

1914 the number of patients who had been treated in the Dispensary at 35, Lauriston Place, was 738; the total number of attendances was 3,022, giving an average daily attendance of nearly 20 patients, the dispensary being open thrice a week. More than sixty different types of skin disease had been dealt with. On February 24th the annual meeting of the New Town Dispensary, familiar to so many old Edinburgh graduates as the N.T.D., was held, when Mr. George Brown, chairman of the board of managers, presided. During the past year the total number of cases treated in connexion with the dispensary had been 4,294 (3,350 at the dispensary and 944 at home). These figures, whilst they were much smaller than before the introduction of the Insurance Act, nevertheless marked an increase of 110 upon the previous year. Dr. James Ritchie, on February 26th, presided over the annual meeting of the Edinburgh Jewish Medical Mission, held in the Café, Princes Street. The report stated that approximately 2,000 Hebrews had passed through the mission during the past year and that 706 of these had been medically attended. The annual meeting of the Edinburgh Hospital and Dispensary for Women and Children and the Hospice was also held on February 26th, when it was reported that the hospital had been founded thirty-five years ago, that all the 44 beds had been in use during the past twelve months, and that 455 patients had been admitted. At the Hospice 246 maternity cases had been attended, as compared with 202 in 1913.

The annual meeting of subscribers to Leith Hospital was held on February 26th, when the report for 1914 was submitted. It showed that the number of cases treated in the wards and at the out-patient department had been 12,066; of these, 1,469 were in the wards, an increase of 21 as compared with the previous year. The number of operations performed was 622, or 44 fewer than in 1913. The deaths numbered 120, giving a case mortality of 8.16, as compared with 8.01 in the previous year, and with 9.4 in 1912. The average stay in hospital was 22.07 days. Mr. Edmund Berry, who presided over the meeting, pointed out that the ordinary income (that from annual contributions) was not much more than half the ordinary expenditure, and that there had been a great falling off in the extraordinary income during the past few years.

## Ireland.

### THE DUBLIN CASTLE RED CROSS HOSPITAL.

THE students of the Schools of Surgery of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland who are not among the large number, past and present, serving with the navy or army, are anxious to help by equipping a ward in the Dublin Castle Red Cross Hospital, to be called the Royal College of Surgeons Ward. A committee has been formed, and will be glad to receive and acknowledge subscriptions from old students and their friends. Cheques should be made payable to the Honorary Treasurers R.C.S.I. Hospital Fund, and addressed to the Honorary Treasurers, Hospital Fund, Royal College of Surgeons, Stephen's Green, Dublin.

## Correspondence.

### THE PHTHISICAL SOLDIER AT THE FRONT.

SIR,—Sir Thomas Oliver's contribution in your issue of February 27th, "The Phtisical Soldier at the Front," calls back to my mind some experiences on this subject from the wars of 1866 and 1870. In my connexion with the German Embassy at that time, I had the opportunity of examining the majority of men who left England for these wars.

In the war of 1866 between Prussia and Austria, three men who were in the first or second stages of pulmonary tuberculosis returned to England after the war in an improved state of health, as well local as general.

The number of men with pulmonary tuberculosis who left for the Franco-German war of 1870 was greater. I have a distinct recollection of eight. Six of them, in the first or second stage, were in fair general health. Of these six, one remained in good health from July till December.

1870, when he fell in action; five were in almost uninterrupted good condition during the whole campaign, in spite of occasional great exposure and hardship, and returned to England in improved health. The other two of the eight cases were not in a satisfactory state of health; they were weak, excitable, dyspeptic and ill-nourished, and went to the war against my advice. One of the two died during the campaign from dysentery, the other from what was called "catarrhal pneumonia."

I was much interested in the question whether the presence of pulmonary tuberculosis in an otherwise fairly healthy man should be a bar to military service, and I was myself in favour of the service if the person himself wished to serve. I had come to this view from my experience of the curative influence of continued work in the open air, even under indifferent circumstances. There were especially two cases which had greatly impressed themselves on me. The one was a young man who worked in a bakehouse and came every two or three months to the German Hospital with bronchitis, and became worse in the local pulmonary signs. I advised him, as a last resource, to leave the bakehouse and wheel the bread car through the streets in all weathers; his health improved rapidly, and he gradually entirely recovered. The other man was a clockmaker from the Black Forest who was employed in the workshop, and frequently came for weeks to the German Hospital with bronchial attacks, and had deposits in both apices. At last I told him to leave the workshop and to carry about the clocks for sale from house to house. This occupation led to perfect recovery.

In this, as in other morbid states, it is not prudent to lay down fixed rules for all cases, but to take into consideration in each case all the conditions and circumstances, general as well as local.—I am, etc.,

Bournemouth, Feb. 28th.

HERMANN WEBER.

### PEDICULOSIS CORPORIS: PETROLEUM AS AN HABITUAL LAXATIVE.

#### A Warning.

SIR,—I was much interested in Dr. Shipley's article on flowers of sulphur and lice, in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of February 27th, because in Gibson's *Textbook of Medicine*, vol. ii, p. 493, 1901, I wrote: "The treatment for *Pediculi vestimentorum* consists in thorough change of clothes, washing with carbolic soap, and wearing next the skin—day and night—a bag containing fragments of sulphur, which, at the temperature of the body, undergo slow oxidation, and prevent the insects again obtaining a lodgement." All these measures may not be at the disposal of soldiers at the front, but wearing bits of sulphur in a muslin bag is easily carried out, and acts efficiently as a preventive as well as a curative.

Purified petroleum, or refined liquid paraffin, has come to be a popular remedy for constipation, and is extensively prescribed and taken. Its action as a laxative is not merely that of a lubricant oil, though it passes unchanged through the bowels. Were it so, then cod-liver oil would act as an aperient, while, on the contrary, it but seldom increases the diarrhoea in phthisis. Petroleum, therefore, must operate as castor oil and croton oil do, by irritating the lining of the intestines, causing an augmented flow of mucus, and at the same time increasing peristalsis. We know that workers in paraffin are liable to a special form of cancer of the skin. I would therefore warn against the persistent or habitual use of petroleum as a laxative, especially if, as Sir William Whitla states in the tenth edition of his *Pharmacy*, published this year, doses as large as 2 oz. are taken. Time enough has not elapsed to decide this question of danger, but I would sound a note of warning.—I am, etc.,

Edinburgh, Feb. 27th.

W. ALLAN JAMIESON.

### ANTITYPHOID INOCULATION.

#### A Further Plea for Enteric Inoculation with Mixed Vaccines.

SIR,—In your issue of February 6th (page 264) a table is given showing the incidence and mortality from typhoid fever in the Expeditionary Force since the commencement of operations. It would be interesting to know whether in the official returns the term "typhoid" covers also paratyphoid A and paratyphoid B. If so, some of the so-called typhoid cases which have occurred in inoculated persons