

Medical Matters.

STATE MEDICAL RELIEF.



At a general meeting of the Medical Practitioners' Association, held on the 9th inst., the President, Dr. ALDERSON, proposed a novel scheme which aroused a good deal of discussion. It practically amounted, in effect, to the creation of State medical appointments on a wholesale scale. Every county in the United Kingdom was to be mapped out into districts, each one of which was to have allotted to it a fixed number of medical practitioners, to whose care the health of the district was to be entrusted, and who were to be paid by annual stipend. A district containing 30,000 inhabitants would be in the charge of ten general practitioners, one physician, two consulting surgeons, and one gynæcologist. The appointments were to be made by the Local Government Board under the advice of a committee of selection, which should consist of the chairman of the vestry, or of the mayor, a justice of the peace, and of any general medical practitioner who was a member of the corporation, vestry, or town council. Finally, the election was to be confirmed by the General Medical Council. The salaries of the medical officials would vary according to circumstances. We doubt if there is any possibility of this scheme ever being adopted, and, if it were, we feel sure that the doctors would often have a very uncomfortable time, for they would, undoubtedly, be at the beck and call of a large number of persons towards whom they can, at present, adopt an independent attitude.

THE INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC.

There is no doubt that the country is again in the toils of this disease, for from all parts of the country we hear of outbreaks, of greater or less severity, incapacitating whole households and seriously disturbing trade. It is somewhat early to judge, but we are inclined to think that the present visitation is of a somewhat milder character than its predecessors were, for there seems to be less tendency to the occurrence of low-type inflammatory conditions than was noted in previous epidemics. Nurses will, doubtless, be in considerable demand throughout the winter, and they should, therefore, remember that warm clothing and extra nourishment have proved to be the best preventives of the disease. Patients should be kept in bed, and as quiet as possible, and guard against chills during convalescence, for it is a well established fact that Pneumonia is much more frequent during relapses than during an original attack.

INOCULATION OF TETANUS.

A most interesting case of this has just been reported by Dr. Nicholas, of Lyons. Experiments were being made by injecting a culture of the bacillus of tetanus into fowls—a very powerful culture being employed for the purpose. The needle had been dipped into the culture, and was therefore wet when a slight prick was inflicted with it upon the left hand, but none of the fluid was forced out of the syringe, and consequently only the most minute amount of the culture could have been absorbed by the trifling wound. The operator was quite well for four days, and then a typical attack of tetanus occurred. Fortunately, however, the patient recovered, but the case is most instructive, as proof of the extreme susceptibility of the human organism to the tetanic poison.

PHOSPHATIC INJECTIONS IN LOCOMOTOR ATAXY.

If further trials of this new method of treatment prove to be as satisfactory as in those cases already reported, there seems reason to hope that a remedy has at last been found for this dreaded disease. Medicinally, nearly every known drug has been tried and discarded in turn as useless. Dr. Brown-Sequard claims that by the injection of his organic liquids, much benefit and alleviation of symptoms have been obtained in these cases. But Belgian physicians have for some time been employing phosphatic injections for ataxy, and a case is now reported in which, after twenty-five of such injections, an English patient became greatly improved, and after the fiftieth injection was completely cured. Further details of the exact preparation employed and the dosage will be looked for with interest. If the new plan proves generally successful, it will throw, perhaps, quite a new light also on the pathology of this disease, but for the moment the practical benefit is sufficient.

DRAINAGE OF THE BRAIN.

A remarkable case has been just published, in which a child, suffering from chronic hydrocephalus, became comatose, and was evidently dying from the pressure of the fluid on its brain substance. An opening was made at the base of the skull, and a probe passed through the membranes gave exit to a quantity of clear cerebro-spinal fluid; a horse-hair drain was inserted and the wound stitched. By the next day, the child was perfectly conscious, and rapidly improved both in general health and mental intelligence. The operation was simple and easy, and will, probably, be frequently adopted in similar cases in future.

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