

auto-intoxication consequent upon an almost exclusive meat diet.

The high fatality of epidemic typhus among the more prosperous classes has been commented on by numerous writers, especially Graves (*Clinical Medicine*, pp. 59-60) and Creighton (*History of Epidemics in Britain*, vol. ii, p. 100 et seq., and especially pp. 290-1). Jeanneret-Minkine's observations fall into line with those of earlier writers. Davy and Brown's figures (*BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL*, November 20th, 1915) are consistent with the fatality-rate upon the medical officers being above the general average, but the absolute numbers are small.

The point is of both theoretical and practical interest, which is my excuse for calling attention to it.—I am, etc.,

M. GREENWOOD, Jun.,

Captain 1st London (City of London) Sanitary Co.
Loughton, May 2nd.

THE "SOLDIER'S HEART" AND ITS RELATION TO THYROIDISM.

SIR,—I do not think that Dr. Harry Campbell is quite correct in his supposition that Sir James Barr is the first to draw attention to the hormonal origin of the symptoms of "soldier's heart."

Some months ago, in the *Lancet*, January 8th, 1916, Dr. Herniman-Johnson and Dr. Percival White pointed out the fact that "soldier's heart" is really due to Graves's disease, and therefore can be cured by x-ray treatment. At the discussion on "irritable heart" at the Royal Society of Medicine on January 18th, 1916 (reported in the February *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine*), I brought forward the same view, but got no support from the meeting. In the *Lancet* of April 8th I again urged the same fact, and quoted cases cured by x rays to prove the contention.

That the thyroid is not primary in Graves's disease, but that toxic influences play a large part in causing thyro degeneration, few will deny.

Sir James Barr's paper is very valuable as again pressing this connexion. His method of treatment is considerably less laborious than x-ray treatment, which latter, however, gives very satisfactory results.—I am, etc.,

FLORENCE A. STONEY, M.D., B.S.Lond.

London, W., May 1st.

INFANTILE MORTALITY.

SIR,—When Dr. S. G. Moore said in his Milroy Lectures that there was nothing to prevent the continuance in the decline of the birth-rate, he surely did not mean that it would continue declining until it equalled the death-rate. He must know that the birth-rate of Australia and New Zealand ceased falling some ten or more years ago, and that ours may be expected to do the same when serious poverty has been eliminated. The scheme which he favours of public assistance to necessitous mothers and infants will merely ensure that the further decline of our birth-rate will be mainly among the people with over 30s. a week.—I am, etc.,

London, S.W., May 8th.

BINNIE DUNLOP, M.B., Ch.B.

In an address delivered at the second scientific Pan-American Congress at Washington on January 7th, Mr. Frederick L. Hoffman stated that the estimated annual mortality from cancer in the continental United States is 80,000 (32,000 males, 48,000 females). Excluding cases of disease of the generative organs and the breast, the rates for the two sexes in the registration area of the United States, are about the same. The rate is somewhat higher in urban than in rural centres, the difference being partly accounted for by deaths in institutions. The death-rate in thirty southern cities was 80.3 per 100,000 of population among whites and 55.2 among the coloured. There has been a considerable increase in the negro rate since the Civil War, particularly in cancer of the uterus. A comparison of the cancer mortality rates in the eastern and western hemispheres seems to show a decrease in prevalence corresponding with diminishing distance from the equator. For the eastern hemisphere the rate was 98.3 and for the western 78 per 100,000 of population. There would seem to be a very close relation between the frequency of cancer and the degree of civilization. The disease was extremely rare among the North American Indians, the Eskimos, and West Indian negroes.

Universities and Colleges.

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

The following candidates have been approved at the examination indicated:

SECOND M.B. (*Part II, Pharmacology and General Pathology*).—B. F. Armitage, H. Barbash, P. F. Bishop, C. V. Braimbridge, E. P. Brockman, G. E. Burton, T. A. Butcher, S. P. Castell, C. B. Cohen, A. J. Copeland, E. C. Curwen, J. C. Davies, C. C. R. Downing, G. A. Fisher, W. S. Gross, A. C. Halliwell, J. C. N. Harris, A. T. Hawley, W. M. Heald, T. L. Hillier, S. C. Ho, P. C. Livingston, A. G. F. McArthur, E. G. D. Murray, P. M. Neighbour, J. W. McK. Nicholl, F. C. Odling, R. A. Olphert, F. P. N. Parsons, R. H. Reece, R. H. O. B. Robinson, N. Rumbold, E. D. Spackman, H. F. Squire, W. S. Sykes, M. S. Thomson, G. H. Ward, J. P. Wells, R. L. Williams, D. W. Winnicott, J. M. McC. Wright.

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

GENERAL COUNCIL.

At the statutory half-yearly meeting of the General Council, on May 3rd, resolutions were adopted recording the Council's appreciation of the services of late Principal Sir William Turner, Emeritus Professor Sir Alexander R. Simpson, Emeritus Professor John Wyllie, Dr. Allan Jamieson, and Professor Hardie.

The draft ordinance for the Degree in Education, which will be one of the most comprehensive in any English-speaking university, was approved.

The report of the Finance Committee showed that the total of matriculated students for the year 1914-15 was 2,417 (1,941 men, 476 women). There had been a marked decrease both of men and women in all the faculties except that of science, where there were eight more women than in the previous year. There was an increased deficit in the General University Fund, the deficiency now amounting to £12,814—a fact which showed the need for unappropriated donations. The increase in bursary funds ought not to be allowed to distract attention from this urgent and more general need.

A motion to provide that all future appointments of principals and professors should terminate either at a definite age limit or after a definite period of office, was adopted, with the addition of the words "unless the university shall request such principal or professors to continue in office thereafter for a further period."

The name of Mrs. A. B. Lothian (*née* Maccallum), M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., was added to the Business Committee.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF EDINBURGH.

At its quarterly meeting, on May 2nd, the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh resolved to offer its diploma of membership to Major Harold Edgar Priestley, Captain Alan Cunliffe Vidal, and Captain James Lafayette Lauder in appreciation of their conduct as physicians at Wittenberg.

Obituary.

JAMES BROWN BIRD, M.D. EDIN.,

PHYSICIAN, CUMBERLAND INFIRMARY.

DR. J. B. BIRD, of Carlisle, died of influenza on April 22nd at the early age of 47. He was born in 1869 in Berwickshire, and received his professional education at Edinburgh University; he was Stark Scholar for post-graduate research in 1888-9, and graduated M.B., and C.M. in 1890. After holding a junior resident appointment at the Crichton Royal Institute, he was appointed house-physician to the Brompton Hospital for Consumption, and his studies in that institution afforded the subject for the thesis on phthisis for his M.D. degree, conferred upon him in 1897. In 1891 he became house-surgeon to the Cumberland Infirmary, Carlisle, and when the period of office elapsed he set up in practice in that city. He was placed on the honorary staff of the infirmary in 1897, and became full physician in 1903. He was largely instrumental in founding the Cumberland Sanatorium, for which he was secretary for many years, and he was for a time president of the Burns Club. In 1906 Dr. Bird was Chairman of the English Division of the Association and President of the Border Counties Branch in 1910. In 1896, when the annual meeting of the Association was held in Carlisle, he was active in its organization. He was universally respected by his fellow citizens, and at the funeral, on April 25th, a large and representative gathering assembled at the service held in St. Paul's Church, Carlisle. He was held in high esteem by his professional brethren, and his death is greatly