

ROYAL COMMISSION ON VENEREAL DISEASES.

At the meeting of the Royal Commission held on Monday, November 24th, evidence was given by Dr. J. C. Dunlop, Superintendent of the Statistical Department in the Office of the Registrar-General for Scotland, to the effect that syphilis and parasymphilitic diseases do not hold a very important place in the list of the principal causes of death in Scotland.

The figures for 1911 showed that the number of deaths due to all tubercular diseases was 8,887; to phthisis 5,451, cancer 4,948, accidents 2,624, whooping cough 2,347, measles 923, syphilis and parasymphilitic diseases 552 (or including aneurism 713), scarlet fever 541, diabetes 445, rheumatism 469, appendicitis 410, enteric fever 272, suicide 253.

It was Dr. Dunlop's impression, from consideration of the figures from 1880 onwards, that there was a decrease in venereal diseases in Scotland. He agreed that the figures available with regard to deaths from those diseases were, on account of defects in certification and diagnosis, only to be accepted with reservation, and that the true amount of deaths from these causes is almost certainly considerably greater than that shown by registration; but looking to the facts that diagnosis and certification are improving, he considered there was evidence of a genuine decrease in syphilis.

Dealing with the question of confidential certification of deaths, he was aware that there was a body of opinion in its favour, but he thought that from the point of view of the Registrar-General there might be practical difficulties about adopting it.

A scheme under which a general certificate of death would be sent to the local registrar and a confidential certificate, giving details of the cause of death, to the Central Office in Edinburgh involved a risk that the latter would not receive a certificate in every case and consequently endangered the completeness of the Register.

A NEW VACUUM FLASK

There are few nurses who do not desire to possess a vacuum flask, or to whom such a flask would not be a welcome Christmas gift, but its price is as a rule prohibitive. This difficulty no longer exists when the new Vacuum Flask supplied by Messrs. Lewis & Burrows, Ltd., 146, Holborn Bars and other surgical depôts is secured. Its cost post free to any part of the United Kingdom is only 3s. 11d., and we strongly advise those who are thinking of purchasing such a flask to inspect, or write for it.

To private nurses it would be a specially welcome gift, both for the sake of their patients and themselves, for, on long train journeys, they would be independent of the uncertain supplies obtainable en route, and could have hot tea, or strong soup whenever desired.

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"VIRGINIA."*

We have had recently a glut of American novels, of which "Virginia" is not the least notable. A charming story, in spite of its pathos, which almost amounts to depression; added to which is a certain monotony of outlook. But it would be ungrateful to carp at the pen which has created Mrs. Pendleton and the Rector, Susan and Miss Willy, and Virginia herself. Dinwiddie, with its limited interests, which so absorbed its inhabitants, sheds an atmosphere round this story which envelops us along with them, and brings us into close personal touch with their joys and sorrows. This is a chronicle of domesticity and the homely tragedy of a woman's devotion and unrequited self-oblation. "The Rector, from the day of his marriage, had never been able to deny his wife anything she had set her heart on—not even the privilege of working herself to death for his sake when the opportunity offered." We must not make a harsh judgment of the Rector from this; he was a charming man, and his wife had a genius for self-sacrifice. Virginia was their only child, and she became an exact replica of her mother. Here is a charming extract from Virginia's girlhood: "In the centre of her bedroom Virginia was standing very straight while Miss Willy Whitlow knelt at her feet and sewed pale blue bows on her overskirt of white organdie; occasionally the door opened softly and the rector or one of the servants would look in to see Jinnie, or Miss Jinnie, dressed for the party.

"Am I all right, mother? Tell me how I look."

"Lovely, darling; there won't be anyone there sweeter than you are."

"The maternal passion lit Mrs. Pendleton's eyes with splendour, and her worn face was illuminated as if a lamp had been suddenly held close to it. All day, in spite of neuralgic pain in her temples, she had worked hard hemming the flounces for Virginia's dress, and into every stitch had gone something of the Divine ecstasy of martyrdom. Love meant to her not grasping but giving; and in serving others, she served herself unawares."

Virginia's married life was a repetition of her mother's.

A very devoted mother is apt to become a little wearisome to all but her children; and while we have every sympathy for Virginia, we cannot wonder that her husband, Oliver, became rather bored with their society. The tragic part was that she never perceived that she bored him, or that he could ever have enough of the children's society.

"During the spring, as he grew more and more indifferent and depressed, she arranged that the children should be with him every instant while he was in the house. She brought

*By Ellen Glasgow. (London: William Heinemann.)

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)