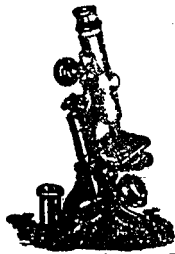


Medical Matters.

TUBERCULOUS CHILDREN.



Sir W. Broadbent, in the course of an interesting speech delivered at a meeting of the Council of the Invalid Children's Aid Association, pointed to the remarkable fact that while consumption, the most prevalent form of tuberculous disease, had steadily diminished year by year for the last thirty years, there had been no corresponding diminution in the death-rate from tuberculous affections specially incident to infancy and early childhood. On the contrary, they had distinctly increased. It was alleged that contaminated milk drawn from a cow in which existed bovine tuberculosis was the main source of communicating infection in early life. Without committing himself to a definite and dogmatic statement on that point, he had no hesitation in saying that tubercular meningitis and peritonitis were often due to cow's milk. No child suckled by a healthy mother ever contracted either of those diseases. From 1901 to 1903 6,391 children under five years of age died in London from different forms of tuberculosis, of whom 2,894 died before they were a year old, and statistics showed that the most fatal form of the disease was tubercular meningitis, next to which came tabes mesenterica and tubercular pneumonia. On public grounds, perhaps, these deaths were hardly to be regretted. If a child contracted tuberculosis at an early age, for its own sake as well as in the interests of the race, death was certainly preferable to a life of suffering. At the same time there were forms of tubercular disease and diseases of the lungs which were not of tubercular origin which, if taken in time and properly treated, led not only to alleviation of the symptoms but to remarkable recoveries. It was in cases of this kind that the Invalid Children's Aid Association could accomplish useful and valuable work. The great causes of tubercular disease were unwholesome houses, overcrowding, improper feeding, dirt, bad ventilation, and the incidents of poverty generally. One of the greatest safeguards against tubercle in

children and all forms of infantile disease was that the infants should be suckled by the mother. There was no substitute for the infant's natural food within the reach of the poor. In all cases early treatment with plenty of fresh air was of the utmost importance. Progress was surer and much more rapid in sea air or in the country than in the wards of even the best appointed hospitals. There was great room for the exercise of charity in providing institutions of this character.

A resolution was adopted recommending the early and efficient treatment of children suffering from different forms of tuberculosis.

The object of the Invalid Children's Association is to assist the invalid and crippled children of the poor. Their befriending by volunteer workers is an excellent feature of the work.

CAISSON DISEASE.

Professor Thomas Oliver, physician to the Royal Infirmary, Newcastle-on-Tyne, recently delivered at the Royal Institution of Public Health, Russell Square, a lecture which dealt with some of the maladies caused by the air we breathe in the home, the factory, and the mine. Caisson disease, or compressed air illness, was the subject of his discourse. He showed on the screen illustrations of the various types of caisson, and stated that during the act of passing into the caisson, or what was known as compression, beyond some unpleasant symptoms, such as headache and deafness, there were no serious results. Imperfect ventilation, caused by passing through various strata such as soft coal, and muscular fatigue were contributory causes of caisson disease, but the real cause, as the lecturer showed, was the sudden liberation of gas in the blood-vessels which had been previously in a state of solution. One of the methods of treating men who had developed symptoms of the disease was to put them again in the airlock and recompress them, and then decompress them very slowly. Of twenty cases taken into the Newcastle Infirmary only two had had their lives threatened, and the others had regained the use of their limbs in a few days.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)