

THE PUBLIC HEALTH.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A UNITED MEDICAL SERVICE.

THE FIRST SIGNS OF DISEASE.

The Development of Modern Medicine appears to be along the lines of prevention, and the detection of the first signs of disease, instead of allowing disease to develop before it is treated.

This is the aim of the James Mackenzie Institute for Clinical Research at St. Andrews, the Tenth Annual Report of which has just been issued, and the purpose which Sir James Mackenzie had in mind in founding the Institute is thus being realised, namely, the study of disease in its earliest stages before any structural change has taken place.

To this end the methods were adopted of which Sir James Mackenzie himself made use as a general practitioner when he laid the foundations of the modern study of diseases of the heart. He made a practice of recording the symptoms, no matter how trivial, and of following up every patient in order to observe the bearing of these recorded symptoms on his future life.

Early in the present year the workers in the Institute began to inspect and analyse their records. They found that some 60 per cent. of these were complete, and a special body has now been formed to extract the information which is obtainable from them, which will then be available for the information of medical practitioners, who will be thus able to recognise the importance or insignificance of early symptoms as danger signals.

The James Mackenzie Institute in St. Andrews has established an exceedingly complete and valuable method of record keeping. Ante-natal histories are provided by the general practitioners and filed; notes are taken from birth to the end of the second year at the Child Welfare Centre; examinations of the same children are made at regular intervals at the Institute between the second and fifth year; finally co-operation with the school medical officers has been established. No selection of cases is made; all babies and children are kept under observation however healthy they may appear to be. A satisfactory feature of the work is the enthusiasm it is arousing among parents. Mothers need no persuasion to bring their children to the Institute for periodic examination. Further, the Institute has become the means of bringing together the services of curative and preventive medicine in St. Andrews. The work of the general practitioners in private and panel practice and the work of the medical officer in charge of the welfare centres and of the school children have been co-ordinated so that a continuous supervision of the health of the community has been established. Private doctors and doctors in the public service are working together and helping each other without any sacrifice of the voluntary principle. The Council of the Institute take great pride in their achievement, which they describe as "the only effectively working example which exists of the end towards which modern public health legislation is tending—namely, the development of a united medical service incorporating private and panel practice and public health work."

THE FATHER OF TROPICAL MEDICINE.

Sir G. Carmichael Low, President of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine, Sir Ronald Ross, and others, are appealing in the Press for funds to establish a house, to be called Manson House, as the Home of the Society, as a memorial to Sir Patrick Manson whom they rightly

describe as a leader in medical science and one of the world's benefactors. His genius first established the principle of insect transmission of disease. At the International Medical Congress in London in 1913 he was acclaimed the Father of Modern Tropical Medicine. His influence continues in the increasing health (and wealth) of the tropics and inspires all who endeavour to overcome obstacles to development caused by tropical disease.

Manson's great work, they say, began in Amoy in 1877 with his demonstration that the filarial worm which inflicts on man the terrible disease of elephantiasis is conveyed by certain mosquitoes. This was no chance discovery, but the reward of labour added to that of daily practice in tropical heat among the sick in hospital and home, and was made in an academical and professional isolation known only to some of his disciples. It involved the study of the little worm in the human blood and the tracing of it into the stomach of the mosquito, and thence into the thoracic muscles, where it developed into another form which could mean only one thing—namely, that the worm was preparing itself for entering into the body of another man. With this observation the science of modern tropical medicine was born, for it was subsequently found that insects are responsible for the spread of many other tropical diseases—malaria, sleeping sickness, yellow fever—to mention only a few.

INTERESTING ITEMS FROM OUR EXCHANGES.

THE EFFECT OF LIVER ON BLOOD SUGAR IN DIABETIC PATIENTS.

SUMMARY.—Liver is now known to have a beneficial effect on the blood sugar of diabetic patients, whereas previously it was considered as an unsuitable article of food for these patients.

Four patients with diabetes, taking liver daily, or from three to five times a week, have been observed with repeated blood sugar determinations for approximately one year, while two were followed for twenty and thirty days. It was found that the blood sugar in these cases remained at a lower level than it did previous to liver treatment.

These observations suggest that liver contains a blood sugar reducing substance, active when taken by mouth, non-toxic, and with an effect on the blood sugar similar to that obtained with insulin.—Harry Blotner, M.D., in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*.

WATCH-STRAP DERMATITIS.

A case recorded by Mr. H. Goodman in the *Urological and Cutaneous Review* suggests that this condition is commoner than is usually supposed. His patient was a young woman, who complained that for ten days she had been annoyed by a reddened area about the left wrist where she carried her watch. Although she had worn the strap for several months she had never been troubled before, and thought perspiration during a recent hot spell had caused the eruption. She removed the strap to the right wrist, on which she noted a similar redness and itching 48 hours later. It was found that the lesions were limited to the forearm. Surrounding the left wrist was an area of erythema surmounted by closely crowded small vesicles. The part of the surface upon which the watch rested was least affected. Although the strap was only half an inch wide, the left forearm was erythematous half-way up to the elbow. The more recently exposed wrist showed an area of erythema and vesicles more nearly that of the strap.

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