

1910, states that the outbreak of plague in Manchuria caused much anxiety towards the end of the year. Every precaution was taken and only one case was imported, which proved fatal. The patient was nursed by the Lady Superior of the Franciscan Sisters, who all bravely and nobly volunteered their services in the event of an outbreak of plague.

### Legal Matters.

#### COMPENSATION FOR EMPLOYEE CONTRACTING SCARLET FEVER.

An important decision to hospitals throughout the country was given last week by his Honour Judge Mellor, K.C., at the Manchester County Court on the question whether scarlet fever is an accident within the meaning of the Workmen's Compensation Act. The question arose in connection with the case of a mortuary porter at the Monsall Fever Hospital, who claimed compensation from his employers, the Manchester Corporation, alleging that he contracted scarlet fever while in their service.

Mr. Gordon Hewart, counsel for the Corporation, claimed on the other hand that the contraction of a disease like scarlet fever was not an accident arising out of the infected person's employment, as it could not be described as "unexpected, fortuitous, and unforeseen."

The Judge said the case was very important (1) because it was going to the highest courts, and therefore the decision would affect all those people employed by hospital authorities throughout the country, and (2) because it was the first case in which the liability of hospital authorities to pay compensation to members of their staffs who contract infectious diseases while at work had been questioned.

The Judge pointed out that the claimant's work included cleaning the mortuary at the fever hospital, and an extraordinary fact brought forward in evidence, and not contradicted, was that all he had to use for this purpose was a broom and a bucket of water. No antiseptic was provided. Water had no sterilising effect on the malignant germs of scarlet fever, and the medical man called for the defence said that if the body of a person who had died from scarlet fever were taken into the mortuary it could be said to be a perfect hot-bed of germs. The evidence showed that there were several, so they had the uncontradicted fact that this man's duty exposed him to every kind of disease germ. It was an extraordinary state of things, but as regards that he would say no more.

The defendant's danger was increased because he had been weakened by influenza and so was specially susceptible to infection.

The attack of scarlet fever to which he succumbed was followed by serious nephritis, and he was now totally incapacitated.

The judge found on the evidence that the defendant, James Martin, contracted the disease in the mortuary, and awarded him 15s. a week during incapacity with costs on the higher scale. He granted a stay of execution pending appeal.

### Reflections.

#### FROM A BOARD ROOM MIRROR.

Her Majesty Queen Alexandra has graciously given a donation of £100 to the West London Hospital, Hammersmith. His Majesty the late King was a patron of the hospital and took a deep interest in its work. His Majesty King George V. has also been graciously pleased to become a patron.

Queen Alexandra has made a gift to the London Homœopathic Hospital, Great Ormond Street, W.C., of a portrait of King Edward, to which her Majesty has placed the autograph inscription, "King Edward VII."

Dr. Meredith Young, Barrister-at-law, in a paper read at the Royal Sanitary Congress at Belfast, advocated the compulsory notification of ptomaine or food poisoning, rheumatic fever, pneumonic fever, tetanus or lock-jaw, typhoid carriers, paratyphoid fever, rickets, rubeola or German measles, and cerebro-spinal meningitis. He thought it doubtful whether the compulsory notification of influenza would have any great practical value.

At the same Congress Dr. Boobbyer, Medical Officer of Health for Nottingham, who read a paper on Municipal Hospitals, said that they had been engaged in the health department of Nottingham during the past fifteen years in making experiments with open air treatment for all classes of acute specific diseases, including small-pox, scarlet fever, diphtheria, measles, whooping-cough, pneumonia, erysipelas, and even enteric fever, and had at length succeeded in inducing the public to accept the open-air conditions as preferable to those of the closed wards.

A consular report on Switzerland says:—"The Queen Alexandra Sanatorium (which is situated at Davos) completed the first year of its active life in November, 1910. It is proving of great value for the class for whom it is intended—people of small means affected with curable forms of pulmonary tuberculosis. This admirable institution is largely indebted for its successful organisation and working to the untiring devotion of its president, Lord Balfour of Burleigh. Its record so far promises well for the future."

Things are usually going ahead in New York City. Recently a Bill was introduced into the legislature to provide eyeglasses for every pupil in need of such in the public schools. It has been estimated that the appropriation would have to be about \$15,000.

The Board of Health has decided that after October 1st of this year the general drinking cup must be removed from all public places, and some sort of spurting fountain or individual cup substituted.

The International Congress on Tuberculosis, which was to have been held in Rome in September next, has been postponed till April, 1912.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)