

were present, including Sir Neville Howse, V.C., the new Commissioner for Australia. In proposing the health of the hospital the chairman referred to the loss it had sustained by the death of Queen Alexandra, its president, whose constant and practical devotion to the hospital had been such a source of inspiration to all those engaged in its work. Queen Mary, in graciously accepting the vacant office, had given a further proof of the personal interest of the Royal Family in the hospital. The chairman spoke also with regret of the death of Mr. Mark Hovell, a member of the consulting staff, and for many years surgeon to the aural department. A reference to the long connexion of Lord Knutsford and Mr. E. W. Morris with the hospital, and a tribute to the incalculable value of their services as chairman and house governor, were greeted with loud applause. During the year three generous donors had each given a sum of £10,000 to the hospital for the service of its students—Mr. Alfred Williams for a research scholarship, Viscount Bearsted for a clinical lecture theatre, and Mr. Bernhard Baron for an extension of the pathological institute. In addition an anonymous donor had given the magnificent sum of £50,000 for the establishment of a "Freedom Research Fund." In the next few months a new cardiological department, new maternity wards, and a large hostel for the residents, would add still further to the opportunities which the London Hospital offered to its students. The resignations of Mr. James Sherren, Dr. E. W. Clapham, and Dr. Probyn Williams would fill all "Londoners" with regret, mingled with gratitude for the long years of service they had devoted to the hospital. With an even more personal regret they would hear of the resignation of Miss Brain, who would always live in their affection as Sister Victor. During the year there had been many additions to the visiting staff. Mr. A. C. Perry and Mr. H. W. B. Cairns had been elected assistant surgeons, Dr. Maitland Jones had been appointed director of the new children's department, Mr. William Morris and Mr. Geoffrey Carte had been elected surgeons to the aural, Dr. O'Donovan to the skin, and Mr. Victor Lack to the gynaecological departments. The hospital continued to attract students of a high order by its great reputation as a teaching school and its incomparable clinical material. It was a remarkable testimonial that among its present students were seventeen sons and three nephews of its old graduates. Old students might look forward with confidence to the future of their hospital, just as the hospital itself relied on the affection and patriotism of its children.

#### NEW HOSPITAL FOR WOMEN IN LIVERPOOL.

The foundation stone of the Liverpool and Samaritan Hospital was laid on October 14th by Mrs. E. W. Hope, the lady mayoress. The new building will contain 120 beds, and the cost of erection will be about £120,000, of which £61,000 has already been collected; in it the work now carried on by the Hospital for Women in Shaw Street and the Samaritan Hospital for Women in Upper Parliament Street will be combined and considerable extension will be possible. At the Shaw Street hospital during 1925 there were 1,331 admissions and 1,185 operations, while at the Samaritan Hospital the corresponding figures were 485 and 410. The number of beds at the Shaw Hospital is sixty, and at the Samaritan Hospital twenty, so that in the new building the present severe demand for beds should be decreased to some extent. The hospital will be equipped on the most modern lines and the voluntary tradition of the two institutions during the last forty years will be maintained. Accommodation will be provided for a limited number of paying patients.

#### VITAL STATISTICS FOR 1925.

We referred a fortnight ago (October 16th, p. 709) to Part I of the *Statistical Review of England and Wales for 1925 (Medical)*. Part II has now been issued and can be obtained (price 5s.) from H.M. Stationery Office or through any bookseller. The salient features are: The estimate of the population of England and Wales at June 30th, 1925, was 38,890,000, as against 38,746,000 in 1924, an increase of 144,000. The births registered in the year 1925 totalled 710,582, representing a rate of 18.3 per 1,000 population, which was 0.5 per 1,000 below the rate

for 1924, and with the exception of the war years 1917-18 was the lowest recorded. Excluding the years 1917-19, the number of births is the lowest number registered in any year since 1861. The proportion of male to 1,000 female births was 1,045. This proportion showed a great increase during the war years and reached a maximum of 1,060 in 1919, since when with one exception it has shown a continuous decline, but is still above the proportions recorded since 1860. The deaths numbered 472,841, and corresponded to a rate of 12.2 per 1,000, the same as for the previous year, but 0.6 more than that for 1923, which was the lowest on record. The marriages registered in England and Wales during the year 1925 numbered 295,689, corresponding to a rate of 15.2 persons married per 1,000 of the population; this is a decrease of 727 over 1924. The greatest number of marriages was again registered in the third quarter of the year, being 90,314, or 30.5 per cent. of the total, whereas the number for the first quarter of the year was 46,263, or 15.3 per cent. This preference for the third quarter has been a feature of the returns since the beginning of the present century; previously the highest rate was recorded in the fourth quarter. The number of decrees nisi made absolute during the year was 2,605 (2,563 dissolution and 42 annulment), as against 2,286 in 1924 and 2,667 in 1923.

## Scotland.

#### ANIMAL BREEDING AT EDINBURGH.

A GIFT of £10,000 by Lord Woolavington towards the endowment of a chair of animal breeding in Edinburgh has just been announced. It follows on an offer by the Rockefeller International Education Board of £30,000 for the extension of the Animal Breeding Research Department, on condition that a similar sum should be obtained in this country. A substantial grant in aid of the scheme is also expected from the Development Commission, and it is anticipated that the Department of Animal Breeding in Edinburgh University will be unique in the British Isles, and will greatly strengthen the school of agriculture as well as the scientific department of the Medical School. It is estimated that a capital sum of between £60,000 and £70,000 will be required. The history of the Edinburgh Animal Breeding Research Station is comparatively short. The suggestion that work on this line might be undertaken in Edinburgh was made by the Board of Agriculture in 1913, and Edinburgh was selected as the centre probably on account of the work which had previously been done in this direction by Professor Cossar Ewart. The activities of the committee appointed to carry out the project were suspended until 1919 on account of the war. Dr. Crew was appointed director in 1920, and in February, 1921, accommodation was provided in an old building in High School Yards, the property of the University, where a small staff of workers was gradually collected.

In the sixth annual report of the Animal Breeding Research Department of the University recently issued, Dr. F. A. E. Crew stated that the transfer of the department to the King's Buildings in December, 1924, had provided room for considerable expansion. Research was being done in regard to the value of certain recognized breeding practices. Much that the breeder had already accomplished would receive the endorsement of science, and much that was at present held to be financially profitable would be ruthlessly condemned on biological grounds. Evidence was being accumulated to show that in certain instances the breeder was seeking to fix characters which were genetically unstable and to perpetuate what was biologically unworthy. The department had been engaged for a considerable period in the study of sheep-breeding problems, particularly in connexion with the fleece of the sheep, which occupied a special place among agricultural products because it was definitely a by-product which was sold directly by the farmer. The practical values characteristic of other animal products were not so well defined in the case of the fleece. Investigation had to be made into the relations that might exist between the nature of the fleece and mutton qualities, the suitability of sheep for

their environment, and special breed characters that might be termed points of valuation. The co-operation of the private breeder was essential, no less than that of the manufacturing expert. Breed characters having been defined, it had become possible to discover the variations that existed and to take advantage of this to lay down standards within a breed. While it was necessary to maintain a certain number of sheep at the department in order to conduct investigations, the great bulk of the work could be done on the flocks of institutions or of private breeders, who were willing to co-operate, without materially disturbing the normal management of the flocks.

Other problems already under investigation are the developmental intersexuality in the fowl, sex link inheritance in fowls, the influence of the ductless glands upon development, the pathology of calves in the Dexter breed of cattle, the factors involved in natural incubation of chicks, and an inquiry into the problem of sterility in cattle. Work is also in progress in regard to pigs, with a view to finding out which of the problems of the pig-breeder are amenable to genetical investigation. An example of the wide scope embraced in the investigations of this department is afforded by the arrangements made with the directors of the Stirling Bacon Factory and with the Prison Commissioners for Scotland in regard to pigs raised at Barlinnie Prison near Glasgow, with a view to investigating the live weight increase in proportion to food consumption, quality and maturity in different strains, and correlating these with the question of fertility. Various other pig-breeding societies are also collaborating with the department in this investigation. Somewhat similar investigations are being made with the help of other associations into problems connected with the breeding of horses, cattle, and goats. In addition to these investigations, a grant of £200 for five years from the Carnegie Trustees has enabled a biochemical laboratory to be equipped, so that many problems which cannot be solved by purely genetical methods may be more thoroughly investigated.

The staff of the department includes Dr. Crew as director, with Mr. A. D. Buchanan Smith, M.A., M.Sc., as assistant and liaison officer between the department and the agricultural community of Scotland. Over twelve research students, from the United Kingdom and from Australia, India, and Japan, have been working in the department. Courses of lectures have been given to students of agriculture in the University, as well as to students of veterinary science and students of the post-graduate medical school. Various public lectures have been given by the director and other members of the research staff, and Dr. Crew has given to the Dundee Branch a British Medical Association lecture on the mechanism of inheritance, which was published in the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL* of August 14th, p. 285.

#### MOTOR ACCIDENTS AND HOSPITALS.

Various voluntary hospitals have recently been concerned about the number of persons admitted to the wards owing to injuries in motor collisions. The Board of Managers of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh on October 4th discussed the question of making claims to meet the cost of treating such cases, and directed a return to be prepared. It was presented to the meeting on October 18th, and showed that during August 42 cases had been treated in the institution; up to September 1st these patients had received a total of 475 days' treatment. This had involved a cost for maintenance during the month of August of £184 1s. 3d., and 18 were then still under treatment. It was suggested that the attention of the insurance companies concerned should be drawn to the matter, and that they should be asked to make grants to hospitals for the treatment of such cases when disposing of their annual surplus. The principle, it was pointed out, had already been recognized by railway companies, and in one instance a substantial grant had been given in recognition of the services rendered by the infirmary following a collision. It was agreed that the matter should be raised again at the beginning of next year, and that a return of the number of cases due to motor accidents should be included in the annual report of the infirmary.

#### MATERNITY BENEFIT IN SCOTLAND.

One of the matters considered at the annual committee, held in Edinburgh on October 13th, of the Convention of Royal Burghs of Scotland, a body which has existed for several centuries, was the disposal of maternity benefit. A letter was read from the town clerk of Kilmarnock regarding the question of maternity benefit mandates in favour of local authorities. Sir Henry Keith, who was in the chair, said that treatment in maternity hospitals was not free, except in cases of necessity; the general practice was to charge for maintenance, and a practice had grown up with some local authorities of suggesting to the woman that she should assign her maternity benefit to the authority, in respect of the charges which otherwise would be made, as a form of security for payment of the expenses incurred. The Board of Health had originally favoured this plan, but recently some of the approved societies had objected to signing the mandate. This matter seemed to be one which could be settled by mutual co-operation and goodwill, and it might be approached either through the Association of Approved Societies or through the Association of Insurance Committees, before seeking new legislation on the matter. It seemed reasonable that since maternity benefit was given for the purpose of enabling the woman to pay for additional nourishment and expense, she should pay for the expenses incurred in the maternity hospital. It was stated by an Edinburgh representative that the matter had been before the Edinburgh Town Council recently, because a large number of the inmates in the maternity hospital of that city paid nothing, although it was believed that many of them were able to pay. The Edinburgh corporation, it was believed, would approve of legislation, and it was finally resolved to approach the Board of Health on the subject.

## Ireland.

#### ROYAL VICTORIA HOSPITAL, BELFAST.

MR. S. T. IRWIN, F.R.C.S.I., delivered the opening address of the new session in the King Edward Memorial Hall of the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast, on the morning of October 19th. Mr. Mitchell, chairman of the visiting staff, presided, and there was a large attendance of the staff and of students. The lecturer pointed out the dependence of voluntary hospitals on the lay press to educate the public, and hastened to acknowledge the value of the help the hospital had always received. He recalled the days in the old Royal Hospital in Frederick Street, where he was one of the four resident pupils in 1903 when it moved to its present quarters. The old hospital was founded in the year of Waterloo and opened in 1817, and had been added to from time to time. Chiefly by the exertions of the late Lord Pirrie, and by his wife, their president, Lady Pirrie, the present hospital was founded and opened free of debt in 1903 by his late Majesty King Edward VII; the originators had the courage of their convictions, and it was planned and built on the latest designs, and had proved a great success; it had 204 beds, and His Grace the Governor would next day (October 20th) open new wards to bring it up to 435 beds. The out-patients were then 22,585; they now numbered 41,024. The visiting staff had increased from 17 to 37; the residents from 4 to 14; and the nursing staff from 60 to 150. There were now a range of laboratories, a biochemistry department, and large x-ray and dental departments. Some of these existed in a very immature and undeveloped condition before; now they were flourishing and in full order, and, indeed, already overworked. Mr. Irwin drew attention to the value of these later and more scientific methods of examination and of treatment in the prevention of the chronic invalidism so prevalent in former years, as well as in the reduction of mortality; this could be well illustrated by the study of the protean ravages of tubercle. The lecturer, on behalf of the staff, welcomed all students, senior and junior, to their hospital studies. The most striking difference from his student days was the large proportion of women, and he paid a graceful compliment to their hard work, steadiness, and conscientiousness, although, as an orthopaedic