a small decrease. Nine inquest cases and three deaths from violence were registered, and 55, or more than a third, of the deaths occurred in public institutions. The causes of six, or more than 4 per cent., of the deaths registered in Dublin last week were not certified.

THE SERVICES.

ROYAL NAVY MEDICAL SERVICE.

The following appointments are notified:—Surgeons: A. W. Tredwell, F. E. Robinson, and M. T. Male to the Vivid for disposal, lent to Plymouth Hospital; J. H. Rooney to the Field for disposal; R. Thompson, E. S. Wilkinson, and E. A. G. Wilkinson to the Pembroke for disposal; R. Kennedy, J. H. L. Page, and W. E. Ormoby to the Duke of Wellington for disposal; and A. F. Fleming to the Wildfire for disposal.

ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS.

Lieutenant-Colonel E. H. Fenn, C.I.E., to be Colonel, vice W. McWatters, retired (dated August 26th, 1903).

The undermentioned gentlemen to be Lieutenants, on probation (dated August 31st, 1903):—Arthur Clayton Horner Doug; Percival Watson, Thomas Scarrington Dudding; Carrick Hey Robertson, Francis Montagu Maxwell Ommannay, John Edward Powell, Robert Henston MacNicol, Osborne Jevers, David Duncan Paton, Santiago Luis Pallant, Charles Reginald Bradley Herbert James Fawcett, Thomas James Wright, Gerrard Alinice Kempthorne, James Thomas McEntire, Stanley Everard Lewis, Norcott D'E-terre Harvey, Joseph Allen Longley, Norman Edwin Dunkerton, Patrick John Haefflin, Arthur Carr Osburn, Marmaduke Stirling, Thomas Colling, William Mac Dowall Mac Dowall, Francis John Turner, Harold Crosley Hildreth, Gordon Stewart Mackay, John Duncan Richmond, Forbes Manson Grantt Tulloch, and Ernest Mare Glaunill. The undermentioned Lieutenants are seconded under the provisions of Article 289 of the Pay Warrant:—O. H. Robertson (dated August 31st, 1903); J. A. Longley (dated August 31st, 1903); and N. E. Dunkerton (dated August 31st, 1903).

Civil Surgeon Aginald Bean Armstrong is appointed to the medical charge of the troops and Station Hospital, Bodmin, and Civil Surgeon A. J. Coppiestone to the medical charge of troops at Devonport.

Imperial Yeomanry.

South of Ireland: Frederick Faber MacCabe to be Surgeon-Lieutenant (dated Sept. 12th, 1903).

VOLUNTEER CORPS.


ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS (Volunteers).

The Manchester Companies: Charles Roberts to be Lieutenant (dated Sept. 19th, 1903).

DEATHS IN THE SERVICES.

Staff Surgeon William Job Maillard, V.O. (retired), on Sept. 10th, at Bournemouth, aged 40 years. He entered the service as surgeon in August, 1889, was promoted staff surgeon in 1899, and retired in 1902. During the outbreak at Candia on Sept. 6th, 1898, some seamen were landing from the Mazar at Serina, where the ship Maillard, who had fallen back wounded into the boat, was shot at by the other men of her merchant ship. Surgeon Maillard only failed to bring Stroud in through the boat being adrift and it being beyond his strength to lift the man (who was almost dead) out of so unstable a platform. Surgeon Maillard returned to his post with his clothes riddled with bullets, though he himself was unhurt. For this gallant action he obtained the Victoria Cross. Surgeon Maillard returned to his post with his clothes riddled with bullets, though he himself was unhurt. For this gallant action he obtained the Victoria Cross.

Colonel William Briggs Allen, R.A.M.C., principal medical officer of the Bombay Presidency, at Landom, India, on Sept. 8th. Colonel Allin entered the army as a surgeon in February, 1877, and was promoted to colonel in November, 1900. He was in the South African war in 1899-1900 as principal medical officer of the infantry division. For his services on this occasion he was also mentioned in despatches and promoted to colonel.

Captain Percy Alfred Browne, L.M.S., officiating medical officer, 17th Bengal Infantry, on Sept. 5th, at Bannu, India, from enteric fever, aged 27 years. He joined the Indian Medical Service as Lieutenant in 1900 and was promoted to Captain in June last.

Correspondence.

* * * Every care is taken by us to prevent the revelation of the identity of a patient who Mr. S. B. Atkinson alleges...
MEDICAL DOCTRINES OF HEREDITY.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I am glad to see from THE LANCET of Sept. 19th, p. 845, that Dr. C. R. Niven recognises that he was in error in attributing to me the opinion that parental alcoholism causes increased desire for alcohol in the offspring. Dr. Niven denies, however, that he imputed to me the opinion that acquired characters are transmissible.

Of course, as Dr. Niven says that he did not do so, I accept his statement, but as he specifically asks me (p. 853) whether it was the opinion of the transmission of an acquired trait, I naturally concluded that he imputed that opinion to me (or why should he have asked me for proof of it?) and I think that anyone else who read Dr. Niven's letter without having seen mine would have formed the same opinion. Dr. Niven asks me for evidence as regards the existence of "molecules" in the germ cells. I used this term in a general sense as indicating the ultimate living elements of which the germ plasm must be composed. I think it is probably a mistake to adopt the term and call them "biophors." Of course, these units are hypothetical, but it is necessary to assume their existence before we can even attempt to account for any of the manifold phenomena of heredity.

A science of heredity is no more possible without the hypothesis of the transmissibility of the character than a science of the propagation of the organism could be possible without the idea of reproduction.

The question as to whether alcoholism in the human subject is capable of producing mental or other defects in the offspring is not a matter that can be submitted to direct experiment and therefore rigorous scientific proof is not obtainable. The end to which Dr. Reid objects is to adopt Dr. Reid's remarks that if the change produced were merely a "modification," whereas in the latter it would seem more likely that a "variation" would take place. This, however, of course purely hypothetical, but I gather from Dr. Reid's remarks that if the change produced were merely a "modification," his views would not necessarily fail from being capable of receiving permanent injury by the action of poisons would be removed.

Dr. G. R. Leighton's letter in your last issue, p. 543, reminds me very importantly of the need which exists for the study of biology to occupy a much more prominent part in the medical curriculum than it does at present. The subject is of vast importance—of how great importance is very far from being generally recognised. What is urgently needed is a national laboratory for the experimental study of heredity, which might in its operations lead to results secondary in importance to no others. Columns of THE LANCET are at present being occupied by a discussion on one very important aspect of heredity, and yet neither side is capable of supplying definite scientific proof of its contents. Yet the question is one which lends itself to experimental inquiry and could probably be definitely settled on experimental lines. As I have already put it, whilst the nineteenth century may be said to have witnessed the placing of the science of biology on a definite scientific basis with the enunciation of the general laws underlying the development of the organic world, so it may well be that the present century will witness not merely an extension of the practice of the present century, but a furthering of the development of the human race.

J. WIGLESWORTH.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

Sirs,—In reading the discussion on the above subject I am reminded of a story which I read lately, giving the evidence of the eminent and veracious Dean of St. Patrick's. A certain man was declared to have a wonderful nose. The learned society of the place met to discuss the case and, having heard that no person but himself had such a nose, walked into the room. As far as I can discern, the present position of Dr. G. Archdall Reid and those who agree with him is that there is no conclusive evidence against their particular hypothesis, but that there is no evidence in their favour, but that the strongest argument in their favour is the biological doctrine that acquired characters are not inherited, which in Weismann's hands becomes the oppressive assertion that required characteristics are not transmitted. It comes to this, that if this extreme view of Weismann cannot be upheld the whole theory of heredity with which Dr. Reid and his friends are intimately concerned fails them;

1 "Heredity and Insanity”; Journal of Mental Science, October, 1902.
2 Ibid.