

EDINBURGH.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

Action by Lady Medical Students.

THIS case has again been brought into court before Lord Kyllachy, the two lady medical students craving an order to readmit them to the Edinburgh school or for £500 as damages. From the evidence brought forward on both sides, the whole case appears to have arisen out of a quarrel about the obeying of a bye-law; but disagreement upon disagreement, none of them about very important or even edifying matters, followed so closely upon one another that eventually relations became very strained between the students and the principal, and it became absolutely necessary that stringent measures should be taken if the dignity of those in authority was to be properly maintained. Pursuers say they were induced to enter upon the course of study upon the faith that defenders would provide them with the whole course necessary to qualify them for practice. The defenders, on the other hand, claim the right to alter or discontinue the whole or any of the courses of lectures. They say also that a new prospectus had been issued before the action was raised, in which was a clause reserving the right to the committee to judge of the progress and general conduct of any student, and declining to readmit a student if they thought it expedient. As to the quarrel, it appears that there was a regulation that students were all to leave the hospital by 5 o'clock in the afternoon. In June last an accident case was admitted to the wards at 5 o'clock, and the students went round to see it. The house-surgeon began to explain the case, and whilst this was being done the lady superintendent appeared and asked, "What is the meaning of you students being here after 5 o'clock?" The students left the hospital about 5.15 P.M. For this they were suspended for a week. Then came a quarrel about some certificate in regard to which the students were asked to express an opinion, and then those who held certain views were evidently stamped as black sheep. The lady superintendent at Leith Hospital, giving evidence, said that the 5 o'clock rule was not a popular one with the students, as they did not care to be hurried away if there was anything interesting going on in the wards at the time. Apart from that incident she never had occasion to find fault; the pursuers were kind to the patients, attentive to their work in the hospital, and they were liked by the other girls and nurses. Evidence was also given to the effect that the pursuers had not caused disorder in the school, and that one of them especially had an influence for good among some of the students. It came out, further, that the school was falling off in popularity with some of the students, and that there was a good deal of discontent as to the manner in which they were treated, it being thought that they were dealt with too much as if they were children. This appears to be the case, as one of the regulations appears to be that the students shall not stop to converse with, or ask questions from, their lecturers at the end of the lecture hours. The Principal of the school said that she considered it insubordination if a friend of a student accused of dishonourable conduct took the student's part. She further stated that she did not think it was a serious thing for ladies to be refused readmission if they could go to London or Dublin. The whole affair really appears to border on the ridiculous. The relations between students and teachers appear to have been most cordial, except on certain points which might have been better discussed *in camera*. A too slavish adherence to petty, and, from what one knows of the working of teaching hospitals, almost "impossible" rules and regulations, has led to the present state of matters. Such is evidently Lord Kyllachy's opinion, for, after hearing the evidence on both sides, he expressed the hope that before the case came up next session the parties would try to bring the matter to an end.

Imbeciles in Private Lodgings.

Kennoway, in Fife, is perhaps one of the most depressing spots of earth on which a visitor could alight. It appears to be populated principally by imbeciles. Commenting on a case of indecent assault on an imbecile woman, in Kennoway, the Sheriff in the Dundee Sheriff's Court said that the offence was a most disgusting one and an outrage upon human nature. The woman who had been assaulted was boarded out

by the Edinburgh authorities, and he expressed the opinion that the boarding out of large numbers of insane women was subversive, to a great extent, of the morality of the district. Anyone who knows the district referred to will fully corroborate the above opinion, and it is to be hoped that the question thus raised may have the earnest attention of those responsible for the welfare of these poor imbeciles. A little extra expense might have to be incurred by placing them in regular and well-appointed institutions for the insane, but the results would be well worth the extra expenditure.

The Triple Qualification.

The following are the results of the quarterly examinations held in Edinburgh during the month. At the first examination, of 65 candidates 45 passed; at the second, only 19 out of 44 candidates were successful; and at the final, 40 out of 79 were successful. During the half-year ending June 30th, 11 candidates were, after examination, elected as Fellows of the College of Surgeons, and 2 were elected without examination; 7, having passed the required examination, were admitted as Licentiates of the College.

Edinburgh, July 30th.

IRELAND.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS.)

DUBLIN.

Annual Report of the Local Government Board for Ireland.

FROM the seventeenth annual report which has been lately issued it appears that there has been a further decline in the average daily number of persons relieved in the workhouses, while there has also been a considerable decrease in the average daily number of persons who received out-door relief. The average daily number in the workhouses was 41,729, and on out-door relief 63,680, or a total of 108,409, which was less than the average daily number relieved in and out of the workhouses in the previous year by 2655. During the year ended January 14th last, the total number of deaths in the various workhouses was 9892, showing a decrease of 295 deaths as compared with the number for the previous year. Of these, fever caused 356, against 383; lung disease 1717, against 1754; and small-pox 1, against 3, in the year preceding. There were for the twelve months ending September 29th, 53,074 admitted into workhouses for sickness, being an increase of 1830 as compared with the previous year; an increase of 6965 in the number admitted who were not sick, and of 415 in the number suffering from fever or other contagious disease. In the various dispensary districts, the medical officers during the year attended 408,554 new cases at the dispensaries, and 186,106 patients at their own homes, or a total of 594,660; and vaccinated 92,498 persons. The vaccination returns show a decrease of 3991 as compared with the year preceding; of the 92,498 persons vaccinated, 76,910 were under one year old when vaccinated, 12,717 above one year, and 2871 were revaccinations. Small-pox during the year caused one death in workhouses, the same as the year previous; and the number of cases of this disease treated in dispensary districts under the Medical Charities Act was 30, or an increase of 12 as compared with the previous return. As regards fever, there were 4357 cases attended by dispensary medical officers, being a decrease of 735; also a decrease of 19 in the number of cases of scarlatina, the numbers being 4357 and 5092 respectively. The medical charities expenditure amounted to £158,996 7s. 10d., under which heading is included the cost of medicines and medical appliances, salaries of medical officers and apothecaries, vaccination fees, and other expenses, showing an increase of £620 over that of the previous year. The Commissioners-sanctioned loans amounting to £182,182 5s. 1d. to various towns in Ireland, principally for sewerage and water-supply, which, added to previous sums allocated, constitute a total of £1,896,479 11s. 3d. for the past fourteen years.

King's Professor of Midwifery, Trinity College, Dublin.

On Friday last the Fellows of the College of Physicians, in whose hands the appointment lay, elected Dr. A. V. Macan King's Professor of Midwifery, in the vacancy created by the death of Dr. Kirkpatrick, a result which was generally expected. Dr. Macan is Master of the Rotunda Lying-in Hospital, and was elected, I understand, by a large majority of votes. The emoluments of the post consist of

£100 per annum, the fees for clinical lectures in Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital, and such proportion of the class fees as may be arranged by the President and Fellows.

Payment of Medical Officers' Substitutes.

The guardians of the North Dublin Union last week adopted a resolution to the effect that the locum tenens of each of their medical officers be paid by the board for attendance during the month's leave of absence. It was carried by 17 to 15, but one of the guardians has given notice that he will move to have the resolution rescinded.

British Dental Association.

The sixth annual meeting of the Irish branch of this Association was held at the Royal College of Surgeons on Saturday, and was presided over by Mr. Robert H. Moore. Some interesting inventions and new dental instruments were exhibited at the meeting.

Dublin, July 30th.

BELFAST.

The Ulster Medical Society.

The annual meeting of the Ulster Medical Society was held in the Museum, Belfast, on July 24th, when the report of the Council, giving an account of the work done in the past year, and the treasurer's statement were submitted. There is a balance in favour of the Society of £112 5s. 1d. Mr. McConnell was elected president for the coming year, Dr. McCaw secretary, and Dr. O'Neill treasurer. At the meeting a discussion took place as to the desirability of forming a medical club in Belfast, where the various societies could hold their meetings. It was thought the time had come when such an undertaking might prove successful, and a committee was formed to consider the matter and to draw up a report. It was also the feeling of those present that a good medical library could be incorporated with the club.

North of Ireland Branch of the British Medical Association.

The eleventh annual meeting of the North of Ireland Branch of the British Medical Association was held in the Royal Hospital, Belfast, on July 18th. Dr. Gray, J.P., Castlewellan, was elected president for the ensuing twelve months, and Dr. Byers secretary. Dr. Dill delivered the presidential address on "Forensic Medicine and Medical Evidence." Dr. Thompson (Omagh), Dr. Dempsey, Professor Sinclair, and Dr. O'Neill brought forward communications. In the evening the annual dinner was held, when Dr. Dill presided, thirty-three members being present.

The Royal Hospital.

About two weeks ago arrangements had been made to give the public of Belfast and the north of Ireland an opportunity of visiting the new steamer *Teutonic*, the largest vessel afloat. The various steamboat companies had promised to take passengers free down the Belfast Lough to the vessel, and each visitor was to pay a charge of two shillings on boarding the steamer, all the proceeds to be handed over to the hospital. Unfortunately, it was found impossible to have the vessel ready in time owing to the July holidays, and on Saturday last a communication was read at a meeting of the Board of Management of the hospital regretting this, and enclosing a cheque for £200 from Messrs. Harland and Wolff, the builders of the *Teutonic*.

Election of Coroner in Mid-Antrim.

A very active canvass is being carried on by the two gentlemen who are in the field for this office. One of the candidates is a lawyer; the other a medical man, Mr. J. Dysart McCaw of Portglenone. From what I hear, it is probable that the latter will be appointed. He is well known and popular in the district, and a very strong committee is energetically working for him.

Belfast, July 30th.

PARIS.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

The Inheritance of Syphilis.

IN a recent communication on this subject I gave a *résumé* of one part of the important contribution to the study of heredity in syphilis given by that distinguished syphilographer, Professor Fournier, in the form of the remarkable lecture at the delivery of which, on a recent

occasion at St. Louis, it was my privilege to be present. In the concluding portion of this eloquent address he discussed the question, Whence comes the hereditary poison of syphilis? Does it descend through the father or mother, or both? On this point, he said, the most opposite opinions were held; indeed, hereditary syphilis was a veritable apple of discord cast into the camp of observers. He did not pretend to reconcile these various views; he would rather endeavour to place before his hearers first the points generally admitted, and then those surrounded by certain obscurities which time alone would clear up. And to begin with, it might be asked whether true hereditary syphilis followed when both parents were in a state of syphilisation. Now this, by way of exception, was a point not disputed. All were agreed that it could and did follow; indeed, examples illustrating this were to be found in the wards at present. Moreover, the influence of the poison did not cease with one pregnancy only, but might be manifest in several subsequent pregnancies, numerous instances of which the speaker cited, and which were sufficiently conclusive. He next took the case of each of the parents separately affected, commencing with maternal heredity. On this score he remarked that affirmative accord was pretty unanimous, although he insisted at considerable length that the demonstration was by no means so simple a matter as it might appear at first sight. He pointed out the many pitfalls to be avoided in tracing out logically the infection from the maternal side alone, and showed that false deduction was as easy as it was common. Indeed, he added, after twenty-eight years of study and practice, he knew of thirteen examples only amongst women whose cases fulfilled all the conditions necessary for a perfect demonstration. In the result, however, he made it clear that maternal syphilitic heredity certainly existed, as *a priori* one might suppose. Moreover, there was, added to other proofs, an anatomical demonstration of this transmissibility which the recent researches of MM. Mathias Duval and Van Beneden on the anatomy of blood-circulation in the placenta had established. These gentlemen showed that the circulation in this organ was not, as was formerly believed, a mere bringing into close juxtaposition of the maternal and foetal blood only while each was independent of the other, but that the placenta was rather a sort of maternal hæmorrhage encysted by foetal structures, in which the foetal elements were bathed in the blood of the mother. Was it possible, then, that under such conditions the transmission of the malady should not take place? And, further, it was easy to cite certain morbid analogies in favour of this thesis; for the placenta, which had hitherto been looked upon as an impassable barrier, was in reality now known to be permeable, not only to liquids, but to microbes, bacilli, &c., as was proved by the experiments of MM. Straus and Chamberland, which showed that the bacteria in charbon filtered through the placenta, and were consequently transmitted from mother to foetus. Again, the same thing had been proved as regarded the bacillus of enteric fever, which had been found in the blood of a foetus, the mother being dead of typhoid. Why, then, should not a like transmission take place in syphilis, the microbe of which was so attenuated that hitherto it had escaped detection? Theoretically and clinically, therefore, maternal hereditary syphilis was demonstrable. Taking up, next, the question of the inheritance of syphilis through the father, Professor Fournier remarked that this was the most debated point in the problem, and one of the most important, especially as to the fitness or not of a man for marriage. In former times paternal hereditary syphilis was allowed to be almost a thing without question. Cazenove held the opinion that syphilis was more often transmitted through the father than the mother. Since 1851, however, views directly opposite had been largely advanced, representing paternal heredity as a fact more or less rare and exceptional; it had even been held that the paternal influence was *nil* in that which concerned the transmission of syphilis to the foetus. This doctrine, M. Fournier emphatically maintained, was false. It was furthermore dangerous, for it exonerated syphilis from a great number of the hereditary perils which were inherent in it, and opened imprudently the gates of marriage to individuals whom a legitimate apprehension for their possible offspring now deterred. The advocates of this view pinned their faith mainly on the manifest disproportion between the number of syphilitic fathers and that of the syphilitic children born to them, and on the undoubted fact that not infrequently one saw