

Annotations.

WHAT THE PEOPLE SLEEP ON.

An amazing account was given by Mr. Peter Fyfe, at the Conference of Sanitary Inspectors held in connection with the Glasgow Congress, in relation to the filthy condition of bedding supplied to the people. He said that, with the view of tracing the diseases with which the sanitary officer had to deal, he instituted an investigation into the bedmaking trade. On examining the nature of common wool flock, he found it was manufactured from a mass of rags, the rejected of every class of the population, from the wealthy of the West End to the tramps and vagrants of the East End. It would be impossible to explain what he observed on some of the torn garments. It was best left to the imagination. Nothing in the nature of cleansing or disinfection was attempted. All went into the machine if sufficiently dry. At the other end it came out flock. Having secured a pound of flock from one of the factories, he twice rinsed off half a pound in jars of distilled water. This water, when analysed, was compared with a similar quantity of average Glasgow sewage, and compared very badly with it. In case it might be urged that the material obtained at the factory was exceptionally filthy, he caused a new flock bed, a bolster, and two pillows to be purchased from one of the largest city furnishers. The materials of the new bed were found by the chemist to contain more solid matter than the flock from the factory.

Having obtained a knowledge of the extremely obnoxious character of common wool flock, the male and female inspectors were asked to make inquiries in the homes of the lower classes in order to ascertain what the majority slept on. Two thousand four hundred and seventy-one beds out of 3,163 cases investigated were of common flock, the sole reason for its selection being its cheapness. The difference in cost between dirty, unwashed wool flock and washed woollen mill puff was about 2s. per bed. It was clearly against the public interest that a filthy and dangerous material should be disseminated over the country. That it was so was admitted by the manufacturers, but they dare not decline to sell it for fear of losing business. It would be safer to sleep on a bed filled with sewage than on this material, on which 78 per cent. of the humbler citizens of Glasgow reposed nightly.

Medical Matters.

AN UNSUSPECTED DANGER.



An unsuspected danger existing in London and other towns, having hospitals for infectious diseases, was disclosed in a paper by Major Cummins, R.A.M.C. read under the presidency of Sir Charles Cameron, C.B., M.D., D.P.H., at a meeting of the Preventive Medicine Section of the Congress of the Royal Institute of Public Health. It appears that it is the almost universal practice for the excreta of patients—through which, certainly in the case of typhoid fever, and very possibly in the case of other diseases, most of the infection of the public is spread—to be discharged direct into the sewers without disinfection. Major Cummins showed reason for believing that this process is not, as has been until recently imagined, an innocent consignment of microbes to be crowded out by larger numbers of their innocent brethren, but that, on the contrary, the infectious microbes survive and from time to time most certainly give rise to infection within the district through which the sewer runs, or which communicates by either air or water with the sewage works or farms. The writer had been confirmed in this view by his experience during the South African campaign, where the introduction of rigid disinfection of the excreta practically stopped typhoid infection among the staffs of the hospitals where it was applied, although these diseases continued to rage both in other neighbouring hospitals and among the general civil population. Sir Charles Cameron expressed his strong approval of the views of the author.

"NATURAL" APPETITE.

Some dietetic dunce, with a large following of plagiaristic parrots, says the *Dietetic and Hygienic Gazette*, insists that the "natural" appetite is the best guide in the selection of food.

It might be a brilliant dietetic fact but for one exception—it isn't true.

In these days of artificialness and morbid hankering after delusive narcotics and mental champagne there's no such thing as a natural appetite. The modern babe in its crib is systematically educated away from all its natural instincts and brought up a bundle of hyper-sensitive nerves and artificial appetites.

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