

prevalence of plague and the consequent flight of an enormous proportion (amounting probably to one-third) of the population. In 1897 the death-rate, uncorrected for age and sex distribution of the population, of urban Calcutta was 32·2 per 1000, that of suburban Calcutta was 44·9 per 1000, and that of the entire town was 36·1 per 1000. The mortality among females was 42·4 per 1000 and among males it was 32·9 per 1000. The infantile mortality, or deaths of children under one year of age, reckoned per 1000 births, was 356·5. The mortality among Christians was 22·6; among Muhammadans, 32·1; among Hindus, 38·7; and among "other classes" no less than 51·9 per 1000. The death-rates in various wards of the city varied between 10·8 (in a mainly European quarter) and 49·9 per 1000 (in one of the most insanitary suburban wards). It must also be pointed out that in almost every instance the mortality rates, of which the above figures are the expression for one year only, have shown a steady increase in recent years. That is to say, that the death-rate of Calcutta, from whatever point of view it be examined, is gradually growing higher instead of lower.

High as many of the above figures are they are largely exceeded when smaller areas of the town are taken as the basis of calculation. It may be shown without any very great trouble that the death-rates are very unevenly distributed in different parts of the city. This has already been seen when the mortality rates in the various wards were quoted; but it becomes more striking when still smaller areas of the town are dealt with. The writer recently worked out the death-rates of 24 "census blocks," constituting together one of the most insanitary wards of the city. The blocks varied in size from two or three acres to seven or eight acres. It was found that in 1897 the death-rate exceeded 40 per 1000 in seven of the blocks; that in five it was over 50 per 1000, and that in two it was as high as 62·52 and 63·36 per 1000 respectively. The infantile mortality in this ward reached the immensely high figures of 792 per 1000 births for males, 571 per 1000 for females, and 677 per 1000 for both sexes.

The death-rates from individual diseases, into the details of which it is not proposed to enter here, show almost without exception a more or less steady increase during recent years, the figures reaching their highest point in the year in question. In no group of diseases is this more marked than in the group of "fevers." Under this head, it is to be noted, are included not only deaths from the various forms of intermittent fevers, but also those from any febrile disease which the relatives of the deceased have not been able to recognise as cholera, small-pox, or other more or less easily recognisable "fever." The very marked rise in the death-rate from this group of causes is one of the least satisfactory features in the situation. The number of deaths registered from "fevers" very nearly doubled itself between the years 1889 and 1897. Dr. Simpson, the late health officer of Calcutta, ascribed this rise largely to the defects in the newly introduced system of sewers and drains and more particularly to the obstructed outfall and consequent deposit in the sewers, and to the occasional contamination of the soil by leakage from defective sewers. It will be interesting to observe whether the completion of the new arrangements at the outfall briefly referred to above will be followed by a corresponding fall in the deaths from "fevers." There can be little question that a large number of such deaths are the result of enteric fever and other diseases caused by the extremely defective house arrangements described in the present paper and that there is quite as great need of dealing effectively with this as with the other end of the sewerage system.

MANCHESTER.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

The Infirmary Site.

A SPECIAL meeting of the Manchester City Council is about to consider the terms of the sale of the infirmary site to the Corporation. There is considerable difference of opinion as to the terms and the *City News*, a widely-read weekly paper, has an article strongly adverse to them and taking a somewhat similar view to that given in my last letter. "From every point of view the decision

of the Special Committee is to be regretted. The Corporation should buy the property out and out or leave it alone. There is not the slightest necessity for the planting of an emergency hospital in the position proposed [i.e., on the present infirmary site]. No one would suggest that such a building should be erected on land worth £50,000. An eligible site could be acquired for one-fifth the money. It is a wrongful use of public money to spend such a sum on a mere ornamental site for a charitable institution."

Hospital Inquiry at Horwich.

An inquiry was held at Horwich on August 18th by a committee of the Lancashire County Council in connexion with the proposed establishment of an isolation hospital for the urban districts of Horwich, Westhoughton, and Blackrod. The chairman intimated that the county council would probably make the three districts a joint hospital area. The hospital is to be at Fall Birch and is estimated to cost with the site between £5000 and £6000. There will be provision for 30 beds.

The Hospital Saturday Movement at Bolton.

The Hospital Saturday movement at Bolton has grown from £628 for 1881—the year of its initiation—to £3120 3s. for 1899, this last being a "very handsome advance" on last year's contribution. Altogether since 1881 the movement has realised £30,000 for the infirmary.

Oldham and Vaccination.

In his first annual report as medical officer of health for the borough of Oldham Dr. Wilkinson mentions a curious fact—namely, that several of those who went through the trouble of obtaining exemption certificates took their children a few days afterwards to a medical man and had them vaccinated. It may be remembered that Oldham became notorious, if not famous, for the wholesale way in which certificates of exemption were obtained under the new Vaccination Act. It is to be feared that these cases of repentance are, however, comparatively few.

August 23rd.

IRELAND.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS.)

The Dublin Sanitary Association and Mountjoy-square.

SOME weeks ago Sir Charles Cameron, Executive Sanitary Officer of Dublin, sent a circular to the residents in Mountjoy-square inquiring whether they were in favour of the square being thrown open to the public. One of the residents addressed a letter to the morning papers protesting against the action of Sir Charles Cameron and stigmatising it as "an audacious proceeding." At the weekly meeting of the Public Health Committee in the Municipal Buildings the following was stated in connexion with the proposed opening of the square:—

The Committee, acting on behalf of the Dublin sanitary authority, and having charge of the provisions of the Open Spaces Act, are of opinion that the Commissioners of Mountjoy-square have not fairly treated the proposal to open that square to the public. The circular letter which by direction of Committee Sir Charles Cameron, executive sanitary officer, sent to the inhabitants of the square merely asked whether or not they were in favour of opening the square to the public. How such a request could be stigmatised as an "audacious" proceeding it is difficult to understand. It is certain that a very general opinion has been expressed in favour of opening Mountjoy-square and several of the residents have assented to the proposal to open it.

On August 14th a circular was issued by the Commissioners of the square to the owners and occupiers of houses there sufficiently long to fill a column in all the morning papers, and strong, as will be seen from the following excerpt:—

The Commissioners cannot but think it an abuse of his position and an unwarrantable extension of his functions as executive sanitary officer for Sir Charles Cameron to canvass the residents of Mountjoy-square for their approval of opening Mountjoy-square without allowing them any opportunity of protesting against this proposal; and they cannot but feel that in many other particulars his circular is misleading and inaccurate.

The above seems more than sufficiently personal and strong. The following is a declaration of Parliamentary war:—

As you are doubtless aware Mountjoy-square was enclosed under the authority of an Act of Parliament (42 Geo. III., chap. 34) under which the Commissioners are constituted at the expense of the inhabitants of the houses and proprietors of the grounds surrounding the square. If the Corporation now insist on opening Mountjoy-square in direct