

subject was not so successful. Dr. Copeman carried out some inoculation experiments in connexion with this interesting outbreak and he was able to show conclusively that the cow-pox in this instance was "true" and not "spurious." The question arose as to whether the milk of the cows affected was fit for human consumption but fortunately the accommodating attitude of the farmer rendered it quite unnecessary to resort to a legal tribunal for the settlement of the difficulty.

Dr. R. Bruce Low completes Appendix A by an exhaustive summary of the progress and diffusion of plague throughout the world in 1902 and in our second notice we shall deal with Appendix B which relates to the experimental work carried out under the direction of the Board's medical department.

VITAL STATISTICS.

HEALTH OF ENGLISH TOWNS.

IN 76 of the largest English towns 7596 births and 5075 deaths were registered during the week ending Nov. 26th. The annual rate of mortality in these towns, which had been 14·9, 15·7, and 16·6 per 1000 in the three preceding weeks, further rose to 17·3 per 1000 last week. In London the death-rate was 16·8 per 1000, while it averaged 17·6 per 1000 in the 75 other large towns. The lowest death-rates in these towns were 9·3 in West Bromwich, 10·2 in Kings Norton, 11·0 in Hastings and in Huddersfield, 11·3 in Bournemouth, 11·8 in Willesden and in Devonport, 12·2 in Blackburn and in York, and 12·6 in Northampton; the highest rates were 21·0 in Grimsby, 21·6 in Liverpool, 22·4 in Wigan, 22·8 in Birmingham, 23·0 in St. Helens, 24·7 in Stockport, and 24·8 in South Shields. The 5075 deaths in these towns last week included 400 which were referred to the principal infectious diseases, against 425, 380, and 444 in the three preceding weeks; of these 400 deaths, 120 resulted from measles, 73 from diphtheria, 68 from diarrhoea, 53 from whooping-cough, 48 from scarlet fever, 36 from "fever" (principally enteric), and two from small-pox. No death from any of these diseases was registered last week in Hastings, Brighton, Bournemouth, Southampton, Reading, Handsworth (Staffs.), West Bromwich, Kings Norton, Warrington, or Swansea; while they caused the highest death-rates in East Ham, Hanley, Grimsby, St. Helens, Salford, Rochdale, West Hartlepool, South Shields, and Rhondda. The greatest proportional mortality from measles occurred in Grimsby, Liverpool, St. Helens, and Tynemouth; from scarlet fever in Rochdale; from diphtheria in Ipswich, Grimsby, West Hartlepool, and Merthyr Tydfil; from whooping-cough in Coventry, Huddersfield, and South Shields; from "fever" in Rhondda; and from diarrhoea in Hanley and Barrow-in-Furness. One fatal case of small-pox was registered last week in Oldham and one in South Shields, but none in any other of the large towns; and only one case of small-pox remained under treatment at the end of the week in the Metropolitan Asylums hospitals. The number of scarlet fever patients in these hospitals and in the London Fever Hospital, which had been 2782, 2843, and 2773 on the three preceding Saturdays, had declined again to 2741 on Saturday, Nov. 26th; 262 new cases were admitted during the week, against 294, 294, and 259 in the three preceding weeks. The deaths in London referred to diseases of the respiratory organs, which had been 285, 324, and 361 in the three preceding weeks, further increased to 385 last week, but were 17 below the number in the corresponding period of last year. The causes of 70, or 1·4 per cent., of the deaths in the 76 towns last week were not certified either by a registered medical practitioner or by a coroner. All the causes of death were duly certified in West Ham, Bristol, Leicester, Manchester, Bradford, Leeds, Hull, Newcastle-on-Tyne, and in 46 other smaller towns; while the largest proportions of uncertified deaths were registered in Birmingham, Liverpool, St. Helens, Burnley, Sheffield, Sunderland, South Shields, and Gateshead.

HEALTH OF SCOTCH TOWNS.

The annual rate of mortality in eight of the principal Scotch towns, which had been 17·8, 17·5, and 17·3 per 1000 in the three preceding weeks, rose again to 18·0 per 1000 during the week ending Nov. 26th, and was 0·7 per 1000 in excess of the mean rate during the same

period in the 76 large English towns. The rates in the eight Scotch towns ranged from 11·0 in Leith and 13·7 in Aberdeen to 20·7 in Dundee and 20·9 in Greenock. The 594 deaths in these towns last week included 21 which were referred to whooping-cough, 18 to diarrhoea, nine to diphtheria, eight to measles, three to "fever," and one to scarlet fever. In all, 60 deaths resulted from these principal infectious diseases last week, against 58, 59, and 47 in the three preceding weeks. These 60 deaths were equal to an annual rate of 1·8 per 1000, which was 0·4 per 1000 above the mean rate last week from the same diseases in the 76 large English towns. The fatal cases of whooping-cough, which had been 17, 20, and 19 in the three preceding weeks, rose again last week to 21, of which 18 were registered in Glasgow and two in Aberdeen. The deaths from diarrhoea, which had been 27 and 19 in the two preceding weeks, further declined to 18 last week, and included 11 in Glasgow and four in Dundee. The fatal cases of diphtheria, which had been eight, three, and two in the three preceding weeks, rose again last week to nine, of which five occurred in Glasgow and three in Edinburgh. The fatal cases of measles, which had been nine, eight, and five in the three preceding weeks, increased again to eight last week, and included five in Aberdeen. Of the three deaths from "fever" registered last week two were recorded in Glasgow. The deaths attributed to diseases of the respiratory organs in these towns, which had been 119, 136, and 154 in the three preceding weeks, further rose last week to 174, and were 26 in excess of the number in the corresponding period of last year. The causes of 20, or more than 3 per cent., of the deaths registered in these eight towns last week were not certified.

HEALTH OF DUBLIN.

The death-rate in Dublin, which had been 21·5, 20·2, and 24·2 per 1000 in the three preceding weeks, declined again to 22·6 per 1000 during the week ending Nov. 26th. During the past four weeks the death-rate has averaged 22·1 per 1000, the rates during the same period being 16·0 in London and 16·7 in Edinburgh. The 164 deaths of persons belonging to Dublin registered during the week under notice showed a decline of 12 from the number in the preceding week and included 21 which were referred to the principal infectious diseases, against 13, 12, and 20 in the three preceding weeks; of these, 12 resulted from measles, four from whooping-cough, four from diarrhoea, and one from scarlet fever, but not any from small-pox, diphtheria, or "fever." These 21 deaths were equal to an annual rate of 2·9 per 1000, the death-rates last week from the principal infectious diseases being 0·8 in London and 0·6 in Edinburgh. The deaths from measles, which had been six, seven, and eight in the three preceding weeks, further increased last week to 12. The four fatal cases of whooping-cough corresponded with the number in the preceding week, while the four deaths from diarrhoea showed a slight decline. The 164 deaths in Dublin last week included 28 of children under one year of age and 48 of persons aged 60 years and upwards; the deaths of infants were slightly fewer than in the preceding week, but the deaths of elderly persons showed an increase. Seven inquest cases and eight deaths from violence were registered; and 55, or more than a third, of the deaths occurred in public institutions. The causes of 8, or nearly 5 per cent., of the deaths registered in Dublin last week were not certified.

THE SERVICES.

ROYAL NAVY MEDICAL SERVICE.

THE following appointments are notified:—Fleet Surgeons: C. S. Woodwright to the *Irresistible*, on recommissioning, and V. G. Thorpe to the *Hercules*, temporary.

ROYAL NAVAL VOLUNTEER RESERVE.

The undermentioned gentleman has been appointed a Surgeon:—Thomas Caldwell Litler Jones (dated Nov. 25th, 1904).

ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS.

Lieutenant MacDonald has left Aldershot for service in India. Major H. D. Rowan is held in readiness to embark for India for service in the Punjab. Lieutenant-Colonel E. M. Wilson, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., retired-pay, is

appointed to the medical charge of the Military Prison at Aldershot. Captain H. J. M'Grigor joins at Woolwich for duty.

ARMY MEDICAL RESERVE OF OFFICERS.

Surgeon-Lieutenant A. Y. Greenwood, 3rd Lancashire Royal Garrison Artillery (Volunteers), to be Surgeon-Lieutenant (dated Nov. 26th, 1904).

IMPERIAL YEOMANRY.

Denbighshire (Hussars): Richard Geoffrey Williams to be Surgeon-Lieutenant (dated Nov. 26th, 1904).

VOLUNTEER CORPS.

Rifle: 4th Volunteer Battalion the King's (Liverpool Regiment): Surgeon-Lieutenant E. L. Hughes resigns his commission (dated Nov. 26th, 1904).

THE REPORT OF THE BUREAU OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY.

The report of the Surgeon-General, chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery of the United States Navy, for the year 1904 is a document which will repay careful perusal. From it we learn that the difficulty of securing qualified medical men for the navy is rendered greater by the fact that a lower rate of pay in some grades is given in the navy than in the army. In the case of assistant surgeons employed on shore duty the pay is 15 per cent. less than the pay received by assistant surgeons in the sister service. The question of rank is dealt with and it is suggested that Congress shall be asked to change the name of the different grades as follows:—In place of surgeon-general, surgeon-admiral; and in the other grades, medical director to become surgeon-captain; medical inspector, surgeon-commander; surgeon, surgeon-lieutenant-commander; passed assistant-surgeon, surgeon-lieutenant; and assistant-surgeon, surgeon-lieutenant (junior grade). The recommendation made in two preceding reports for the enactment of legislation authorising the employment under the control of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery of skilled dentists for service in the navy is renewed. With reference to the model hospital ship for 300 patients, of which plans have been laid down, it is pointed out that such a vessel will prove far more efficient than a ship diverted from a commercial use and hastily converted into a hospital in time of war.

The health of the Navy and Marine Corps for the calendar year 1903, as shown by the statistical returns was good, the ratio of admissions to the sick list per 1000 of strength being less than the average for the eight years prior to 1902. The ratio is slightly greater, however, than that for the last year. The average strength of the active list during the year 1903 was 37,248, which is an increase of about one-fifth over the previous year, the average strength for 1902 being 31,240. The total number of admissions to hospital for all causes was 28,569, the ratio per 1000 of strength being 782.24, as compared with a ratio of 767.63 for the previous year, and 797.10 for the eight preceding years. There were 24,545 admissions for disease and 4024 for injury, giving ratios of 671.82 and 110.14 respectively. The corresponding ratios for 1902 were 640.07 and 125.56. There were 224 deaths during the year, giving a ratio of 6.01 per 1000, which is considerably less than that of the previous year (6.75), or the average of the eight preceding years (6.78). 164 deaths occurred from disease, with a ratio of 4.40, and 60 from injury (including poison) with a ratio of 1.60. There was a general increase in admissions for diseases of the digestive apparatus. With the exception of the class of "general infectious diseases" venereal diseases gave a greater number of sick days than any other class. The total of 114,571 sick days due to venereal disease is equal to the entire loss to the service of 314 men for the year. The total admissions for venereal disease during the year are 1207 in excess of 1902 and the total sick days are 22,572 in excess. This cannot be accounted for by the increase in strength. In comparing the above figures with those of the previous year it is noteworthy that while the ratio of admissions to the sick list per 1000 of strength is greater than in 1902, the mortality is not only less than that of 1902 but lower than the average for the past eight years.

REGIMENTAL HOMES AT DEVIZES.

At Devizes, on Nov. 24th, the Countess of Pembroke formally opened two regimental homes for disabled soldiers which have been erected as a memorial to Prince Christian Victor and officers and men of the Wiltshire Regiment who were killed during the South African war.

ARMY EXAMINATIONS AND FOGS.

This is the season for holding competitive examinations for army candidates and it is likewise the time for the occurrence of darkness and fogs. No one can tell when he goes to bed at night whether he will or will not wake in the morning in a dense fog rendering vehicular traffic or even ordinary street locomotion a slow and difficult or possibly an impracticable undertaking. We have often wondered whether any provision has been made in such circumstances for the non-attendance of candidates at such examinations or for their being unavoidably delayed beyond the hour fixed for their being present. They cannot all locate themselves close to the place of examination. It occurs to us that something should be done to meet *bonâ-fide* cases of this sort if only as a matter of justice to the candidates and to their parents who have been put to much expense in their education.

THE WAR IN THE FAR EAST.

There is but little news of a general kind from the seat of war and none of any special medical interest to be chronicled this week. The armies on the Shaho have had some desultory fighting and the fierce assaults on Port Arthur are still going on. But there is one matter of present and growing importance which calls for comment. It requires no great exercise of the imagination to form some idea, even if it be a very inadequate one, of the situation and of what must be the hardship and suffering of the belligerent armies now wintering in Manchuria. Their sufferings and hardships must be considerable, as all the available sources of water-supply for men and animals are frozen, the ice has to be thawed, and there is said to be but a scanty supply of fuel. If all we hear about the army commanded by General Kuropatkin be true—viz., that the troops at Mukden and elsewhere in Manchuria are badly huddled and that the stores of warm clothing are inadequate to meet all their requirements—they will need all their stolid fortitude to sustain them in such circumstances. It is officially stated, however, that the health of the Russian army is fairly satisfactory, but it cannot remain so under such conditions as are described and, in addition to frostbite, dysentery and outbreaks of other forms of camp disease may be expected to occur, if, indeed, these are not already prevalent. These remarks equally apply to the Japanese armies, but in their case it is stated that they are well supplied with warm clothing of good design and quality and the comparative nearness of these armies to their base will greatly facilitate the work of furnishing the Mikado's forces in Manchuria with all the needful requisites for a winter campaign. The conditions in the case of General Kuropatkin's army are very different and make the problem one of very great and increasing difficulty. To feed and to clothe such an enormous force operating at such a distance from Russia and to provide it with all necessary war material and to transport all the sick and wounded who have to be removed from the Manchurian hospitals to base hospitals in Russia will be a very great, difficult, and costly undertaking.

Miss McCaul's work, entitled "Under the Care of the Japanese War Office," is to be published by Messrs. Cassell during the present week. It should, we think, prove both interesting and instructive.

The Army Medical Department has drawn the attention of the responsible officers at home stations to the necessity for reducing the expenditure caused by the employment of civilian practitioners.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

CANCER OF THE CERVIX COMPLICATING LABOUR.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In THE LANCET of Nov. 19th, p. 1449, Dr. Herbert Spencer advocated the old Porro-Cæsarean operation with the *serre-nœud* instead of conservative Cæsarean section for *inoperable* cases of cancer of the cervix uteri complicating labour but he does not bring forward any case of his own in support of his view. During the discussion which followed the reading of his valuable paper at the Obstetrical Society