

Medical Matters.

CANCER RESEARCH.



From the indescribably minute and most patient investigations which are being made in the Imperial Cancer Research Laboratories on the Victoria Embankment, one fact which may be reassuring to the public emerges; and it is that so far as can be ascertained cancer is not an infectious disease. The occurrence of the disease in man and animals; the universal laws which seem to govern its occurrence at various ages of the tissue of the body where it occurs; the relations between cancerous growths and the tissues in which they occur and with which they are connected—together with various other observed phenomena—all point in the opinion of the Director, Dr. Bashford, to the probability that cancer arises *de novo* in the individual attacked. In other words, nobody acquires cancer by living in the so-called cancer houses or cancer neighbourhoods. There must be in himself favouring causes for cancer both in the beginning and in its continuance.

THE ELECTRIC SLEEP.

Le Presse Medicale says: Dr. Leduc gives the name electric sleep to a condition analogous to that of chloroform anæsthesia, produced by a current of electricity upon the brain, administered in the manner which he describes. He states that in this sleep the subject lies without voluntary movement or sensibility to pain, that the condition may be maintained for several hours, and that it disappears instantly with the cessation of the current.

THE CARE OF THE TEETH.

The effect of unhealthy teeth upon the general health is a subject which is receiving increased attention from the members of the medical profession and at the Congress on School Hygiene Dr. Edward C. Wallis gave some particulars about a detailed examination of the teeth in a London elementary school in a poor district. Out of 245 children examined only four were found to have the normal number of healthy teeth. There was an appalling absence of cleanliness, and a total absence of evidence of dental conservative treatment. In nearly all cases of extensive dental caries he found that the physical measurements were below the average.

Germany has now opened, at Strasburg, a dental hospital for schools, in which, last year, no fewer than 18,607 school children received treatment.

Lectures on Anatomy and Physiology as Applied to Practical Nursing.*

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(Continued from page 83.)

INFANTILE TETANUS.—There is a form of tetanus, with which nurses occasionally meet, which occurs in infants of two or three weeks old. It is almost invariably due to some error in the child's diet or to its exposure to cold, although epidemics have been known to occur in crowded foundling and lying-in hospitals where the ventilation was deficient and the sanitary arrangements very defective. As a general rule, these cases are, if treated at once, cured by an aperient and a hot bath, or, in the latter cases alluded to, by immediate removal to more healthy surroundings; so that the nursing is simple.

HYDROPHOBIA.—This disease, fortunately, is becoming extremely rare in this country. Formerly, outbreaks were by no means infrequent. It is an extremely painful disease to watch or to nurse. After a very uncertain interval, after the bite of some mad animal, pain or stiffness or throbbing is felt at the seat of the wound, and, after a few hours, stiffness is complained of in the neck and throat, which goes on to complete incapability of swallowing. Then follow convulsions more or less general; the patient is unable to bear any light or sound; often screams violently, and constantly spits thick, viscid saliva, whilst the jaws become more and more fixed by muscular spasm. Generally, in two or three days, the patient dies delirious or comatose. The nursing consists, of course, in keeping the patient as quiet and comfortable as possible, and it has been found that relief is often afforded by allowing him to suck constantly small pieces of ice.

EPILEPSY.—This disease is characterised by sudden attacks of unconsciousness, accompanied by more or less violent convulsions, from which its old name of "the falling sickness" was derived. A fit is quite distinctive, and enables one to realise why, in Biblical times, the patient was thought to be "possessed by a devil." As a rule, he suddenly, with or without a short warning, loses consciousness, so that, if standing or walking, he falls to the ground. The face and limbs are violently

* These Lectures commenced on October 6th, 1906. Back copies of the Journal (post free 3d each) can be obtained from the Offices.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)