

## Scotland.

[FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS.]

### ROYAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH.

At the sixteenth and last ordinary meeting of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, held on July 20th, Dr. R. H. Traquair, Vice-President, who occupied the chair, presented the Keith and Neill prizes. Of Dr. Alexander Bruce, to whom the Council had awarded the Keith Prize for the biennial period 1905-7 for his paper on the Distribution of the Cells in the Intermedio-lateral Tract of the Spinal Cord, the Chairman said that Dr. Bruce had early turned his attention to the elucidation of the finer anatomy of the brain and spinal cord. Few fields of investigation required a greater amount of patience and more laborious treatment; and yet, although Dr. Bruce had only been able to devote the few leisure hours he could snatch from the responsible and exacting duties of a consulting physician, he had attained a high reputation both at home and abroad in this line of work. Dr. Bruce had published many important papers and memoirs on neurology, both in the *Proceedings* of that society and elsewhere. The particular essay which the Council had deemed worthy of the award of the Keith Medal and Prize provided for the first time a complete anatomical picture of an exceedingly important column of cells, which since 1851, when first described by Lockhart Clarke, had been much in the mind of the anatomist and physiologist. Dr. Bruce showed that that column was neither continuous nor yet uniform. Its continuity was broken at certain well-defined points, whilst its contour was distinctly moniliform. Dr. Bruce further laid stress on the suggested correlation which existed between the regions of outflow of sympathetic fibres from the cord, and the distribution of the cells in the cord of the intermedio-lateral tract. This correlation offered strong presumptive evidence that these sympathetic fibres arose as the axons of these fibres. The Neill Prize for the triennial period 1904-7 had been awarded to Mr. Frank J. Cole for his beautiful and valuable papers on the anatomy of the skeleton and of the muscles of the hagfish (myxine), which formed the first instalment of a comprehensive monograph on the general morphology of the myxinoid fishes. Regard had also been paid by the Council to Mr. Cole's other contributions to the anatomy and morphology of fishes. In these works his attention had been principally devoted to the nervous system and sense organs, and the chief result obtained had been the formulation of the component theory of the nervous system, now almost universally accepted.

### THE NEW PROFESSOR OF CHEMISTRY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

A meeting of the Curators of Patronage of the University of Edinburgh took place on July 16th, for the purpose of making an appointment to the vacant chair of chemistry. All the seven Curators were present. After careful consideration and full discussion of the qualifications of the seven gentlemen who had submitted applications for the chair, a list of two was decided on—Professor Walker, F.R.S., University College, Dundee, and Professor Alexander Smith of the University of Chicago. After further deliberation, the former was unanimously elected. Professor Walker is 45 years of age, was educated at the High School of Dundee, at the University of Edinburgh, at Munich, at Leipzig, and at University College, London. In 1894 he was elected to the Chair of Chemistry in University College, Dundee. He has served on the Council of the Chemical Society of London, and of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, which in 1896 awarded him the Macdougall-Brisbane medal for Researches in Physical Chemistry.

### ABERDEEN.

#### *British Red Cross Society.*

A branch of the British Red Cross Society was established on July 2nd. Sir George Beatson, Chairman of St. Andrew's Ambulance Association, described the objects of the society. It was to organize the civilian aid rendered to the sick and wounded in time of war. For the medical service of an army to overtake all that could be demanded of it after a heavy or severe battle was more than any service of any

Power could accomplish. Certainly, as regards the Territorial Army, if there was an invasion and many battles fought the medical service would be unable to cope with the work. To keep up a service entailed personnel and material, or expense and stores of a perishable kind, meaning more expense, and it would be ruinous for this country if it had to keep up a staff for the emergencies of possible war. They had to remember, however, that civilian aid had its dangers. It could not be adopted indiscriminately. It would be the means of introducing into the army spies and other people who should not be there, and who, by giving information about the movements of an army, might wreck a campaign. By the International Geneva Convention all civilians who aided and helped in the work of attending to the sick and wounded were neutralized. In the British Empire there was no really scientific arrangement. There was a National Aid Society for the sick and wounded until the British Red Cross Council was established, and he regretted that that was not continued. The new British Red Cross Society was formed four years ago. The society had been spending its time in organizing the Empire in connexion with Red Cross work, and had formed branches in Canada, New Zealand, Ireland, and Scotland. Accordingly, Scotland had now before it the duty of establishing committees throughout the country, so that they might have an institution able to furnish workers in time of war and need. It was not very generally understood that assistance in time of war could only be sent through a Red Cross Society. If Scotland had not a branch and sent an hospital to the army, it would be refused, and they would be told to send it through a Red Cross Society. He was glad to say that in the last year they had been able to establish committees in all the counties of Scotland, and in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, and, he hoped, in Aberdeen. The duties of such a committee were many. First of all, they would organize the branch itself in time of war. In time of peace the committee could gather together lists of doctors, nurses, attendants, and the many other things that might be of the very greatest assistance. One of the most perfect of the Red Cross societies was that of Japan, the most recent, and, in reading over their report, he found they kept themselves on a war footing always, and that they had arranged lists of doctors, nurses, apothecaries, sick attendants, probationary nurses, ships suitable as hospital ships, cases of medical appliances and surgical instruments, stretchers, articles of body and bed clothing, and miscellaneous articles. That gave them an idea of the field for work in time of peace. He thought he might safely appeal to them that such a committee was called for in a city like Aberdeen, as, leaving out of account the humanitarian aspect and the cost, and its effect in the field in time of war, it would be to the advantage of the community to have such a committee. After some remarks from the Lord Provost, Professor Ogston said that whenever a war broke out in any country, the tendency of private benevolence to take a part in it in regard to the management of the sick and wounded was simply irrepressible. Yet any one who knew how campaigns were conducted was well aware of the fact that the money was mostly thrown away. In Britain, during the time of the South African war, the money was poured into the coffers of the National Aid Society, and it was perfectly apparent that it had been wasted. In the Soudan the agents of the Red Cross Society were not assisted by the military, and were not looked upon as at all valuable workers, but as good-natured persons who had come out, and were not allowed to do anything. A great deal of the money contributed during the South African war was usefully spent on the establishment of hospital ships, but it did not do anything like the amount of good it ought to have done. A great proportion of it was wasted in giving teas to people in Cape-town, in sending people up the country, and in many foolish ways. As to the benefit the sick and wounded at the front got from the voluntary contributions of those at home, such a thing could not be said to be at all efficacious. Long before Japan established a Red Cross Society Germans had organized the matter very much better. All voluntary aid in Germany had to go through the military authorities, and when money came in or assistance was offered at the time of the outbreak of the campaign it was all provided for under a certain official of the German

army. That was a thing Britain ought to imitate. The proposal to form a branch was unanimously adopted, and a committee appointed, with the Lord Provost as President. Among the Vice-Presidents was Professor Ogston; among the members of the committee were Dr. Angus Fraser, Dr. David Littlejohn, Professor R. W. Reid, Dr. J. Scott Riddell, M.V.O., and Dr. Albert Westland. Dr. F. Kelly was elected Honorary Secretary.

## Ireland.

[FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS.]

### THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION IN DUBLIN.

THE seventy-seventh annual meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science will be held in Dublin, the third time that the Association has met in that city, and the seventh occasion of its meeting in Ireland. The President-elect is Mr. Francis Darwin, M.A., M.B., F.R.S., Foreign Secretary of the Royal Society. Mr. Darwin received his medical training at St. George's Hospital, but never practised, becoming first the assistant of his distinguished father, and after the latter's death settling at Cambridge, where he now holds the position of Reader in Botany. His address, it is stated, will deal first with the movements of plants, as illustrating the meaning of stimulus and reaction, and then with the view that morphological changes are regulated in a similar way, something equivalent to unconscious memory or habit ruling both types of reaction. Hering's thesis, that memory is a universal function of organized matter, will be supported by illustrations drawn from the development of the adult from the germ cell, and the address will conclude with the discussion of the problem of the inheritance of acquired characters. The Section of Physiology will receive reports from a number of committees, including those on the effect of climate upon health and diseases and on body metabolism in cancer. Two discussions on general subjects have been arranged, the one on the instruction of school teachers in physiology and hygiene, to be opened by Professor C. S. Sherrington, who will be followed by Professors Gotch and W. H. Thompson, and the other on mental and muscular fatigue. Among the papers to be read are one on tsetse flies, by Mr. R. Newstead; another, on atoxyl and allied compounds, by Dr. M. Nierenstein; on the action of acids and alkalies on the growth and division of animal and vegetable cells, by Professor B. Moore and Dr. H. E. Roaf; on the biological method of differentiating blood stains, by Professor E. J. McWeeney; and on localization in the brain in lemurs, by Professors W. H. Wilson and G. Elliot Smith. In the Section of Anthropology the address of the President, Professor William Ridgeway, will deal with the application of biological laws to man; he will contend that teleological doctrines still influence anthropologists, and that the chief errors which impede the scientific study of the history of man, lead to our maladministration of alien races, and give origin to blunders having the gravest effect on our social and educational legislation, are due to the obstinate refusal to look upon man as regulated by the same laws as the rest of the animal kingdom. He will point out that although "natural selection" and "the survival of the fittest" have been accepted phrases for nearly half a century, yet in educational and social matters statesmen of both parties act on the opposite principle, and at the present moment are encouraging the wastrels of the community to increase and multiply, by feeding their children and in other ways, and are deterring by all sorts of burdens the middle classes from increasing as they ought. Trinity College, the Royal University, the Royal College of Science, University College, the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, the Royal Irish Academy, and the Royal Dublin Society have placed their rooms at the disposal of the British Association for the sectional and other meetings.

### THE SANATORIUM FOR COUNTY CORK.

A special meeting of the Building Committee of the Joint Hospital Board was held on July 18th to consider the question asked in the House of Lords by Lord Castletown with reference to the site for the sanatorium.

Lord Castletown alleged that "the legal document conveying the Doneraile site contained a very remarkable clause, which set out that if any consumptive patient went outside the enclosure put up round the land, the gift of the site would be null and void, and the buildings were to become the property of the donor." The legal adviser to the board was present, and stated there was no such clause in the lease, and that Lord Castletown's remarks were based on an entire misapprehension of the facts. There was a clause making it mandatory on the board to safeguard as far as possible the public health of the neighbourhood, and covenanting not to permit the patients to wander over the neighbouring lands or to approach the intake of the Buttevant Waterworks. This clause was put in by Mr. Creagh entirely for the purpose of protecting Mr. Barry, Lord Castletown, and other adjoining owners, and as a result of their objections. There was no clause of any kind authorizing Mr. Creagh to seize the buildings.

### THE NENAGH AMBULANCE AFFAIR.

In our issue of June 13th, in narrating the story of how the dispensary doctor of Toomvara applied for the Nenagh ambulance to remove a man who had been shot to the workhouse infirmary, and how the master of the Nenagh Union refused to send the ambulance when he discovered the man did not reside in that union, we said: "We shall be surprised if the master of Nenagh Union is not found guilty, and called upon to resign after the manner of the Irish Local Government Board when an official carries out its rules strictly." And our prognosis was correct; as the result of the inquiry he was suspended, and in addition the medical officer of Toomvara was censured.

Dr. Kennedy, the gentleman in question, now writes to the Nenagh Board of Guardians objecting to this censure, on the grounds that the injured man was not a dispensary patient at all, and that he only wired for the Nenagh ambulance at the express desire of the patient, who refused to go to the Roscrea infirmary, that being the union in which he resided.

Now, the Local Government Board inspector examined Dr. Kennedy at the inquiry in Nenagh, and it only shows how carelessly these inquiries are conducted, that the important facts above stated were not elicited at the inquiry. If the patient was not a pauper, and did not reside in the union, he had obviously no claim to admission without the express permission of the guardians, and even then they could only admit him with the prospect of being surcharged by the auditor.

In addition to the inquiry at Nenagh, there was another at Roscrea as to whether the ambulance driver was drunk or sober, and why the workhouse medical officer was not called out in the middle of the night to see the man on his admission.

We think there must be something radically wrong with a system calling for these constant sworn inquiries, which have vastly increased in numbers since the passing of the Act of 1898, conferring upon Ireland democratic control of local matters. It is a system that could hardly exist out of Ireland, and it is small wonder the Irish people are tired of it, and are insistent in their demands for a new Poor Law with less red tape about it.

### HEALTH OF BELFAST.

The medical superintendent officer of health has drawn up a series of practical rules for the proper feeding and care of infants during the hot summer and autumn months, and has obtained the permission of the Health Committee for their publication and distribution. The death-rate in Belfast from consumption and typhoid for the last six months has shown considerable diminution. This last month the total mortality has been 16.9, or, on the English system, 15.4.

### LIMERICK DISTRICT ASYLUM.

Dr. O'Neill, medical superintendent of Limerick District Asylum, stated in his annual report, read at the last meeting of the governors, that the percentage of deaths was the lowest in Ireland, being only 4.9 last year. The number of patients in the asylum on the last day of the year was 671, the accommodation being for 550; he had repeatedly directed the attention of the board to the matter. Insane prisoners are sent in from the Limerick Prison, although not belonging to the asylum district. The