

approve the setting apart of £2,500 to purchase surgical appliances. The council had always thought that they ought each year to distribute what they received, and he hoped that this plan would always be continued.

Archdeacon Sinclair, in seconding the motion, observed that they must all feel greatly indebted to Sir Sydney Waterlow for having initiated the fund, and to the committee of distribution for the wise and thoughtful way in which they had conducted their very delicate operations.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

In their report the committee of distribution recommended awards to 192 institutions—138 hospitals and 54 dispensaries—being four more than last year.

## Medical Matters.

### TUBERCULOSIS.



THE report of the delegates of Her Majesty's Government at the International Congress on Tuberculosis, held at Berlin from May 24th to 27th last, has just been issued as a Parliamentary paper. Perhaps the chief interest of the report is the memorandum by Dr. Pye Smith, on the medical aspects of the results of the Congress. He states that the most important conclusions which were recognised are, that Consumption and other tubercular diseases are caused by the presence and multiplication of the specific bacillus discovered by Professor Koch; that tuberculosis, as a condition directly transmitted by inheritance, is extremely rare; and that Phthisis, or pulmonary tuberculosis in particular, is not catching. He then describes the following practical points in the prevention of tuberculosis as a widespread and destructive disease which were inculcated by various speakers at the Congress:—

*A.*—The primary importance of free ventilation and wholesome and abundant food. Improvement in the dwellings and the food of the poorer classes in this country, and their increasing cleanliness and sobriety, have not only diminished sickness generally, but directly reduced the number of deaths from Consumption until the mortality from this cause is less in London than in any other large city.

*B.*—The prevention of infection of the lungs by the bacillus of tubercle depends chiefly on rational treatment of the sputa of consumptive patients, or rather, for practical purposes, of the sputa of all those affected with cough and expectoration. The phlegm should never be deposited on the ground or on a handkerchief, where it can dry up; it should be kept moist until it can be destroyed by heat, and the vessel used to receive it should contain phenol or some other antiseptic solution.

*C.*—The prevention of infection by tuberculous milk may be accomplished by boiling all milk given as food to children or by inspection of dairies, so as to prevent tuberculous milch-cows being used.

*D.*—The prevention of infection by meat can be secured by careful and thorough inspection of carcases, or by diagnostic testing of cattle with tuberculin. This is the only undoubtedly useful application of the so-called tuberculin.

Though the question of the treatment of Phthisis was only a supplementary part of the work of the Congress, the following facts are important for the public:—*(a)* That tuberculous disease of the bones and joints of the glands and skin and abdomen, though dangerous, is not incurable, and, by the modern methods of operative medicine, is in most cases successfully cured. *(b)* That tuberculosis of the lungs (Phthisis or Consumption) is frequently cured, and probably more often now than formerly. *(c)* That there is no specific drug which has direct influence upon Consumption, but that many, both old and new, have valuable effects upon its complications. *(d)* That abundant food, particularly of a fatty nature, and a life in the open air, are no less valuable in the treatment than in the prevention of Phthisis. *(e)* That the influence of climate, altitude, temperature, and dryness of the air and soil, of travelling, and of sea voyages, has been very differently estimated at different periods, and that, while each is in various degrees important, popular opinion probably exaggerates their power. *(f)* That the prospect of improved success in the treatment of tuberculosis in general, and of Consumption in particular, by the advance of pathology and the progress of surgery and medicine, is a hopeful one, almost as hopeful as that of limiting the spread of the disease by preventive measures.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)