

grapple with the expected outbreak of plague during the coming winter. Experience has taught that segregation of the sick is out of the question, evacuation of dwellings, even in villages, can only be partial, and disinfection is practically useless. Major Dyson, Sanitary Commissioner for Bengal, says, in an official report with regard to disinfection, "no marked effect on the progress of the disease followed it," and, again, "disinfection cannot prevent fresh infection," and "does not confer personal immunity nor can it mitigate the severity of an attack." He thinks that inoculation "will ultimately be found to be the only satisfactory way of dealing with the plague in future." The Punjab Government now proposes to offer universal voluntary inoculation, and arrangements are to be made to perform 6,500,000 inoculations.

A Government Commission, which will probably be composed of State engineers, doctors, mine managers, miners, and an explosives expert, is to be appointed to inquire into the causes of miners' phthisis at Johannesburg. The respirator is being submitted to a practical test, and important information is being obtained.

We regret to record the death of Mr. R. Goffton Salmond, the indefatigable Secretary of the British Home and Hospital for Incurables. His organising and executive powers were of a high order, and during his tenure of office, and largely owing to his ability and energy, the new Home at Streatham has been built, and the number of pensioners greatly increased.

A Master in Medicine.

By the death of Professor Virchow the medical world is deprived of a great leader; his two great achievements were the detection of the cellular activity which is at the foundation of all physiological processes, and the classification of a group of new growths on a natural histological basis. He came prominently into notice in 1848, as a member of a Government Commission sent to investigate a typhus epidemic in Silesia caused by famine. He afterwards issued an impassioned report of the whole situation, and the episode had a powerful effect upon his subsequent career. Thereafter he was a pronounced democrat, and his unmodified expression of his extreme political views led to his removal from the Rectorate of Berlin University. He was, however, subsequently and triumphantly reinstated. In the Berlin Municipal Council he was a strong force as a hygienic reformer. He also represented a Berlin constituency for many years in the Reichstag, in the course of which he had many passages at arms with Bismarck, who was once so provoked that he challenged him to a duel. Notwithstanding the unpalatable character of his political views to the authorities, he was held in universal veneration not only for the value of his services to science and humanity, but for his personal characteristics of noble simplicity and single-minded devotion to truth.

A few years ago he declared the secret of his long life (he died in his eighty-first year) to be "the regular change between working and rest, not only in the alternation of the action of the different organs, but equally in the activity of the different powers of the same organ."

Review.

TRANSACTIONS OF THE BRITISH CONGRESS ON TUBERCULOSIS.

The Transactions of the British Congress on Tuberculosis for the Prevention of Consumption have, this week, been placed in the hands of subscribers.

The editors are to be congratulated on the manner of publication, the division into four volumes making the Transactions convenient to handle and read. The great majority of the French and German speeches and papers have translations appended for those who cannot read them in the original, and there is a fairly comprehensive index to each volume.

It will be remembered that the work of the Congress was divided into four sections—State and Municipal, Medical, Pathological, and Veterinary. In addition, there were five general meetings and a banquet. The task, therefore, of editing these volumes can have been no light one.

Vol. I. of the Transactions contains lists of the members of the Congress and reports of the general meetings, edited by the Hon. Secretary General. Here we find Dr. Koch's speech throwing doubt on the communicability of bovine tuberculosis to man, and the no less famous reply by Professor M'Fadyean. In Vol. II. (Report of the State Section, edited by its Hon. Secretary) special attention may be drawn to the handbills, circulars, and placards issued by the Manchester Health Authorities and the Boston (U.S.A.) Health Department on precautions against the communication of consumption, the danger of spitting in workshops, public-houses, and elsewhere, and the destruction of expectoration.

The papers on ventilation, the danger of dirt and dust, and the necessity of disinfection of dwellings after their occupancy by tuberculous persons are of interest to every district nurse.

"The prevention of tuberculosis in childhood" is a national question of grave importance. We observe in this connection the demand for "more outdoor instruction and more outdoor play"; the remonstrance against the prevalent habit of enveloping a baby's face in a "thick, almost impermeable veil," and an appeal for the proper and regular use of the bath and soft Turkish towel from the first weeks of infant life.

Vol. III. (edited by the Secretaries of the Medical and Pathological Sections) is perhaps the most interesting to nurses, containing, as it does, the discussions on Sanatoria, Drs. Symes Thompson, J. E. Squire and Vicary Snow all bearing testimony to the necessity for the discipline of the nursing home and the sanatorium in inculcating good habits and a hygienic mode of life in patients of all classes. Dr. Snow also laid stress upon the fact that as regards infection "no place is so safe as a well-conducted consumption hospital."

The interest of Vol. IV. for non-veterinary readers lies in the discussion on the advisability of destroying tubercular cattle and the precautions suggested in the use of meat and milk.

These four volumes may be said to represent not only the opinions of the leading scientists of the age as to the possibility and means of preventing tuberculosis, but also the sum total of the knowledge at the present day of the disease, its causation, treatment, and likelihood of cure.

H. T.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)