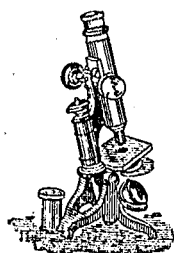


Medical Matters.

THE NASAL TREATMENT OF ASTHMA.



Dr. P. Watson Williams, who advocates in the *British Medical Journal* the nasal treatment of asthma under certain conditions, discusses the statement made by Dr. Francis, of Brisbane, that in 402 cases treated essentially by cauterising the septum nasi complete relief resulted in 194, while in twenty-one only there was no improvement.

Dr. Francis arrived at the conclusion, which he brought before the Clinical Society of London, that "some part of the nasal apparatus had a controlling influence upon the respiratory centre, and there was in the nose, as it were, an agency through which the afferent impulses must pass."

With this statement Dr. Williams thinks many will agree. He also asserts that the arterial supply to the mucous membrane of the nose is controlled by vasomotor nerves from Meckel's ganglion, and is under the control of the vasomotor centres in the medulla, where there is probably a connection with the nuclei of the vagus through association fibres, a physiological connection which has an important bearing on the pathology of various neuroses, as, for instance, the cases of asthma associated with nasal disease. If on the application of cocaine solution to the nasal mucous membrane the asthmatic attack is aborted or obviously relieved, Dr. Williams believes there is justification for saying to the patient that it is highly probable that local treatment of the intra-nasal abnormalities will result in considerable relief, and possibly cure, but whether the relief will be of long standing or the cure permanent cannot be foretold.

Dr. Williams, however, holds that, though the above measures exercise a controlling influence on the unstable pneumogastric centres, this influence is only temporary, unless general hygienic and tonic measures are also adopted, and that while nasal treatment in asthma is often beneficial, and the relief thus obtained affords an opportunity for discontinuing anti-spasmodic and sedative remedies, which are at best palliative, and which always leave the patient's nervous system in a more unstable condition, yet the adoption of intra-nasal cauterisation as the panacea for paroxysmal asthma would be deplorable.

HISTORY OF CHILDREN BORN DURING MOTHERS' INSANITY.

In the *Lancet*, recently, Dr. A. F. Tredgold publishes the results of an interesting research undertaken at three of the London County Asylums with the object of ascertaining the mental and physical development of children born whilst the mother was insane.

Although 121 cases were originally examined, it was not possible to obtain reliable information in all the requisite data in more than thirty-eight cases, the children's subsequent histories being traced to at least two years and onwards, and accuracy as to family inheritance being verified as far as possible.

Of the thirty-eight children, thirteen were alive and of good mental and physical development, twenty-five had died or were mentally affected, the majority (twenty-two) dying before the expiration of the first year, showing a mortality twice as great as that of the average infantile mortality in the most thickly populated parts of London.

The insanity of the mothers was of various types—mania, melancholia, delusional insanity, general paralysis, and primary amentia, and no connection could be drawn between the variety of mental disease and the condition of the child. Dr. Tredgold gives exact figures which indicate that the degree of morbid inheritance as instanced in insanity occurring in the mother only or her sisters and brothers appears to have a less baneful influence than when the heredity could be traced to one or two antecedent generations, and when heredity could be traced on the father's side as well. That where strong morbid inheritance exists the vitality of the child is so much impaired as to result in idiocy or extermination, whilst the type of insanity in the mother and its curability appear to have no effect on the child.

DEATH FOLLOWING THE FLAG.

It is said that the epidemic of plague which has been raging in Odessa was conveyed in the folds of a flag. One of the crew of an Austrian vessel was interred in the Catholic cemetery. An Austrian flag was hoisted over the grave, and at the conclusion of the service was carried in turn by two seamen, who on their way back to the vessel entered various public-houses. Both men subsequently died of plague, and the disease was developed in every house they entered with the fatal flag, in the folds of which the bacilli of plague were evidently carried.

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