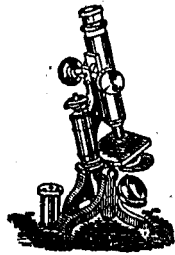


## Medical Matters.

### CANCER FROM CLAY PIPES.



The *Practitioner* for May is a special number, and is devoted to malignant diseases of the mouth. Among the contributors are Sir Thornley Stoker, Mr. Walter Whitehead, Mr. Henry T. Butlin, Mr. Jonathan Hutchinson, jun., Mr. E. W. Roughton, and other medical authorities. Sir Thornley Stoker writes on "Cancer on the Lips," and here is an extract:—"The use of the pipe is the exciting cause of lip-cancer in almost every case. The disease is rarely found in non-smokers. The few cases of epithelioma of the lips which I have seen in women were all in peasants who smoked. The great bulk of the cases of this class in the Richmond Hospital come from the more remote parts of Ireland. In these districts the short hot clay pipe is still smoked; while in Dublin, and in regions closer to the cities, where the briar-root pipe is in use, cancer of the lips is not nearly so common. If further evidence is necessary in this direction it may be found in the fact that patients can nearly always tell you that the cancer has appeared on the side on which they use their pipes." Sir Thornley Stoker notes the freedom of women from cancer of the lip. He has operated on over 350 cases, and has seen many others, and all were males except three. These three were West of Ireland peasants who smoked assiduously.

### YAWS.

As it is daily becoming more important for English practitioners to study tropical diseases, it is essential that medical journalists and specialists should watch and record any progress made in the study of such diseases. A short editorial note appearing in the *Polyclinic* (December, 1902) announces that "there will probably be no further serious dispute that yaws, parangi, &c., are identical with syphilis, and depend upon race and climate for their supposed peculiarities," and it is claimed that this satisfactory conclusion has been worked out in the committee room of the *Polyclinic*. Naturally the first idea that occurs to one is, why should any very difficult medical problem be settled in any committee room? The most natural places to settle such a point would be

by the bedside and in the scientific laboratories and dermatological societies' meetings. Perhaps the simplest way of indicating to our readers that this question is by no means settled—the authority of the *Polyclinic* notwithstanding—is to quote what is said by Drs. Hyde and Montgomery (1900) on the Pathology and Bacteriology of Yaws:—"The disease is caused by a specific microbe—a rod-shaped bacillus—occurring singly and also in couplets and triplets, and being about  $2\ \mu$  in length and  $0.5\ \mu$  in breadth. It is readily cultivated in nutrient jelly, and is capable of transference, with production of yaws, not only upon the skin of a man, but also upon the surface of the lower animals, especially that of a cat."

Not only does yaws differ essentially from syphilis in its pathology, but, as we should expect, its treatment is said to be much simpler; it is local and anti-parasitic. The very appearance of the skin in yaws suggests a superficial epidermal affection, primarily and essentially so. The general eruption of syphilis is essentially sub-epidermal.

### "RAT FLEAS" AND THE PLAGUE.

The discovery has been made in the Bombay Plague Laboratory that the flea plays an important part in the dissemination of plague. According to the *Calcutta Englishman*, it has been placed beyond doubt that the "rat flea" becomes infected with the bacillus. When the plague-infected rat dies the fleas leave it and attach themselves to other rats, or, failing them, human beings. The experiments at Bombay have shown that plague-infected rats biting a healthy rat convey the disease to it, and it is a strong scientific surmise that a human being would become infected likewise. It looks as if in the scientific chain of evidence of plague infection that the "rat flea" is the missing link, and it endows that unpleasant insect with tragic possibilities.

### THE TEETH IN LARYNGOLOGY, RHINOLOGY, AND OTOTOLOGY.

In the *Journal of the American Medical Association* for January 31st, 1903, appeared a paper by Dr. K. W. Baldwin, on "The Teeth as a Cause of Pathological Conditions in the Throat, Nose and Ear." The author gives illustrative cases, including sinus disease, tonsillitis, peritonsillitis and permanent aural damage following otitis media. The paper is, in the main, a plea for the association of dentistry with rhinology, otology, and laryngology in clinical work.

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