College of Surgeons of England. Apart from his long tenure of the Curatorship in the Museum and his Erasmus Wilson and Bradshaw lectures, he served for nine years on the Examining Board (1902 to 1911). Eve was an ideal surgical examiner, always considerate to the candidates and scrupulously fair. In 1904 he was elected on to the Council, and at the time of his death was one of the Vice-Presidents. Few persons realise the very great amount of time and labour required from the holders of these posts, and Eve left nothing undone during the term of his office. In all, his work at the College covered the long period of 24 years, and he was justly proud of his high position on its Council, which no one could have better earned. By his colleagues there and at the London Hospital, as well as by many other friends in the profession, his loss will be deplored and his memory will be honoured, and the deepest sympathy is felt for Lady Eve in her bereavement.

Frederic Eve was knighted in 1911. He leaves one son, now serving in France, and one daughter.

A memorial service was held on Wednesday last at All Saints', Margaret-street, which was attended by a large number of medical and official colleagues and friends, including Sir W. Watson Cheyne, President of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, Lieut.-Colonel Yolland, of the Eastern Command, Professor W. Wright, of the London Hospital, and Dr. A. J. Rice-Oxley, representing H.R.H. Princess Henry of Battenberg.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

THE PROHIBITION OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—You recently considered the memorial to the Government signed by a thousand thoughtful officers, and business and professional men, asking the Government to suspend all drink licences for the period of the war. That request is so important, I beg you will let me draw attention to it again. The memorial states that, even where it does not cause drunkenness, alcohol by "the constant sapping of man's energies" endangers the supply of munitions. Anyone might be excused for thinking that such a pronouncement from so wise a body of men would cause the munition workers as a body to drop all drinking. But we in the medical profession will be less sanguine, for we know that we have been telling people for years that those who drink live fewer years than do teetotallers, yet that people continue to drink. They prefer a more cheerful life and shoot Niagara with eyes wilfully closed. They will not take scientific precautions for themselves; are they likely to take them for the country? Drink makes them more sociable and their friends more interesting, but they feel, unconsciously perhaps, that it makes them less able to take care of themselves, and that they should only drink with their friends, not with strangers, and still less with enemies about. (Does not that apply to the nation now?)

Drink is an anæsthetic which relieves the pain of disappointed love, of poverty, of indigestion, and, above all, it makes people feel comfortable and better pleased with themselves. Why—men ask—should we not drink? That wine is a mocker they do not frankly believe. It has before now lessened their self-control, blunted their perceptions, and impaired their judgment; it has made them less alert and less efficient at their work; all these things are proved by the chronograph, but of none of them will the obstinate and selfish moderate drinker be convinced. But we members of a scientific profession, we know they are all true. As men of the world, too, we know that nothing like the whole of the damage done by drink has been brought home to drinking. How few are the accidents unattended by a whisper about drink as the cause? How often, when some accident has happened, is the suggestion about its author heard in the mess—"He does himself pretty well"? And is it not just as frequently true that when a formal inquiry is being held most particular

endeavour is made by everyone to keep any suggestion about alcohol from the official notice of the people who are inquiring.

Why is everyone so friendly to drinkers? I remember a very distinguished officer to whom I mentioned the death of A, a brother officer with whom we had both served at different times in the same ship. "He drank a bit," said I. "Yes," said the other, "but I could never catch him; everybody shielded him." And I recalled to myself an occasion when A was "under the influence," and some half-dozen officers stood round him to shield him from possible notice by his (and our) captain near by. Yet his falling might have drowned us any night.

Drink being known to be so frequent a cause of accidents and delay to work, and it having been stated by authority that we are fighting three enemies, Germany, Austria, and drink, of which the most deadly is drink, surely it is nothing but our British want of logic that keeps open the licensed houses which the memorialists desire closed throughout this war. Inadvisable in peace-time, indulgence in alcohol is suicide now. The moderate drinker may easily pass over his limit by a chance any day. And think of the responsibilities to-day, especially those of public servants, a captain in the trenches, the commander of a destroyer, a Cabinet Minister. Why should they drink? To compensate them for the strain of their anxieties? It is pleasant; it is an anæsthetic. Will the enjoyment of that small sensuous pleasure make up to them or will it compensate us, their employers or their beneficiaries, for perceptions delayed, decisions slowed, one gunfire wasted, a ship lost, an opportunity unseized? But of course it would be most unfair to stop naval officers' grog while we went on drinking grog ourselves, or to keep it from the soldiers while allowing it to the Cabinet. Wherefore, I submit it is most important that the Government, determined to spare no effort to win the war, should accede to the prayer of the memorial and close all licensed houses till the war ends. Such is undoubtedly the teaching of science.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Naval and Military Club, Dec. 5th, 1916.

W. E. HOME,
Fleet Surgeon, R.N.

THE USE OF X RAYS DURING OPERATION FOR FOREIGN BODIES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I have found the following technique invariably successful in cases of removal of metallic foreign bodies, and I adopt this procedure in all cases, however simple. The X ray room is turned into a temporary operating theatre. The patient prepared for operation is placed on the X ray table with the tube underneath. The tube is then centralised under the part to be operated on. The room is then darkened and the foreign body is localised by the screen in the ordinary way in order to see where the incision should be made. Lights are then turned up. The surgeon washes up and prepares for operation while the patient is being anæsthetised. One nurse is told off to turn the light on and off. Another nurse takes charge of the screen, and another nurse or the X ray operator controls the switch-board for the X ray apparatus. The operation is now commenced. If the foreign body is not immediately found the operator has merely to ask for X rays. Without further instructions, each assistant does her allotted part and the operation proceeds in the dark with the shadow of the instruments and the foreign body getting closer together. This may only require a few seconds.

In a recent operation, where I was searching for a piece of shrapnel about as big as my little finger-nail (and as thin) in the buttock very near the great sciatic nerve and which was causing intense sciatica, I had to ask for the rays five or six times, and each time I had merely to say, "X rays, please," and "Lights, please," alternately, and I was able to get the piece out with very little damage to tissues. A month previously I had failed to find it in the operating theatre, though I had myself spent a long time in "marking" it down. I now adopt this method for all cases.

There are, of course, a few drawbacks to the method, the principal one being the want of space in many X ray rooms. So many hospitals when installing X rays have put their apparatus into such small rooms. This is not only greatly