

Drink and the War: Public Opinion in Edinburgh.

Edinburgh is not an industrial centre in the accepted sense of the term, and is not to any extent concerned in the production of munitions of war. Nevertheless, by reason of the fact that it is one of the leading brewing centres in the country, the proposed prohibition of the drink traffic, consequent on the state of affairs in the ship-building and other industrial areas, has for it a very special interest. It goes almost without saying that the licensed trade is strongly and unanimously against any measure of the kind that have been indicated. There is, in their opinion, no call for any such drastic action in Edinburgh, and naturally they do not care to distinguish between their own district and such areas as Clyde-side. It is stated that drunkenness in the city, judged in the light of police statistics, is below the normal. While the majority of the opinions of those not directly concerned in the liquor trade appear to favour prohibition, there was an important section against any proposal of the kind. One leading public man declared that in his opinion this merely represented the thin edge of the wedge. "We are told," he said, "that this is to be only for the time being, but I am confident that an attempt will be made to make the prohibition a permanent thing. Experience abroad, and especially in America, has been that you get more drunkenness in the prohibitionist States than anywhere else." Another prominent citizen declared that his position was briefly this—to have a total prohibition of all spirituous liquors, such as whisky, brandy, and gin, but to make no such regulations regarding beer. It was his opinion that the riveters and men engaged in similar work must have drink of some kind, and he did not think the drinking of beer would in any way interfere with the work of production. He was convinced, however, that for such measures to be in the least efficacious they must be universal, applying to clubs no less than to public-houses. An interesting corroboration of his point of view was furnished by the head of one of the largest manufacturing firms in the district. The question of the stoppage of the whisky traffic was discussed at a *soirée* which was held by the employees, and the managing director was so much struck by the point of view which the men indicated that he there and then proposed that they should have a referendum on the subject. The ballot was secret, and the result was a vote of 90 per cent. in favour of prohibition of whisky until the war is over. The question of beer-drinking was not voted on. The men's views were admirably summed up by one of their speakers in the following manner: "The immediate completion of the war or its prolongation evidently now means a question between efficiency and inefficiency. If drink means inefficiency then drink must be stopped."

Views of Edinburgh Medical Men on the Drink Question.

From a number of interviews with medical men in Edinburgh representative opinions were obtained in regard to the effect of drink on the general efficiency of the worker. A prominent panel practitioner said that there had not been much increase in drinking during the war among working men, but he had observed that there had been a considerable increase in the consumption of liquor among a certain class of women in receipt of war money. "Edinburgh is not," he remarked, "like places in the west country with their big ship-building yards

and engineering works. I would not say that men in Edinburgh are drinking more than they were before." Another leading medical man thought that as a rule long hours were not responsible for increased drinking among the workers. If a man got occasional or intermittent extra long hours he might find that drink would help him along, but if he were working a few extra hours a day regularly, provided he used his spare time with discretion, he did not find the necessity for a stimulant. It was more likely that extra wages had made some of the workers more prodigal of their money. He thought that there was no question that the medical profession would favour prohibition. Another practitioner, who at present has a panel list on which there are about 2000 names, said that he had only just come across his first case of a man being laid up through nervous strain, brought on by overwork since the beginning of the war. He did not believe for a moment that extra work was knocking down workers. With fair rest a man could get along nicely working 12 hours a day. Long hours, in his opinion, did not directly induce drinking. From his experience the war had not increased the incidence of drinking. He also mentioned the interesting fact that there had been less illness among the poor. He had the duty of examining applicants for parish outdoor relief in his district, and for the last month the number was 8, compared with 16 last year. There was more work, and they either did not bother about medical attention or the fact of being at work kept them well. A medical man with a large practice among the working-class population in the western district of the city said it had not been noticed that there had been any increase in drinking among the workers in the city since the outbreak of war. Work, and plenty of it, he believed to be one of the greatest aids to sobriety and good living. He was of opinion that total prohibition would be a mistake. Civilisation was not sufficiently far advanced at the present day to permit of that. If drinking was stopped altogether he thought the result would simply be that the evil tendencies of the worst elements of the population would break out in another direction, with probably the direst consequences. His own idea was that a much better plan would be for the Government to prohibit all strong drink, such as whisky, rum, and brandy, and permit the sale and consumption of beers of a very light alcoholic strength, and wines.

Edinburgh Royal Maternity and Simpson Memorial Hospital.

Dr. James Haig Ferguson has succeeded Dr. F. W. N. Haultain as physician on duty, and Dr. George F. Barbour Simpson has succeeded Dr. J. Lamond Lackie as assistant physician, both for the quarter to June 30th, 1915.

April 12th.

IRELAND.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS.)

Honorary Degrees at the National University.

HONORARY degrees were conferred by the Senate of the National University at its last meeting under unusual but distinctly interesting circumstances. Some 60 years ago there was founded in Dublin, under the rectorship of John Henry Newman, the Catholic University of Ireland; it consisted of several faculties, including medicine,

but not having a charter it had no power to confer degrees. The Senate of the National University, considering the position of the past students of the Catholic University, conferred honorary degrees upon many who "having during their student days, for conscientious reasons, refrained from attending institutions where they could have obtained university degrees, and in place thereof having resorted to the Catholic University, which was unable to grant them that privilege." Among those who received degrees were the following medical men:—

L.L.D. (Honoris Causa).—Lieutenant-Colonel John Joseph Crean, A.M.S.; Mr. George Unthank Macnamara; Surgeon-General Thomas Maunsell, C.B.; Dr. Joseph Francis O'Carroll; and Colonel James Patrick Rooney, R.A.M.C. *In absentia*: Mr. Nicholas Thomas Connolly; Right Hon. Michael Francis Cox, M.D.; Mr. William Creagh; Surgeon-General Sir Charles MacDonagh Cuffe, K.C.B.; Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Boromeo Jennings, A.M.S.; Lieutenant-Colonel Ignatius O'Farrell, A.M.S.; and Major Patrick Walter Stafford, A.M.S.

M.D. (Honoris Causa).—Mr. Thomas Joseph Crean, Mr. Nicholas Furlong, Mr. Thomas Laffan, Mr. John M'Cullagh, Mr. Charles Stennett Redmond, Sir Joseph Michael Redmond, Mr. Charles O'Lomasny Ronayne, Mr. John Ryan, and Mr. Denis Walshe. *In absentia*: Mr. Richard Cannon, Mr. Matthew Kearney, Mr. John Kilbride, Mr. Charles William M'Carthy, Mr. Constantine Joseph MacGuire, Mr. Thomas M'Kenna, Mr. Daniel Aloysius O'Sullivan, Mr. Joseph Quirke, Mr. James Patrick Ryan, and Mr. Edward Aloysius Stephenson.

Royal College of Physicians of Ireland.

At the last meeting of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland Dr. J. J. Gannon was elected a Fellow of the College.

Cerebro-spinal Meningitis.

Since Dec. 8th, 1914, up to and inclusive of April 10th, 1915 (when 4 new cases were admitted), 47 patients were received into Purdysburn Municipal Fever Hospital, Belfast, with cerebro-spinal meningitis; while 3 were treated in the surrounding districts. Of these 50 cases of cerebro-spinal fever 10 have died, which gives a mortality of a little over 22 per cent. These cases have been treated with three varieties of serum—i.e., Flexner's, from the Rockefeller Institute, New York, Dopter's, from the Pasteur Institute, Paris, and Mulford's, from Philadelphia. It is too soon to give any opinion as to which of these serums affords the best results, though there seems to be a preference among practitioners for Flexner's. From the experience at Purdysburn Hospital it is clear that when serum is used within the first 24 hours of the onset of the disease infinitely better results are obtained; and, further, in cases in which the serum was used early recovery has taken place, even when within less than a day from the beginning of the attack the patient was covered with a petechial rash, and when on lumbar puncture the cerebro-spinal fluid was found to be purulent. It is therefore more prudent to risk sending a patient into hospital on a mistaken diagnosis than to wait for certainty, thereby depreciating the results of serum-therapy.

The late Samuel Hamilton, M.D. R.U.I.

Dr. Samuel Hamilton died suddenly, from angina pectoris, on April 4th, at his residence, Ballynahinch, co. Down. A sudden strain about a year ago warned him that his heart was not strong, and he thereupon gave up night work, but otherwise continued at work until two days before his death, when he developed a severe cold, during which two attacks of angina, the last a fatal one, occurred.

Dr. Hamilton, who was a native of Dromara, studied at Queen's College, Belfast, where he graduated as M.D., M.Ch., of the Royal University in 1882, and M.A.O. in 1885, and was noted as an athlete. He settled in practice in Ballynahinch in his native district, where by his cheery manner and professional skill he obtained a large practice, and was greatly liked. In 1891 he married a daughter of Professor Witheron, D.D., of Londonderry, who, with two sons—one of whom is a lieutenant in the R.A.M.C.—survive him. Dr. Hamilton was buried in Dromara on April 6th.

Richard Crossett, L.R.C.P. & S. Edin.

The death is announced at his residence, Cookstown, co. Tyrone, of Mr. Richard Crossett, after a prolonged illness. A native of Londonderry, Mr. Crossett studied at Queen's College, Belfast, and in 1876 became a Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Edinburgh. Forty years ago he began practice in Moneymore, but soon afterwards he removed to Cookstown, where he built up a large practice and where he has resided ever since. In addition to leading a busy professional life, he took his share in the public-business of Cookstown, where for a time he was a town commissioner and for upwards of 30 years he was consulting sanitary officer of the Cookstown union. He retired from active practice four years ago.

April 12th.

NOTES FROM INDIA.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS.)

Vaccine Treatment of Leprosy in India.

VACCINE for the treatment of leprosy, prepared from the streptothrix isolated by Major T. S. Beauchamp Williams, I.M.S., has been supplied by the Bombay Bacteriological Laboratory to various parts of India and other parts of the world. Owing to the slow progress of the disease, the recurring attacks of fever with extension of the leprosy lesion, and the periods of remission and temporary improvement even in untreated cases, it is difficult to arrive at any conclusion as to the usefulness of the vaccine as a method of treatment. Generally speaking, it may be said that some cases appear to improve under treatment, some remain stationary, while others show no improvement at all. A report by Major J. R. J. Tyrrell, I.M.S., Nowgong, shows that he had nine cases under treatment long enough to test the vaccine. Seven improved by treatment, while two showed slight, if any, change. None were any worse, and one had been under treatment for 10 months, one for eight, one for seven, two for four, two for three, and two for two months.

Plague in the Punjab: Iodine in the Treatment of Plague.

The plague returns for the month of February show that 23,389 deaths were reported in the province of the Punjab during the month, the weekly returns having been, Feb. 6th, 4492; Feb. 13th, 5285; Feb. 20th, 7798; and Feb. 27th, 5814. A decrease was thus disclosing itself at the end of the month, but throughout the period practically all parts of the province were affected.

The last report of the Bombay Bacteriological Laboratory includes an account of experiments made to test the efficiency of the treatment of plague