

In the *Nineteenth Century*, December, 1889, the late Sir Morell Mackenzie in an article entitled, "The Dreadful Revival of Leprosy," after referring to its diffusion in Europe and America, says:—"In almost every other quarter of the globe leprosy is rife at present, and wherever it exists it seems to be slowly but surely extending its ravages. It is impossible to estimate, even approximately, the total number of lepers now dying by inches throughout the world, but it is certain they must be counted by millions. It cannot be comforting to the pride of England—the august Mother of Nations—to reflect that a very large portion of these wretched sufferers is to be found amongst her own subjects."

Sir Ranald Martin, a great authority on leprosy, states: "The dangers to Europeans arise chiefly from vaccination and from wet-nursing. I felt that very early in my career in India. I saw an English lady last year in a horrible condition (she said) from having been vaccinated from a leprosy child" ("Leprosy in British Guiana," by Dr. Hillis, p. 182).

Dr. H. W. Blanc, of New Orleans, in his report addressed to the President of the Board of Health for the State of Louisiana, November 27th, 1889, says, in his two-fold capacity of Dermatologist to the Charity Hospital and Chief Sanitary Inspector of the city, he has had unusual opportunities for the study of leprosy and vaccination. During the past eight years he had observed over sixty cases of *bonâ fide* leprosy (anaesthetic and tubercular). The disease is slowly increasing, it is inoculable and communicable by vaccination.

Surgeon-General C. R. Francis, in the *Journal of the Leprosy Investigation Committee*, No. 1, August, 1890, wrote: "I would advocate an investigation into the effects of vaccination, there being some who are still dubious on this point, though the statement made two or three years ago by Professor Gairdner on the subject would seem to be conclusive in favour of vaccination as a factor."

Dr. Roger G. S. Chew, of Calcutta, who has devoted fourteen years to the study of leprosy in India and other countries, furnishes in his pamphlet on leprosy a table of the results of his investigations into the causation of 1,034 cases which have come under his treatment. Of these, he says, insanitation is responsible for 105 cases, vaccination for 148, and 72 cases are due to other forms of inoculation.

Dr. A. Mitra, Chief Medical Officer, Kashmir, says: "I have on three occasions searched for bacilli. In one instance I found them in lymph from a vaccinated leper" (*American Journal of Medical Sciences*, July, 1891).

Before the Select Vaccination Parliamentary Committee in 1871, Dr. Hall Bakewell, formerly Vaccinator-General of Trinidad, said, in reply to Question 3564, "Have you had experience of any case in which leprosy has been introduced by vaccination?" "I have seen several cases in which it seemed to be the only explanation. I have a case now under treatment, of the son of a gentleman from India who has contracted leprosy, both the parents being of English origin. I saw the case of a child last year, who, though a creole of the Island of Trinidad, is born of English parents, and is a leper, and there is no other cause to which it is attributable. Sir Ranald Martin, who is a great authority on these points, agreed with me that the leprosy arose from vaccination."

If space were allowed I could cite numerous other testimonies. Those who wish to pursue this enquiry should peruse a volume by Mr. William Tebb entitled, "The Crudescence of Leprosy and its Causation," 412 pages. London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co.

Yours faithfully,

JAMES R. WILLIAMSON.

[We publish this letter because it is our invariable rule to afford a fair hearing to both sides. We do not agree with our correspondent, and he clearly has not proved his case. If he were correct, England, as the best vaccinated country, ought to be the most overcrowded with lepers.—ED.]

SKIMMED MILK IN INFIRMARIES.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—In the last issue of the *British Medical Journal* a correspondent says:—"Knowing the deep and practical interest you take in the reform of our workhouse infirmaries, I know I need offer no apology for troubling you. For many years, nothing but skimmed milk has been supplied to the inmates of our workhouse infirmary. The cream is taken off and used by the officers of the house, either as cream or after being converted into butter. As a member of the Board I am anxious to have this state of things altered, but I am at once told that skimmed milk furnishes all the nutriment required. Further, I may say that the milk is sometimes twenty-four hours old when used in the Infirmary and is at times sour, but the inmates must either consume it or have nothing. May I venture to ask, as the result of your large experience, whether you know of any other workhouse infirmary where skimmed milk only is supplied, and whether you consider this is a proper state of things to exist, and one that the medical inspector of the Local Government Board would approve of?"

In the course of the letter mention is made that "the cream is taken off and used by the officers of the house," &c. Now, madam, we are accustomed to reading of things of this kind being done by Poor Law officials and considering the status of some of these officers, we can hardly be surprised that such should be the case. But it has long been a matter of personal shame to me that in many of our Hospital wards the same thing is done. I am speaking after due consideration and well knowing the retorts that may be made, and the discredit that may attach to my experience. In my several years of Hospital life beginning in one of the most important Training Schools in London, I have been horrified to see the matter-of-course way in which the patients' milk was skimmed to provide cream for "Sister's afternoon tea." I have known the small jug of cream taken in daily to Sister either by the ward-maid or the Staff-Nurse, and the Sister has asked no questions and pursued no investigations as to its source, knowing only too well that the cream which went to enrich her afternoon beverage, meant so much impoverishment to the diet of the sick people for whose welfare she was responsible.

Of course I have known Sisters, high minded and honourable, who would have disgustedly refused to be parties to such proceedings, but alas! I have known only too many who appeared to have no pride in the matter. How many times have I not heard the matter talked over by the patients and doubtless retailed with many exaggerations outside the Hospital gates, to the detraction of our honour as Nurses.

Truly yours,

A SELF-RESPECTING NURSE.

[We believe and hope that our correspondent's experience was unique.—ED.]

"A NURSE'S IDEAL."

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—I have been attending a good many of the meetings held in connection with the British Medical Association, and have been fired with an enthusiastic hope that we of the Nursing profession will soon establish and hold some such annual conference, or professional parliament, at which we can read papers, hold debates, and carry on conferences on the ethics of our work.

I am very much interested in the future of the Matrons' Council, and hope that in time it will lead to my ideal being carried out.

I could not help feeling the strength of the bond of union and sympathy which weld medical men together, and I do not see why we Nurses should be behind them in the power of cohesion.

Some of the discussions in the ethical department were of practical and keen interest, one paper especially on the "Sweating of the Profession by Friendly Societies," where these latter were described as "lay associations which en-

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