

## Annotations.

### DISEASE INCIDENTAL TO DUTY.

The medical report of the Berlin Fire Brigade which has recently been issued affords striking proof of the risks to health which are sustained by firemen in the discharge of their duty. Of the entire staff of 850 men 580 were medically treated during the year 1901. Ninety-four were treated for derangement of the digestive organs occasioned by severe cold and by the haste with which nourishment had frequently to be taken. Colds contracted while on active duty also caused fifty-seven cases of muscular rheumatism, and twelve cases of affections of the ears. Sixty-six cases of acute smoke-poisoning were also recorded, and thirty-four cases of complaints of the nervous system. The latter were the most difficult to overcome, and accounted for the largest proportion of men retiring on pensions. One hundred and one men received what the report calls "mechanical injuries" during the year. Of the men medically treated during the year 467 were discharged as completely healed, fifty retired on pensions, and three died.

It would be interesting if some statistics could be obtained as to the injuries to health sustained by various classes of nurses in the discharge of their duty. Take, for instance, those engaged in midwifery nursing. They often have broken rest for nights in succession, and, night calls being always emergency ones, they are usually out of bed and on their way to the case within ten minutes of the call, having hastily swallowed some light refreshment. After a quick walk, often through cold, snow, or rain, they enter a small cottage, with probably a big fire in the bedroom where their work lies, and get thoroughly heated, and then, the case being over, they return through the cold streets again, and back to bed—to sleep if they can. How many cases of digestive derangement—occasioned by severe cold and the haste with which nourishment is taken—of muscular rheumatism, and complaints of the nervous system occur in their ranks as a consequence, remains, so far, unrecorded.

### GOLD MINERS' PHTHISIS.

The Chamber of Mines at Johannesburg has offered three prizes for the best practical suggestions and devices for the prevention or diminution of miners' phthisis. The causes of the disease are not definitely known, but it is

supposed that it is due chiefly to the inhalation of fine dust given off during machine-drilling operations.

The special points to be taken into consideration by competitors are :—(1) The applicability of the device or the apparatus to the existing system of machine drilling; and (2) the practical demonstration of the device or apparatus. Papers accompanied by the plans, models, or apparatus of the devices suggested will be receivable at the offices of the Chamber of Mines, Post-box 809, Johannesburg, up to February 15th, 1903, or at the London agents of the Chamber, Messrs. Barsdorf and Co., Wool Exchange, Coleman Street, E.C., up to January 15th, 1903. The awards offered are :—First prize, £500 and a gold medal; second prize, £250; third prize, £100. The effect of the competition should be to stimulate research into the cause of this dread disease.

### THE TREATMENT OF CONSUMPTION.

Germany, with its customary thoroughness, is taking vigorously in hand the problem of the prevention of consumption. Out of the total 56,000,000 inhabitants of the country, 14,000,000 are required by Government to contribute to the Workmen's Insurance Fund. By this means the State has secured capital to the amount of about £50,000,000. At the expense of the fund thus created the State has power to send to sanatoria cases of consumption in an early and curable stage.

These sanatoria, in all of which the open-air treatment is adopted, cast a net over the whole country for catching those afflicted with tuberculosis. In connection with the nursing of the patients, help is given by the Red Cross Society, and various women's organisations.

Measures have also been taken to deal with the prevention of the disease, and the heads of schools in all the Federated States are ordered to give special attention to the course of instruction given as to the best means of preventing the spread of tuberculosis.

Interesting points will be discussed at the coming meeting of the International Central Bureau for the Prevention of Tuberculosis, which has been summoned to meet in Berlin next week, which many eminent physicians from other countries are expected to attend. During the conference there will be an exhibition, of materials relating to the prevention of consumption, in the Prussian Parliament House. There are advantages in a fatherly government.

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