

HEALTH OF DUBLIN.

The death-rate in Dublin, which had been 23·8 and 19·2 per 1000 in the preceding two weeks, further declined to 17·3 during the week ending Sept. 13th. During the past twelve weeks of the current quarter the death-rate in the city averaged 20·2 per 1000, the rate for the same period being 18·4 in London and 16·6 in Edinburgh. The 117 deaths in Dublin showed a decline of 13 from the number in the previous week; they included 11 which resulted from diarrhoea, 2 from "fever," 1 from measles, 1 from whooping-cough, and not one either from small-pox, scarlet fever, or diphtheria. Thus the deaths referred to the principal zymotic diseases, which had been 22 and 11 in the preceding two weeks, rose again last week to 15; they were equal to an annual rate of 2·2 per 1000, the rate from the same diseases being 2·9 in London and 2·7 in Edinburgh. The deaths from diarrhoea, which had been 13 and 6 in the previous two weeks, rose again last week to 11. The fatal cases of whooping-cough, which had been 3 and 4 in the previous two weeks, declined again last week to 1. The 117 deaths in Dublin included 27 of infants under one year of age, and 29 of persons aged upwards of sixty years; the deaths of infants showed a slight increase, while those of elderly persons were fewer than those recorded in any recent week. Five inquest cases and 4 deaths from violence were registered during the week; and 32, or more than a fourth, of the deaths occurred in public institutions. The causes of 13, or more than 11 per cent., of the deaths were not certified.

THE SERVICES.

ARMY MEDICAL STAFF.—Surgeon William Henry P. Lewis, from the Seconded List, to be Surgeon (dated Sept. 4th, 1890).

MADRAS MEDICAL ESTABLISHMENT.—Brigade Surgeon Alexander Porter, M.D., to be Deputy Surgeon-General (dated July 25th, 1890).

INDIAN ARMY.—The Queen has approved of the retirement from the Service of Brigade Surgeon John Martin Coates, M.D., Bengal Medical Establishment (dated July 6th, 1890).

ADMIRALTY.—The following appointments have been made:—Staff Surgeon Samuel Keays to the *Briton* (dated Sept. 28th, 1890). Surgeons George Allan and Richard Barnard to the *Vivid*, for the Royal Naval Barracks (both dated Sept. 15th, 1890).

VOLUNTEER CORPS.—*Artillery*: 1st Norfolk (Eastern Division, Royal Artillery): Acting Surgeon T. J. Compton to be Surgeon (dated Sept. 13th, 1890).—1st Gloucestershire: Acting Surgeons J. S. Carleton and J. H. Wathen to be Surgeons (both dated Sept. 13th, 1890).—6th Lancashire: Acting Surgeon J. B. Oliver to be Surgeon (dated Sept. 13th, 1890).

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

"A GRAVE NOVELTY IN LICENSING."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I can scarcely presume that you are ignorant that by the Wine and Beerhouse Act, 1869, and with reference to the provisions of 9 Geo. IV., chap. 61, "no application for a certificate under this Act in respect of a licence to sell by retail beer, cider, or wine, not to be consumed on the premises, shall be refused except upon one or more of the following grounds: 1. That the applicant has failed to produce evidence of good character. 2. That the house or the locality of the house is of a disorderly character, or frequented by thieves, prostitutes, or persons of bad character. 3. That the applicant having previously held any licence has forfeited it by misconduct, or has been previously disqualified. 4. That the applicant's house is not duly qualified as to rental," &c.

Now the Excise say that these beef and malt wines, and even quinine wines that do not contain a grain of quinine to the ounce, shall not be sold without such licence as above; but make the proviso that any chemist who is

licensed to sell methylated spirit cannot also have an "off" licence to sell these wines. With regard to the question you raise of chemists selling brandy and beer, you see there is not any option so far as beer is concerned, if license is applied for subject to the four points. No one was more astonished than I when the first application was made to me for one of these licences, but there is really no alternative.

If we are to look forward to any revising, amending, or codifying of the licensing law, than which no body of law requires all these three processes more, it must be by educating everyone on lines quite apart from faddism and confiscation, and with a desire to largely limit facilities which are now from various causes outside the power of the authorities. If this revising, amending, and codifying could be dissociated by mutual consent of parties from political complications, I doubt not but that the cause of true temperance would gain largely, and the process of education in moderation of all kinds be greatly forwarded.

I am, Sirs, your obedient servant,

FRED. ED. MANBY, F.R.C.S. Eng.,

Sept. 16th, 1890.

Deputy Mayor of Wolverhampton.

"A MEDICAL MAN CENSURED BY A CORONER'S JURY."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I have heard that any crime may be committed with moral impunity if it has the sanction of the cause of liberty, any baneful superstition may be indulged with applause under the shield of religion, and any imputation allowed on the character and conduct of a man if it can only be made under the pretext of the cause of humanity.

That the last of these conceptions should find expression in the verdict of a coroner's jury is an experience familiar to everybody acquainted with the miraculous deliverances of that tribunal, but that the same sentiment should find an echo in what is presumed to be the cultured intelligence of a professional organ is not, I think, so perfectly intelligible.

In the annotation in which you discuss the subject that stands at the head of this letter you enunciate a doctrine which is, so far as it applies to me, equivalent to this: that I, finding myself confronted with the alternative of treating a case of puerperal peritonitis in circumstances in which I had come under an obligation not to treat it, and passing it over to the charge of the Poor-law medical officer, was bound to treat it. And this doctrine you support on the basis of "professional responsibility and humanity." I think your view of the nature of professional responsibility and humanity extremely curious. Are what you deem professional responsibility and humanity to be reckoned paramount in their obligation to the sentiment of fidelity to one's word, to the need of discharging your trust in the terms of its contract—to the force, in a word, of truth and justice? Such a conception is, in my opinion, a travesty alike of common sense and common honesty, and when made the basis of a grave imputation on character and conduct comes perilously near being simply disgraceful.

I am, Sirs, yours obediently,

Tunbridge Wells, Sept. 17th, 1890.

F. S. CONNAN.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Kindly allow me space to say that I think your remarks in the above case about Mr. Connan unfair. The patient, Mrs. Camfield, was not able to pay the fee settled by the Tunbridge Wells Club to Mr. Connan, and, in my opinion, the case became one for parish relief. It seems the husband obtained the necessary order for Dr. Starling to attend, and he, in not doing so, I think, was most deserving of censure. Had the jury who returned the verdict censuring Mr. Connan for not acting charitably been put to the test by being asked to put their hands in their pockets to pay the doctor's fee, I wonder how many would have been ready to do so. There is no class who, according to their means, act more generously to their fellow creatures than the medical profession, and when they object to exercise their charity, why should they be censured more than other mortals? If Mr. Connan had attended the woman Camfield, I am afraid in the future he might have had occasion to repeat his charity, for many other members of the above club would have taken such an