

observed a dead gull, lying in a grass field in front of the window, which, she is convinced, was not there before.

Those who picked the bird up report it as still warm, and it is said that it smelt villanously of "brimstone." I should like to know whether a bird *not perched* can be killed by lightning, and, if so, whether instances are common. SKELFO.

The Early Return of Birds.

THE remarkably early appearance of some of our migratory birds this season is worthy of note. On Wednesday, April 4, while crossing some fields south of Ashted Station, a solitary chimney swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) passed close to me, flying near to the ground.

On the following Saturday (7th inst.), when strolling through the woods on the Common, I heard two cuckoos, getting quite near them to prevent mistake. They have been heard in the neighbourhood each day since. ROBERT M. PRIDEAUX.

Ashted, Surrey.

The Foundations of Dynamics.

IF no one else cares to raise the question, may I ask Mr. Bassett how he fixes the foundations of his dynamics, viz., the axes of reference to which the positions and velocities of his particles are referred? There are other questions, of more or less metaphysical interest (such as the nature of "Force"), which his paper does not touch; but this one is of importance to the most practical view of the subject; and only an elementary text-book for schoolboys can afford to beg it, while treating of the Foundations of Dynamics. EDWARD T. DIXON.

Cambridge, April 13.

THE ELEVENTH INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CONGRESS.

LAST autumn, when the public health of Europe was in an unsatisfactory condition, it was thought that it would be wise to postpone the Medical Congress until this spring, though it was feared by everyone that such a determination would be fatal to the efforts of the Congress. The votes of the majority and of the most influential members of the Executive Committee, however, impressed upon Prof. Baccelli the necessity of postponement. It was also thought that the visitors would prefer to enjoy the attractions of the city in the spring rather than in the autumn. No one in Rome expected such a numerous concourse of savants, doctors, and others, as assembled on this occasion. At such an extraordinary meeting we must not only consider the characteristic note of the congress and the certainty of its success, but also ascertain the causes of various inconveniences which members of the congress have had to submit to, and of which complaint has been made.

The object of a congress is to afford an opportunity to its members to make new personal acquaintances and to renew old ones with the view of exchanging ideas between men who live at great distances from each other, and to ventilate their arguments.

A congress provides also a means of estimating the scientific condition of a country, which it is impossible to do through correspondence or through the public press.

The ordinary channel of particularity was abandoned at the Congress, and it will have been seen from the speeches that more general and comprehensive ideas were evolved than is possible through ordinary scientific literature.

Considered in this sense, the Congress at Rome has been a great success, and it has been easy to see that visitors have a growing sense of admiration for medical science in Italy, and especially for the younger branches

of the profession. Italy, however, has been regarded from other points of view. Its reputation led many persons to expect a spectacle of misery, but they, on the contrary, have been agreeably surprised at the enlightened aspect, comforts, and welfare of the land. This has shown visitors that they had formed a wrong impression, and the critical condition has proved only a temporary difficulty; for the original foundation still exists unchanged.

The best proofs of scientific progress were seen while travelling through the Mont Cenis Tunnel and visiting Turin. Passengers found there many large edifices destined shortly to be utilised as scientific institutions.

Only one of the four blocks is entirely finished and one almost furnished. On one side is the Department of General Pathology (Prof. Bizzozero), and that of Experimental Pharmacy in Medicine (Prof. Giacosa). On the other side, Physiology (Prof. Mosso).

Prof. Mosso has distributed to his colleagues of the section of physiology a pamphlet containing the description and drawings of his institute. Everyone has admired the beauty of the new laboratory. The University of Turin is the second in rank in Italy for the number of students it will accommodate.

The Congress was divided into several sections. The conferences were held in the central part of Rome, in a building very badly selected, but which had the advantage of being near the building where the International Exhibition was held. The meetings of the sections were held in the Policlinic buildings, outside of the Porta Pia, at a convenient distance from the centre of the town, but in a quarter very difficult of access.

The Policlinic is a very large institute, built by Prof. Baccelli. It is not yet finished, a small portion only being complete. The essential and historical elements of the eternal city are equally represented in this institute, which has evidently been built regardless of cost in its external appearance and its maintenance hereafter. The Policlinic was built for the accommodation of the clinics. It is arranged not only for the welfare of the sick, but also in the interests of students.

It is interesting to note that the man who has built two edifices for the clinics in the Policlinic has totally overlooked the tuition. The complete buildings are five in number, connected by a passage which in the future will be turned into a portico.

The central building, which is also the largest, has a large marble staircase, which called forth the admiration of more than one of the congressists; it contained the offices of the presidency, secretary, and accommodation for the press, post, and strangers' committee.

The meetings were held from the 30th March to the 5th of April, from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. At 4 in the afternoon addresses were given, which constituted a most interesting part of the programme. Among these addresses we must mention those of Prof. Virchow, of Bizzozero, growth and regeneration in the organism; Cajal, morphology of nervous cells; Danilewsky, protoplasm and its modifications by life; Foster, the organisation of science. Other addresses were given by Profs. Brouardel, Babes, Nothnagel, Laache, Kocher, Jacoby, and Stockvis.

In some sections the debates were carried on with difficulty. The most rational method has not been always observed, many meetings therefore have left a certain impression of confusion. Certainly for a future congress it will be necessary to make some definite rule on the matter; that is to say, to indicate the special theme and argument, which will conduct the discussion in a more useful manner between competent men, who are always to be found in such a congress. It is a cause of complaint that in such an assembly those who wished