

Medical Matters.

ALBUMINURIA IN TYPHOID.



A WELL-KNOWN French physician has recently stated his belief that albuminuria, though an almost constant condition in typhoid, is also one the significance of which varies. The albuminuria which appears at the end of the first week, or early in the second, is merely that of pyrexia, and does not in any way affect the course of the disease. It is in those cases in which it appears at the end of the third week that it gives an indication of grave changes in the kidney, and that uræmia may declare itself at any time. When such is the case, the patient is clearly in a very critical condition, and requires the most careful watching, however slight the attack of typhoid. Recovery may take place after the appearance of such kidney complications, but it is not usual, and two-thirds of such patients die. A further fact of importance is, that the quantity of albumen passed is no indication as to what the result may be; the amount of urine is much more important, and when this is small the outlook is very grave.

CHOLERA INOCULATION.

THE medical profession in India have for three years been watching with the keenest interest the work performed in their midst by Dr. Haffkine. During the whole of that time he has carried out at his own cost a public spirited but most arduous task. He has performed many thousands of inoculations at cholera centres throughout Northern India, and the results have been impartially watched and reported upon by English medical men in the various provinces of the Punjab, Oudh, the North West, Assam, and Bengal. Out of a total of 42,445 inoculations, not a single mishap or injury to health has resulted, and there is now abundant proof that the measure is of the greatest benefit. Amongst a large number of uninoculated inhabitants of a district devastated by cholera, 13.47 per cent. were attacked by the disease, and 11.6 per cent. died. Amongst those partially protected by preliminary inoculation only 2.2 were attacked and died, while amongst those who had been completely inoculated there was not one single case and not one death. It is the fashion of faddists to deny and disparage any advantages which seem derivable from vaccination, and from these there will

doubtless arise raucous comments on Dr. Haffkine's beneficent work. But, seeing that his experiments have been carried out at an expense to himself not only of some thousands of pounds, but of shattered health, it will be difficult for his detractors to impugn his good faith or singleness of purpose. It is earnestly to be hoped that Dr. Haffkine will soon and completely regain the health which has been endangered by his arduous labours; and there seems every reason to believe that his remedy will prove efficacious to the saving of thousands of lives and of incalculable suffering.

CANCER HOUSES.

ATTENTION has been drawn, in this column, upon several previous occasions to certain interesting facts which have been recently published, concerning the apparent infectiousness of cancer. It has, for example, been proved that a number of persons who successively occupied certain houses, and were quite unconnected by any blood relationship with each other, successively died from the same type of malignant disease. Since attention was first called to this matter, such facts have accumulated in such numbers as to render it almost an accepted doctrine that there are veritable "cancer-houses"—in other words, that there is some infectious principle involved in the dissemination of cancer. Then the conclusion, which has for long been an acknowledged fact, that cancer is most prevalent along valleys through which rivers run, which seasonally flood their banks, has led to the further theory that the progress of cancer is closely connected with the water supply of the district. Examination of this suggestion has led to the belief that it is less the influence of the house which is concerned in the spread of malignant disease than the quality of the water which is supplied to those habitations. From this it is argued that the various forms of cancer must depend upon some form of *bacillus*; and, to the objection that there are many and widely diverse varieties of malignant growths, and that therefore one bacillus would not account for all, it is replied that diseases which appear to be so widely different from each other as lupus of the skin, pulpy disease of the joints, and pulmonary consumption, are all caused by the action of one special irritant—the tubercle bacillus. Such being the case, it is certainly open to debate whether the various kinds of cancer may not in like manner be caused by one special microbe. This, if proved, would considerably simplify the etiology of cancer, and should the theory prove to be true, it would advance us a long step on the road towards the prevention and cure of this dreaded disease.

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