

86 cases in which acute inflammatory disease of the vermiform appendix caused death, directly or indirectly. About 48 per cent. were males. About 48 per cent. of the deaths occurred in the second and third decades of life.

In some of the cases the symptoms of appendicitis were not discovered until after death. The larger percentage of cases among men and boys is explained as being due to the greater liability to exposure, to injury and the greater tendency to errors in diet, and in part, perhaps, to the excessive use of tobacco and the consequent digestive disturbances.

The size of the appendix varies according to age and to persons. Its length averages from three to three and a half inches. The appendix of man is slightly larger than that of the woman.

Of seventy surgeons who were canvassed on the question: 'When the abdomen is opened for other causes and the perfectly normal appendix is easily accessible, is it your rule to remove it?' forty-four replied against and the rest in favor of doing so.

The result of a canvass among many physicians as to whether the appendix, while still in a normal condition, should be removed as a preventive measure was the almost unanimous conclusion that such a step is 'absurd,' 'unjustifiable,' or 'without excuse.'

Artificial Silk

A textile fibre which has recently come into the market is artificial silk. This is a French development which is yet scarcely on its feet, but promises a great future. The present output is about one-eighth that of annual silk, or about 4000 tons per annum. The selling price is about 14s per pound, as against 18s for animal silk. The centre of the new industry is in France, but there are also factories in Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, Spain, and Italy.

Artificial silk is produced from the vegetable compound cellulose, which substance is also the basis of silk-worm silk. The raw material from which artificial silk is produced is chiefly cotton fibre, though paper and wood pulp can also be used. The lowest grades of cotton can be used for this purpose. The cotton or pulp is first cleansed and bleached by chloride of lime. It is next soaked in a mixture of three parts sulphuric acid and two parts nitric acid. The temperature of the acid bath must be held between 85deg. F. and 100deg. F. This treatment is called nitrating, and has for its end to render the cellulose soluble in a mixture of alcohol and ether. A bath of some drying oil, such as cotton seed or castor oil, is used after the nitrating bath.

The solution thus produced is a syrup-like liquid which is run into a closed tank, and subjected to a pressure of several atmospheres. This tank has at the bottom a number of glass tubes having a diameter of about 1-150inch, and any convenient length. The outlets of the tubes dip into or overhang a basin of cold water. Through these capillary tubes, by the air pressure in tank, the liquid, now called pyroxylin, is forced in fine streams, which coagulate and harden immediately they touch the water. From the water bath the now solid threads are wound on spools, and passed through a heated and ventilated chamber. The hot air in the chamber vaporizes, and drives off the alcohol from the threads. By suitable tubes this alcohol is carried to a condenser, where it is recovered and used over again.

The dried threads are very combustible, and are next treated to a bath of sulphhydrate of ammonia or potassium and then washed in cold water. They are now become no more inflammable than ordinary spun cotton. The fibre is then ready to be spun into cables of any desired diameter. The resulting thread is very tough, and more lustrous than animal silk.

The special uses of artificial silk, and for which it is superior to animal silk, is in lace making and for weaving fabrics in which the pattern stands in high relief. Such goods are tapestries, upholstery, and brocades. The fabrics are as durable as any animal silks. This fibre is also the best known material for making incandescent mantles for gas burners. Mantles of artificial silk, when impregnated with salts of thorium and cerium, give the best possible light, and last about six times as long as ordinary mantles. Artificial silk filaments, when carbonized, make excellent 'carbons' for incandescent electric lights. The filaments when treated with shellac and castor oil are used for making tooth brushes. Cloth made from artificial silk can be bleached white, and fast-dyed with red, blue, violet, saffron, or black dyes of the aniline group.

Turning the Tables

When Mr. Courthope, a Sussex Tory member, asked a question about alleged boycotting in Cavan (writes the Parliamentary correspondent of the 'Freeman's Journal') Mr. Dillon very adroitly interposed an inquiry in which he set forth the terrible list of crimes committed in the past year in his division of Sussex. Every form of offence in the calendar, from the most violent to the most odious, was plentifully represented in this list, making the trivial matters mentioned by Mr. Courthope fall into utter insignificance. The experience was not encouraging for other English Tory members whom the Ulster Unionists may wish to supply with questions condemning their own countrymen. It also had another not unimportant result. The two Unionist evening papers that give the lengthened reports of the early business of the House entirely omitted Mr. Courthope's question, because of the awkward pendant that Mr. Dillon affixed to it. Seeing that the object of the framers of such questions as Mr. Courthope's is to obtain wide publicity for the allegations put forward, in the hope of creating the false impression that Ireland is in a disturbed state, this suppression of such questions is rather a disagreeable surprise to their originators. Every English or Scottish Unionist member who identifies himself with the campaign of slander now being pursued by the Ulster Unionists will find that the criminal statistics of his own constituency will be paraded with equal prominence. No Irish constituency has anything to lose by such comparisons.

Mr. Walter Long is taking a hand in this game. He has given notice of three long questions about boycotting, but has not starred them, so that the answers will not be given in the House, but will be circulated with the votes. This is an example of the discretion of which Mr. Walter Long has an ample store, for he foresaw probably that he might have to face an inquiry about the criminal statistics of the county of Wilts, with which he is closely identified. However, the question about Wilts will be put, all the same, by Mr. Mooney, and the criminal calendar which it will be his painful duty to expose to the House is sufficient to explain Mr. Walter Long's prudence in the method of his questioning.

Andrew Mack

The advent of Mr. Andrew Mack, who opened with his own company at His Majesty's Theatre, Auckland, on Monday week, to a large and enthusiastic audience, marked a new departure in Irish drama. His first production was 'Tom Moore,' a pleasant love story, for which Mr. Mack appears eminently fitted. He also has Moore's musical gifts, and is said to have something of his extraordinary personality and magnetism. It will come as a pleasant surprise to Irishmen to find there are Irish plays in which the hero is not a buffoon. In 'Tom Moore' we are taken back to the days when George III. was King, and introduced to such historical personages as the Prince Regent, Beau Brummel, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, and others. The play was especially written for Mr. Mack by T. B. Sayer, who has chosen the days when Moore was wooing Bessie Dyke for the period of his play, and has invested his hero with a sentimental charm, naturally to be expected in the writer of 'Believe me if all those endearing young charms,' and the rest of Moore's beautiful series of ballads, several of which were introduced into the play by Mr. Andrew Mack, who is a tenor singer of high repute, as well as a famous actor. The second production of the Auckland season was the phenomenally successful Irish drama, 'Jack Shannon.'

Hockey is essentially Irish in its origin. It was first played there under the name of 'hurley,' and is still known by that name in various parts of Ireland.

A further list of subscriptions in aid of the building fund of the Memorial Church to the Irish Martyrs, Cromwell, appears in this issue....

Mr. J. Casey, the people's outfitter, Princes street, Dunedin, has just opened up a large stock of gentlemen's underwear and overcoats, which are quoted at specially low prices....

The publication of an advertisement in a Catholic paper shows that the advertiser not only desires the patronage of Catholics, but pays them the compliment of seeking it through the medium of their own religious journal. So says an esteemed and wide-awake American contemporary. A word to the wise is sufficient....