

IRELAND.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS.)

The Irish University Commission.

At the annual meeting of the Royal University Graduates' Association held in Belfast on June 29th the following resolution was unanimously passed:—

That this annual general meeting of the Royal University Graduates' Association most emphatically condemns the constitution of the Irish University Commission on the following grounds: first, that the Government have departed from the principle of appointing only such persons as are entirely unprejudiced on this important question and have included the names of several who have pronounced strongly-biased views on one side; second, that the faculties are not represented thereon in proportion to their importance; and third, that there are on the commission certain members whose acts will form part of the subjects of inquiry and report.

At a meeting of the Higher Education Committee of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, held in Belfast on June 28th, resolutions were unanimously adopted opposing the establishment and endowment of any denominational university or college and protesting in the strongest manner against the exclusion of Trinity College, Dublin, from the scope of the Royal Commission, as no settlement of the education question could be regarded as final or satisfactory which did not include Dublin University and Trinity College, Dublin. Previously to the appointment of the commission the Presbyterian Church expressed to the Government the earnest hope "that the constitution of the commission shall be such as to be a guarantee to the public that the great object aimed at shall be the advancement of education and not the promotion of any merely sectional or denominational interests." The Education Committee of the Presbyterian Church protest that as a large proportion of the members of the commission are known to be in favour of one policy (denominational education), while no recognised opponent of such a policy has found a place on the commission, any report the commission may make is discredited beforehand as likely to be partisan and one-sided.

Outbreak of Typhoid Fever in Belfast.

The medical officer of health reported to the Belfast City Council on July 1st at their monthly meeting that "there can be no doubt but that there is at present a serious outbreak of this [typhoid] disease." Between May 19th and June 15th, 1901, there were 247 cases of typhoid fever notified, as compared with 129 in the preceding month and 177 in the corresponding four weeks of last year. The outbreak first occurred in the Woodvale district which is a part situated in the higher portion of the city. It has since spread into the adjacent districts and at present is prevalent in all parts of the city. The only crumb of comfort is that whilst the number of cases has almost doubled, yet the deaths therefrom were 22 for the last four weeks, while in the preceding month they were 19; they were 29 in the corresponding month of last year. Dr. J. Fulton, dispensary medical officer of the district in which the outbreak occurred, attributed the majority of the cases to the dry weather in the month of May which had caused an accumulation of sewage in the sewers. A very animated discussion followed the presentation of the public health report in the City Council. The vice-chairman of the Public Health Committee (Dr. J. King Kerr) said that when on June 13th it was reported that 71 cases of typhoid fever had been notified during the week they had ordered their sanitary officer and medical superintendent, and with them Dr. Fulton and Dr. A. G. Robb, to supply them with a thorough and impartial report as to the cause of the outbreak and that their report was a very serious indictment of the state of affairs arising from matters connected with another public board in the city. It was, he said, a strong indictment of the Stoneyford catchment area, and they would present it when they had the fullest details. They had found no cause either in regard to sewers, houses, dams, or milk-supply for the outbreak of typhoid fever. Failing all these as causes they looked to the water-supply and they believed that the water-supply from Stoneyford catchment area was a menace to the health of the city. Councillor J. D. Williamson, M.D. R. U. I., took an entirely opposite view and said that it was not fair to the water commissioners to continuously trot out the water as the cause of typhoid fever. He asked, had the sculleries and the subsoil of the houses where the disease occurred been examined? How many samples of milk had been bacteriologically examined? He called attention to the "tippings" that were taking place all over the city, and on these places where the dirt was being cast houses would presently be erected without any regard whatever to the

nature of the soil on which they were erected. He advised the water commissioners not to lay pipes through these impure soils as crackings of pipes might let impurities into the water. Alderman P. O'Connell, M.D. R. U. I., and Councillor A. V. Browne, L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S. Edin., also blamed the polluted subsoil. There can be no question that this continued friction between two public bodies like the corporation and the water commissioners of Belfast as to the cause of repeated outbreaks of typhoid fever in that city is a great mistake, and as a result nothing whatever is being accomplished to prevent the occurrence of the disease. The only solution is to get a skilled expert—a public health officer of experience from England—to come over and to investigate the whole question and to let the citizens know the truth and see on whose shoulders the blame for these annual epidemics rests.

July 1st.

PARIS.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

Assistance Publique.

M. RANSON has just laid before the Municipal Council a report upon the work of the Assistance Publique in Paris. The report is a lively criticism of different abuses. First of all with regard to the nurses the report states that at the Lariboisière Hospital the principal nurses who are in charge begin their day at 5.30 A.M. and do not go off duty until 6 P.M., while five of their number keep on duty until 8 P.M., making a total day of 14½ hours which is broken only by 80 minutes which are allowed for three meals. About every seven weeks these nurses go on fatigue duty from 8 P.M. until 11 P.M.—that is to say, three hours' more work, making a total day's work of 17½ hours. If we consider that these unfortunate women must have half an hour to go to bed and as much time in the morning to dress and to perform certain indispensable toilet arrangements it can easily be seen that they have not more than five hours' sleep. It is very difficult for a young woman on whose shoulders are laid very delicate duties, for the right performance of which it is necessary that she must have all her wits about her, to avoid occasional failure in the presence of so much work. M. Ranson finally called the attention of the council to another point. He stated that three kilometres of string which had been ordered at a cost of 5 francs 85 centimes had taken six weeks to be delivered. An order form took 92 days to get from the Salpêtrière to the central dépôt, although these two establishments are absolutely next door to one another. A patient who had been operated upon and for whom the surgeon had signed his ticket of dismissal had to stop in hospital for six weeks for the want of an orthopaedic apparatus because the order for it had been pigeon-holed all this time in the bureau of the Assistance Publique. This cost the administration four francs per day—that is to say, they had to pay 160 francs in addition to the cost of the apparatus. At the central dépôt a machine for measuring cloth and costing 1500 francs had been waiting for two years for a governor, and during this time the attendants had handed out cloth in any quantity they liked. As a matter of fact, 30 per cent. of the bedding was in such a state that it would be far more preferable to destroy it than to keep it. The chief cause of this was the state of the disinfecting stoves, but the arrangements for carding and purifying mattresses also gave the most disgraceful results. The mattresses were run through old carding machines and were re-made in a hurry without the wool and the hair being thoroughly carded as they should be. For the workmen had to re-make the mattresses as fast as possible if they wished to make even two francs a day by them. Only 40 centimes were paid for mattresses. M. Ranson concluded by saying that the stock of linen which had almost run out would alone cost 3000 francs to renew. The Assistance Publique had hidden its deficits and had actually violated the law, because it gave out that a reserve of linen existed which did not exist. The institution would have to be re-constituted but money was wanting. The realisation of the promises of the new director is awaited to bring about a great reform.

Cerebro-spinal Fluid after the Injection of Cocaine.

At the meeting of the Society of Biology held on June 15th M. Ravant and M. Aubouy communicated a paper in which they pointed out that after coming to the conclusion that

headache after injection of cocaine into the spinal canal might be due to the presence of the cocaine in the cerebro-spinal fluid as well as to the increased tension they drew off some of the fluid some little time after the injection had been made. In this manner they managed to draw off some 20 cubic centimetres of cerebro-spinal fluid which spirted out with great force. As a rule the headache was very much diminished after this second tapping. With regard to the cerebro-spinal fluid drawn off it was generally found to be turbid. Chemical examination revealed the presence of cocaine, and microscopical examination showed that it contained a marked quantity of polynucleated cells which upon centrifugalisation made a clot upon the bottom of the tube. Sometimes the fluid clotted uniformly in the tube after it was left quite at rest. If the puncture was repeated during the following days it was found that at the end of three or four days the liquid, which had gradually become clearer, contained only lymphocytes and mononucleated cells and finally no formed elements of any kind. The fluid was found to be absolutely normal at a period varying from eight to 20 days after the first injection. Out of 21 patients only one was found to give perfectly clear cerebro-spinal fluid. It is obvious then from these observations that cocaine, however carefully sterilised, has a special influence upon the spinal membranes and brings about alterations in them which, although very fleeting in their effects, are in all points analogous to those observed in certain cases of meningitis although there is no trace of any microbe to be found in the cerebro-spinal fluid.

A Method of Detecting the Bacillus Typhosus.

M. Cambier explained at the meeting of the Academy of Sciences held on June 10th a method of detecting the bacillus typhosus. He placed a porous porcelain bougie in a large glass tube, both tube and bougie being half filled with bouillon sterilised at 110° C., and showed that when the bouillon contained within the bougie was inoculated with a pure typhoid culture, after some hours' subjection in a stove to a temperature of 37° C., that part of it in the glass immediately around the bougie, which had been originally quite limpid, presented manifest symptoms of the passage of the bacillus through the pores of the bougie. This property possessed by the bacillus typhosus of being able to traverse certain porous divisions suggested to M. Cambier the idea of making the following investigations in water. He infected a certain quantity of water within the bougie with the bacillus typhosus. The bougie was placed in a litre of bouillon at 38° C. As soon as a cloud appeared in the bouillon outside the bougie, with a delicate pipette he removed drops of the turbid fluid and inoculated with it different common substances—such as milk and potatoes, for example—which were afterwards submitted to microscopical examination and the agglutination reaction. Sometimes the passage of the bacillus typhosus was so complete that he found a pure culture of it within the bouillon. M. Cambier was able by this method to isolate the bacillus typhosus in the water of the Seine and of the Marne. His investigations are now being directed towards typhoid stools.

July 2nd.

BERLIN.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

Courts of Honour for the Army and Navy Medical Corps.

COURTS of honour are to be instituted for the medical officers of the army and navy. These gentlemen have hitherto not been under the jurisdiction of any court of honour, either military, naval, or civilian, the result being that in the event of a dispute arising between a medical officer of these services and another officer or a civilian medical man there was no means of deciding which party was in the right. The Imperial order which has been issued on this subject, after speaking in the highest terms of the merits of the army medical corps, says that His Majesty expects the courts of honour to maintain the general interests of all the members of the corps and to uphold the sentiments of duty and fidelity. The medical officers of the reserve, though under the jurisdiction of the courts, will not be entitled to act as judges. This course has been taken in their interest because they might otherwise be put to inconvenience in connexion with their practices. In cases where a charge has been brought against a medical officer of the reserve the matter

must be adjudicated by the medical chamber previously to the verdict of the court of honour of the army medical corps. There will be two kinds of courts—one in each division for medical officers of the rank of staff surgeon and under and one in each army corps for the medical officers of higher rank. These courts are to be presided over by the chief medical officer of the division or of the army corps respectively, whilst the general commanding the division or the army corps is authorised to order the court to be convoked. The courts may either admonish the accused or may exclude him from the army medical corps in cases of grave ethical misdemeanour. The courts of honour for the navy medical corps will be composed in the same way, with the exception that in foreign ports where there might not be a sufficient number of medical officers to form a court the latter may in certain cases be composed of naval officers.

Rabies in Germany.

In Germany during the year 1900 there were 230 persons bitten by animals suffering, or suspected to be suffering, from rabies. This number showed a considerable decrease as compared with 1899 when 303 persons were bitten. Of the above 230 persons 187 were treated in the institution for infectious diseases in Berlin by injections of Pasteur's antirabic serum; the remainder were either treated at home by cauterisation or other methods or did not receive any medical treatment at all. It is remarkable that rabies did not develop in any instance either among the patients who received the injections or among the others, so that no case of rabies in the human subject occurred in Germany in 1900. The bites were inflicted by 162 dogs, five cats, and three cattle. Post-mortem examination showed the existence of rabies in 102 dogs, two cats, and three cattle, and of suspected rabies in 44 dogs and one cat.

The late Professor Langenbuch.

Professor Carl Langenbuch, chief surgeon to the Lazarus Hospital, died in Berlin on June 9th. He was born at Kiel in 1846, became qualified in Berlin in 1869, and took part as a military surgeon in the war of 1870–71. After having acted as an assistant to the late Professor Wilms he was appointed chief surgeon to the Lazarus Hospital, an office which he held till his death. His principal work was on the surgery of the liver, and as early as 1882 he performed total extirpation of the gall-bladder, and in 1888 made a partial resection of the liver. He described his views in a monograph entitled, "The Surgery of the Liver and Gall-bladder" which formed a part of the "German Surgery" edited by Professor Bruns. He was also the author of some essays on military surgery, a subject with which he was very well acquainted, as he had taken part not only in the Franco-German, but also in the Turco-Russian war. Professor Langenbuch was very much liked by the profession in Berlin and his early death is in every way greatly regretted.

July 1st.

EGYPT.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

The Plague.

THE plague this year has taken a new departure, but the present generation has become so accustomed to hearing of cases of plague in different parts of the world that there is very little public interest in its apparition. In fact, the sceptics sway public opinion in the newspapers and in society by declaring, on the one hand, that it is not plague and that the sanitary officials are quite wrong about it all, and on the other hand, they state that the plague is of no consequence because it has evidently been lying dormant in the country since 1844 and the medical men have never discovered it until now. Anything which prevents a panic is good, so that the ignorant had better be left to their own beliefs while the intelligent can obtain daily information from the bulletins issued by Mr. Pinching, the Director-General of the Sanitary Department in Cairo. In 1899 plague spoiled the spring months of Alexandria by appearing there, but it had the courtesy not to travel away from the sea coast. The following year, in the months from May to August, it was found at Port Said, but again it showed no disposition to attack the rest of the country. On neither occasion could its first onset be traced, but it is fairly obvious that it must have come from a neighbouring country. Now for the third time it has been discovered not in Alexandria