral waters; a considerable portion of the charges thus incurred being defrayed by the proceeds of a theatrical benefit, bestowed by Manager Nestroy. Both the mother institution, and its filial offshoot, are supported by voluntary contributions; and we are once more gratified to notice here, as formerly, the various and kindly forms in which these present themselves. The permanent endowment of one or more beds, to which the name of the founder is attached, the unconditional gift of money, the gratuitous contribution of necessary articles of use or consumpt, or of the labour of artisans, appear all as liberal sources of capital or of revenue, or, what is equivalent, as representing and sparing revenue. The result has been that, with the frugal management employed, the whole cost of the institution having been about L.1000 yearly, a sum of L.750 has been added to the capital, and towards a permanent fund destined ultimately to secure against dependence on the more precarious sources of income.

We learn from the able Report of Professor von Düben, that, in the second year of the existence of the Children's Hospital at Stockholm, 183 patients were admitted within its walls: the average number of beds occupied having been about 31, with a mean period of residence of 63 days, and a mortality which rose as high as 20



per cent., that of the preceding year having been 17 per cent. As no malady of an epidemic nature prevailed at the time, this high ratio of deaths shows amply what had been the severe nature otherwise of the diseases presented for treatment; and once more teaches us, like the experience of Vienna and elsewhere, how clamant is the misery which the Children's Hospital is first destined to treat or to remedy, and then, by the diffusion of a better instruction, to obviate and prevent. To mark this with still greater distinctness, Dr von Düben has arranged the cases into three classes, according to his opinion of their degrees of severity, entertained at the period of admission. Of the first, or what he then considered hopeless cases, 18 in number, 16 have died: of the second, or diseases judged to be of decidedly fatal tendency, yet more or less amenable to medical treatment, 66 in number, 18 have died: while of the less serious ailments, 99 in number, and completing the aggregate of 183, only 3 succumbed. The first class would have been wholly rejected by many institutions; and might, at least, be justly excluded from any computation of therapeutic results, while it occupies, not the less, a proper and necessary place in the general statistics of disease. The third class is that which presents its field of easy conquest to all miracle-mongers in medicine. But it is the middle division which offers its true test of the skill and care of the physician; and here, we are convinced, the intelligent reporter has not been found wanting. The scientific attainments of Prof. von Düben, and his capacity for their practical application, are not only manifest from the Report before us, which contains many valuable details of pathology and treatment, but are become familiar to us from other sources.<sup>1</sup> An institution under his superintendence, and that of his eminent colleagues, Professors Huss and Santesson, cannot fail to confer the benefits which it contemplates, if it have the support which it deserves. That the value of this description of instruction is appreciated extensively by the thoughtful Swedish physicians, we gather elsewhere<sup>2</sup> from the fact, that, of 86 students pursuing the advanced practical courses at the Medico-Chirurgical Institute of Stockholm, as many as 53 attended the clinique for sick children.

If we advert to the celebrated Hospital of the *Enfants Malades* at Paris, first established towards the close of last century, it is with no intention of pointing out the conspicuous, and, in many respects, unrivalled, services to medical science which, directly or indirectly, have emanated from within its walls, because there is no physician, deserving of the name, to whom these are not already more or less widely familiar. We merely refer to the Report of the General Administration of Public Assistance, in the French capital, to glean from

<sup>1</sup> We have been recently favoured with the first part of a series of Lectures on Pathological Anatomy (*Föreläsningar i Patologisk Anatomi*, Stockholm, 1857) by this physician, and have been much gratified by their judicious and comprehensive, yet concise, details.

<sup>2</sup> *Hygiea, Med. och Farm. Månads-skrift*, 1856, p. 3.



it a few brief statistical facts, which complete, or illustrate, those which we have gathered elsewhere, from sources perhaps less ordinarily patent. The total number of sick children treated in this institution, in 1855, with a mean occupancy of 556 beds, was 3718, of whom 694 died, or at the rate of 18·66 per cent.; or, more strictly, and deducting from the aggregate 540 patients remaining under treatment at the close of the year, the mortality was in the proportion of 21·83 per cent., or 1 in 4·57. But we find, from examination of a decennial period between 1835 and 1844, that the average is more favourable than this, and that the ratio of deaths was 1 in 5·20, or 19·25 per cent. Reviewing further the same period, the mean duration of residence in the hospital was 46·93 days: while, reverting to 1855, the daily cost of each patient was about 17 pence, and the total yearly charges about L.25 for each bed, rates which seem exceedingly high, when we consider the age of the patients, and the experience, at least in most cities, of other institutions, for whatever stage of life. The Empress Eugénie has commemorated her accession to her place on the French throne, by the graceful act, in a female sovereign, of establishing another hospital for sick children, distinguished by her name, and already, in 1855, having a mean of 398 beds in constant occupation. The duration of this hospital has been too brief to permit us to judge definitely of its efficiency. We note only, that, in 1854, the ratio of mortality was 1 in 6·09 among its patients, and in 1855 was 1 in 5·40. We turn for an instant only to the great Hospital of Milan, merely because it presents us with an easy opportunity of showing what is the relative mortality, at different stages of life, among individuals placed, as nearly as possible, under identical conditions and circumstances, within a special locality. Of 1066 children, under 7 years of age, treated in 1855, the deaths were 168, or 15·76 per cent.: of youths, from 8 to 15 years, 2095 were treated, and the deaths were 154, or 7·35 per cent.: and of all those of riper years, 19,597 in number, the deaths were 2467, or 12·59 per cent. It is creditable to the institution to have secured for children so low a comparative percentage of mortality, considering the defective groundwork for the labours of the physician, which the neglect, and still, in great part, the tolerated ignorance, of the age supplies him with generally in this interesting department.

We have thus enumerated many Children's Hospitals, situated in various great centres of civilization, or in places of somewhat minor importance, or forming constituent parts of the leading medical schools. Our opinion, also, has sufficiently evinced itself, that we consider these establishments as the first generous steps towards the removal of a stigma, which the apathy of past times has suffered to rest on medical science; as of a bar against the advancement of that science, which medical zeal, alone and unsupported, was inadequate to sweep away. We admit that it is no infallible proof of the value of such institutions, that they have been adopted elsewhere; for even philanthropy, doubtless sometimes very fortunately, has its whims of fashion, and the wave



of a popular medical creed or fancy, with the popular physician floating on its surface, is not unfrequently as sudden in its ebb as it had been capricious in its flow. Unquestionably, that is a singular merit, which can detect the right, and guard itself in it, while all beyond is in error. But to be led here by imitation, is at least to have an excuse for pliancy, when we can point to such seats of learning as Paris, Berlin, Vienna, and London, and show that it was by a gradual diffusion, and by no sudden and inconsiderate impulse, that in each of these, one after the other, the persuasion embodied itself to which we finally assent. And let us recollect that, in several cities, a first institution has led, after a test of a series of years, to the establishment of a second, denoting surely something deeper here than that popular acclamation, or merely imitative instinct, which sees reputations, and believes them solid, when the cloud-mountains are only vapour. To that part of the public, however, which demands substantial reason for its guide, and not authority, it is no discredit that its decision should have been deferred, till it could judge with safety, and on grounds comprehensible to itself. Such rational thinkers need proceed here upon no dictation of opinion, whether for or against; for they encounter at once a stern fact and a broad principle upon which to commence. Nor do they require to search at a distance, through its haze of dreamy and softening influences, in order to discover either. Both lie at our own door, distinct and unmistakeable.

Our fact is, that of every hundred persons, dying at all ages, and of no selected class, but of all classes, in the eight principal towns in Scotland, about 46·50, or nearly a half, perish before the completion of the fifth year: our principle is the very obvious one, that to tolerate a great evil, if it be removable or capable of mitigation, is a cruelty, and that, to be removed or mitigated, or to be judged whether it can be removed or mitigated, it must be diligently studied. Our fact is gathered from the published Reports of the Registrar General for Scotland, the most authentic of sources, now extending over a period of three years, and rapidly rising into a body of valuable information, though still undeveloped to its due extent, from the parsimony of Government withholding from us part of that which it admits to be a desirable knowledge, and a proper object of public expenditure, for England. As to our principle, so manifest a truism may well rest upon itself; and it is only necessary to show how indisputably it connects itself with our fact. We have been accustomed, from our past experience, to accept, as the usual mortality of a town population, a ratio presenting about 38 per cent. of deaths of children under five years of age, in every hundred deaths occurring in the aggregate at all ages; and this, with a kind of grim contentment, we have suffered ourselves to call the normal mortality, because consistent with the self-imposed results of our own neglect, where not more than ordinarily flagrant, however opposed to the more perfect law of vitality as planned by the divine benevolence. But to show how little



absoluteness there is in this rule when applied specially, we may point out, still gathering from the same source of information, that while in Perth, in 1856, only 32 per cent. of the persons who died during the year were under 5 years of age, in Aberdeen the proportion was 35·5 per cent., in Edinburgh 41·8, in Paisley 46·7, in Greenock 46·8, in Leith 47·5, in Glasgow 52·9, and in Dundee not less than 55·1 per cent. If we look to the individual months, we find that the proportion in Leith and Paisley has risen as high as 58, in Glasgow as 61, and in Dundee as 63 per cent. In England, on the other hand, we learn from the more complete returns and tabular information furnished there, that of all children born, whether of town or rural population, nearly 26 per cent. perish before the completion of the fifth year. But the ratio of mortality of 46·50, which we have given as that of our eight principal towns, becomes tantamount, with a minute correction for rate of increase of population, to the melancholy statement, that, of every hundred children born, nearly a half is consigned to a premature destruction; and rises far above that which has been admitted as an ordinary town mortality, while it almost doubles that calculated from the aggregate experience of England. This, then, is neither an invariable nor a necessary mortality; and to tolerate it, without a search for a remedy, must involve a heavy responsibility.

But we may place the facts in a different point of view, deduced from various inquiries, and once more chiefly from the valuable materials acquired by Farr in England, confirmed as these generally are by the researches of Neison, and by the results of foreign statisticians. Thus, of 100,000 children living under one year of age, not of the poorer classes only, nor of the sick only, nor exclusively in cities, but throughout England, and under all the ordinary conditions of life, it is believed that 17,355, or 1 in about 6, die within the year. To parallel this proportion of mortality, we must pass, from what should be the day-spring of life, to the age of decrepitude, and we find it first reached a second time between the eightieth and eighty-fifth years of existence. Again, of 100,000 living under five years of age, 6349, or 1 in 16, die within the year: a mortality which is not again attained till from the seventieth to the seventy-fifth year. Of a like number living in the period of from ten to fifteen years, up to which the mortality rapidly decreases, presenting what has been designated the highest specific intensity of existence, the annual deaths are only 527, or 1 in 190; and, in the prime of manhood, from thirty to forty-five, they are 1143, or 1 in 88: while, of 100,000 living of all ages united, from the new-born to the centenarian, 2160, or 1 in 46, is the sum of the annual mortality. The average annual mortality of the nursling is therefore about 32 times, and that of the child up to five years of age about 12 times, that of the vigour of youthhood; and as high as 14 times, and  $5\frac{1}{2}$  times, that of the manly prime; or the one is about 8 times, and the other 3 times, that of the gross, or general average of human existence. We should rejoice if we



were in possession, as yet, of any facts to show, that the statement would be more favourable than this, or even equally favourable, if, instead of for England, it were made for Scotland universally, whatever may be the sanitary condition of a few of our happiest districts.

If such, then, be the unhappy relations, as to mortality, of the aggregate of all children born, in whatever rank of society, and subject only to the grades of liability to disease contingent upon the ordinary circumstances of health and life in all conditions of locality, we may now judge to what extent these appear to be modified in children already affected by serious sickness, belonging to a city population only, and placed for treatment in such institutions as those under consideration. We institute this comparison, both for the sake of the material truth which it evolves, and for the sake of those who may possibly imagine that the sick child can be more safely treated in its own home, whatever the character of that may be, than within the wards of even the best constructed and most carefully regulated hospital. But let such, and we believe there are such, remember, that scarcely one, possibly not one, of our Scottish mean of 46 per cent. of deaths of children, was really ever sheltered within the walls of such an institution; and that, in so far, their homes and home tending must bear the full and exclusive reproach of this fatality. No practical physician, acquainted with the habitual occupants of our hospitals, within them or beyond them, needs to be instructed as to this: but there are physicians who are not practical, and who yet do not fear to deliver positive opinions, where the true basis for sound opinion utterly fails them; as if practical medicine left the determination of its grave questions to dilettanti, who contemplate the homes, and life, and relations in sickness of the poor, within the retreat of a carpeted and curtained library. Holding this in view, and restricting now our consideration more absolutely to the intrinsicities of early age, we renew, as merely a modified form of presenting facts already submitted, the statement that, in all children living throughout England under five years of age, the rate of mortality ranges from 17 as a maximum, to upwards of 6 as an average percentage, and then decreases, in the age of from five to ten, to a minimum percentage of about one, in order to contrast this with the ratio of mortality of the actually sick children of an exclusively city population, treated within an hospital, which we find in the London Hospital to have been 14 per cent. Absolutely considered, this is certainly not a low mortality; but relatively it is exceedingly favourable. Turning to the seven great hospitals for adults in London, chiefly occupied by individuals at the middle periods of life, we learn that the average annual mortality is about 9 per cent. of the patients admitted; and in our Edinburgh Infirmary the proportion is nearly similar. But we have already seen how trifling is the ordinary mortality at, or even considerably beyond, the middle terms of life, when compared with that which weighs upon infancy;



and thus the efficiency of the Children's Hospital unquestionably rises high in the scale, when we reflect on the arduous domain of its duty, and contrast the original condition, as to general vitality, of either class of inmates with the results attained in both.

To pursue now our investigation abroad, we have seen that, for an average of years, the mortality of the Hospital for Sick Children in Berlin has been as low as 11·7 per cent., though in one year rising as high as 27 per cent. : but we are informed by Casper, the eminent medical jurist and statistician of that city, that, in an average of forty years up to 1822, of all children born there, 52 per cent. died in the first year; while in 1808, during the disastrous period of the war, 71 per cent. perished. The Children's Hospital of Vienna has presented an average mortality of 24·50 per cent. : but it is only within this century that, at a mean of eighteen years, the deaths of all children, of all ranks, born in Vienna, have been computed at the appalling amount of 60 per cent. yearly; and the deaths in the great general hospital for adults, in that city, usually average about 14 per cent., or present as high a mortality as in the Children's Hospital in London, and a greater than that of Berlin. In all Austria, on the other hand, it has been found from recent investigations, that 26 per cent. of the totality of children born die in their first year, and 37 per cent. within the first four years. In Paris, during a considerable average of years, 19·25 per cent. have died in the great Hospital for Sick Children : but in that city, in 1820, died, of all ages, 22,957 individuals, and of these 7441, or nearly 33 per cent., perished in the two first years of infancy; while throughout France, in the fifteen years preceding 1831, the average deaths of all children born were upwards of 18 per cent. within the first year of existence, and had risen to 28 per cent. before the close of the fourth year. In the six chief general hospitals for adults, in the same city, the average mortality seems to vary from about 12 to 14 per cent. In Stockholm, again, we have noted that the mortality in the Children's Hospital has been 18·50 per cent. : but in all Sweden, during the five years succeeding 1830, the mean deaths of the aggregate of all children born were 16·50 per cent., within the first year, while at the close of the last century they were 24 per cent. The Children's Hospital of Prague, we have stated, has shown a mortality of 16 per cent., and that of Frankfort of about 17 per cent. These statistics are exceedingly significant, and they might be almost infinitely extended. Their lesson, once more, is this : that, when we contrast, in any of these situations, the special mortality of hospitals for severely sick children<sup>1</sup> with the general mortality of the whole

<sup>1</sup> Many of the fatal cases admitted into children's hospitals are, as we have shown, of a scrofulous nature, and usually chronic in their course. The result of this is, that there are fewer patients in the wards in the course of a given time, and the ultimate fatality appears proportionately greater; a fact to be borne in mind in comparing the statistics of hospitals for different ages, that there may be no bias towards an inconsiderately unfavourable impression.



class placed elsewhere, or with the special mortality of adults in the general hospitals, and study the relations of either, reciprocally or apart (and nothing more vague will relieve us from responsibility), we must admit great cause to be satisfied with the result; not only because it is really gratifying in itself, but because it indicates a progressive improvement, and justifies in us the expectation, with the growth of fuller knowledge and better appliances, of infinitely more to be accomplished henceforward, whether in the homes, by the inculcation of a more judicious system of nurture, or at the sick-bed, by the more successful treatment necessarily arising from a clearer understanding of the nature of infantile diseases, happily exercised upon constitutions into which early care has implanted a higher vigour. But even had all this been otherwise elsewhere, we could not have been divested of our individual obligation. So long as 46 per cent. of our town deaths are those of early childhood, whatever might be the want of success elsewhere, it remains imperative upon us to investigate the source of so dark a fatality, and to strive to diminish its intensity; and, for the patient labour of this, the public, or some private benevolence, must supply the necessary means, and, one day or other, will supply them. Our fact and our principle are still instant; and humanity must prove its full consciousness of the one, that science may measure itself earnestly with the other.

When we look at our admirable and costly establishments for the treatment of the diseases of the adult, how can we escape the question, whether there be anything in the position of the child to exclude it from a like charity; and whether the advantages to the humanest of sciences, which accrue for the one class to the world beyond, should not be conceded to the other also? We cannot use the helplessness of the child as a plea against the general humanity, or withhold aid because it is too weak to demand it or resent its denial. Neither can we boast, that in its present state it needs no further protection, and smiles in security. But infant deaths, paradoxical as it may appear, are sometimes, and in a certain sense, really more depressing upon the mass of the population than those of adults. The more children that perish within the early months of existence, the more quick the recurring births; and so onwards, in sad alternation: a fact easy to divine *à priori*, and manifest from that universal experience to which our Scottish reports do not fail to contribute their testimony. Thus, in 1856, in the rural districts of Scotland, while there was only one death in 66 persons, with an infantile mortality proportionately limited, the births were one in 32 persons: but in the town population, with the aggravated infantile mortality upon which we have commented, while the deaths were one in 39 persons, the births rose to one in 25 persons; or, in other words, out of a given population, the births were 28 per cent. more numerous in the one than in the other. In all this is involved a largely increased, and a more frequently renewed, occupation of the mother in the cares and distractions of child-birth, nursing, and, above all, sick-tending;



chaining her often from the possibility of a cheerful and profitable, to a painful and profitless office, and saddening, dispiriting, and impoverishing the household. They incur the risk, besides, of becoming careless and inconsiderate as to their offspring, where the parental tie seems never fairly knit; as they may become even prone to be reckless and improvident as to their own future, who do not recognise between themselves and their children so strong a union as to render it a source of hope for reciprocal comfort and sustenance. Nor, through an obvious reaction, will the hospitals for the adult be the more crowded, that those for the child have been liberally opened, and prudently directed. On the contrary, the efficiency of the period of life, when man's labours are valuable to the family and society, will be the more secure, that efforts have been made to give stability to his health, at the time when the frame is the easiest moulded to strength or weakness. These facts do not lie wholly on the surface, yet they are easily within the reach of every one who chooses to observe and to reflect. Man is twice helpless: in childhood and in old age. But death at the one period is to rob or defraud nature; at the other it is to pay her a debt.

Perhaps we may appear to have treated this subject with something like enthusiasm. If so, it is merely the expression of a conviction, is at least disinterested, and has been previously shared by many to whom we are accustomed to offer willingly the homage of our respect. No one who has read our remarks, or who has examined these matters for himself, will, we think, hesitate to admit, that, if the condition of the sick poor, in the helpless stage of its existence, present us with a melancholy picture of human fatality on the one hand, it is, not the less, one which has been lighted up with so many gleams and traits of human benevolence on the other, that the impression left is not wholly painful. But strip away the charity, and what remains? These redeeming touches of light, without which the picture of life is nowhere either perfect or natural, our antecedents here give us a right to anticipate. An hospital, constructed for from sixty to eighty beds, but opening with a smaller number, would be ample for our city; and surely a number of cases so limited, selected from those who could not be efficiently treated in their domiciles, would do little to deaden the responsibilities of its mothers, dismally inadequate as these responsibilities have hitherto proved themselves. But such an hospital, so occupied, would prove a valuable asylum for suffering, and a source of precious instruction. There are large funds, devoted by citizens of Edinburgh to purposes of public beneficence, which have not yet been finally appropriated, and which it may perhaps still be possible to direct to this channel. The aid of female benevolence might also be engaged here, in a kind of work of organised charity for which it is peculiarly fitted. But on such points we have neither the power nor the inclination to dictate. Our province as journalists is merely to advise, and to substantiate our grounds by the necessary evidences.



