

WE learn from the *British Medical Journal* that the Nizam's government has sanctioned the immediate construction of a complete and thoroughly-equipped Pasteur Institute for Hyderabad. It will adjoin the hospital and medical school, and will be available in about six months for patients. The Colombo Pasteur Institute, which is being constructed near the Lady Havelock Hospital out of funds towards which Mr. J. W. C. De Soysa contributed 10,000 Rs. in memory of his father, is approaching completion, and will be opened probably early next year. Meanwhile the Pasteur Institute for India hangs fire, and the delay is calling forth some expression of impatience on the part of subscribers.

DR. CROSBY, of the New York City Board of Health, has given out the following statistics of deaths from influenza in the city :

| | 1890. | '91. | '92. | '93. | '94. | '95. | '96. | '97. | '98. |
|-------------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Jan | 264 | 1 | 281 | 5 | 71 | 242 | 16 | 10 | — |
| Feb | 30 | — | 109 | 4 | 33 | 165 | 18 | 28 | 8 |
| March..... | 12 | 45 | 50 | 47 | 29 | 84 | 17 | 64 | 19 |
| April | 3 | 507 | 20 | 86 | 16 | 44 | 26 | 51 | 16 |
| May..... | 1 | 123 | 13 | 30 | 5 | 15 | 5 | 21 | 2 |
| June | 2 | 34 | 3 | 9 | 6 | 2 | — | 4 | 2 |
| July | — | 4 | 1 | — | 4 | — | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| August... | — | 3 | — | — | 1 | 1 | 1 | — | — |
| Sept..... | — | — | — | 2 | — | — | — | 2 | — |
| Oct. | — | 4 | — | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | — |
| Nov..... | 1 | 4 | 13 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 12 |
| Dec. | 1 | 129 | 5 | 35 | 13 | 8 | 11 | 10 | ? |
| Totals.. | 314 | 854 | 495 | 227 | 188 | 567 | 101 | 196 | 58 |

The mortality attributed to other sources has also been greatly increased during epidemics of 'the grip.' It appears that the disease grows in severity for two or three months, and the outlook for New York and other cities is consequently unfavorable. Until December, 1889, when the disease was imported from Europe, having apparently traveled from China to Russia, there had been no epidemic since 1849.

THE question has of late been often raised among professional men whether it would not be wise and practical to seek to evade many of the difficulties and objections arising from the employment of 'experts' by litigants on both sides, leaving Court and jury to gather the es-

sential facts and the technical merits of the case, as best they can, from prejudicial and admittedly partisan testimony, the usual suggestion being the appointment by the Court of its own experts. We find in '*Der Ingenieria*' of Buenos Ayres, 1898, pp. 91-102, an account of the investigation of the cause of a steam boiler explosion by the National Railway Board, in the course of which a detailed report was submitted by independent experts appointed by the Courts. It would seem that Argentina has progressed further in this direction than the United States.

PROFESSOR H. H. TURNER, of Oxford University, makes the breaking of windows at the Observatory by small boys the occasion of a renewed appeal for a house for the director in the park near the Observatory. He says: "It was in the last few months of my chief assistantship at Greenwich that the anarchist Bourdin made his attempt to blow up the Royal Observatory; and the attempt, unsuccessful as it fortunately was, could not fail to impress those immediately concerned as to the necessity for carefully protecting an observatory isolated in the middle of a park. I do not wish to compare the mischievous boyish freak of yesterday with this grave and dastardly outrage; but there is this common to the two—that the opportunity was selected with reference to the absence of people from the spot. Bourdin selected a time when the Astronomer Royal was away and the staff would ordinarily have left the Observatory (though, as a matter of fact, one or two were on the spot, having stayed beyond the usual closing hour to finish some work); the boys with catapults found Sunday afternoon a good time to use them."

UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL NEWS.

THERE seem to be difficulties in arranging for the accommodation of the University of London, in the buildings of the Imperial Institute. In the meanwhile the Council of University College have notified the Statutory Commission that they are prepared to consider placing the land, buildings and endowments of the College at the complete disposal of the Commission.

AN organization, 'La société des amis de l'Université,' has been formed in Paris and adopted a constitution on December 11th. The object of the Society is to aid in the development of the University of Paris, by forming new chairs, assisting the laboratories, establishing scholarships, prizes, etc. It is proposed to issue a bulletin especially in the interests of the students.

DR. THOMAS EGLESTON, emeritus professor of mineralogy and metallurgy in Columbia University, has presented to the University his library and mineralogical collection. The former is especially rich in serials; the latter contains about 5,000 valuable specimens.

MR. CHARLES WHEELER, of Philadelphia, has given \$5,000 to Harvard University in memory of his son, Stuart Wadsworth Wheeler, '98, who served in the Porto Rican campaign, and died in Boston a short time ago. The money will be invested, and the interest used as a loan fund in the Lawrence Scientific School.

PRESIDENT WARFIELD has announced a gift of \$10,000 to Lafayette College. It is also reported that a gift of \$50,000 has been made for the Chemical Laboratory.

It is proposed to establish, as a memorial to Sir Robert Peel, a scholarship in the Technical School at Blackburn. Mr. Yerburch has opened the fund with a donation of £1,000.

DR. JAMES LITTLE has been nominated regius professor of medicine in the University of Dublin in the place of Sir John Banks.

PROFESSOR RÖNTGEN, of Würzburg, has declined the call to Leipzig as the successor of Professor Wiedermann.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE.

THE ORIGIN OF MAMMALS.*

THE question under discussion is not new, but one of a series of similar nature and difficulty. The origin of birds, of reptiles, of amphibians and of fishes really precede it, and offer less difficulties in solution. The answer

to each, in my opinion, belongs to the future, and how far it may profitably be sought in the present limited state of our knowledge is a fair question in itself.

Too often in the past a discussion on the origin of mammals has seemed a little like the long philosophico-theological controversies in the Middle Ages about the exact position of the soul in the human body. No conclusion was reached, because, for one reason, there were no facts in the case that could settle the question, while the methods of investigation were not adapted to insure a satisfactory answer. The present discussion is on a much higher plane, and the previous speakers have made an admirable presentation of their side of the case. I cannot, however, quite agree with them as to the value of the facts and theories they have presented, and shall consider the question from another point of view.

The mammals, as we know them to-day, are classed by themselves, yet contain such diverse groups that it may fairly be regarded an open question whether all have a common origin. The attempt to ascertain whence they came is likely to bring out indications that they may have had several sources of origin, and this, if so, may help to explain the great diversity among them.

It is, of course, evident that some of the most characteristic features of recent mammals, for example, the hairy covering, the circulatory system and the milk glands, cannot be used in a comparison with fossil forms. The osseous structure only is now available in the early mammals and other vertebrates, and in this alone points of resemblance must be found if different groups are connected genetically.

In considering the relations of reptiles to mammals so far as the fossil forms are concerned, which seems to be the main question before us to-day, I have only time to speak of the skull, and shall refer to some of its salient features already mentioned in this discussion, namely, the teeth, the squamosal bone, the quadrate, the occipital condyles, and with them the lower jaw. These, perhaps, may serve as crucial points in distinguishing the skull of a reptile from that of a mammal, even if they fail to indicate a near affinity between them.

* Remarks in the general discussion on the Origin of Mammals, at the International Congress of Zoology, Cambridge, England, August 25, 1898.