

Medical Matters.

THE CARRIAGE OF INFECTION BY FLIES.



Dr. R. M. Buchanan, at a recent meeting of the Glasgow Medico-Chirurgical Society, read a paper, reported in the *Lancet*, on the Carriage of Infection by Flies. Flies caught in a typhoid fever ward were placed in Petri capsules containing lactose neutral red crystal violet agar and allowed to walk about. Abundant coli-form organisms developed, but no bacillus typhosus. Other flies were placed in capsules smeared with typhoid stools and transferred to the culture media; one or two colonies of bacillus typhosus developed among an exuberant flora. Flies were caught when walking over the carcasses of two pigs dead from swine fever. In one plate the bacillus was identified. Similar experiments on the carcasses of animals dead from anthrax yielded abundant growths of the bacillus anthracis. One cubic centimetre of bouillon, used to wash the surface of an agar plate contaminated by a fly, which had walked over a smear of tuberculous sputum, was injected intra-peritoneally into a guinea-pig. Tuberculosis developed. These experiments proved that flies carried organisms on dirt adhering to their feet and emphasised the importance of protecting food from them.

RELATIONS BETWEEN GASTRIC JUICE AND INTESTINAL PUTREFACTION.

Dr. Von Tabora *Deutsches Archiv f. klinische medicin*, says that hydrochloric acid has direct bactericidal action and, aside from this, the gastric juice in general has a far-reaching influence in regulating putrefactive processes in the intestines. When the proportion of acid in the gastric juice is below normal, the putrefactive processes occur unregulated and unchecked, and if the resisting powers of the intestines are unduly taxed otherwise, trouble is liable to result.

HABITUAL CONSTIPATION.

Dr. C. F. Spivak, in an interesting paper published in the *Medical Record*, controverts many established ideas on this subject. He says: "Humanity is undergoing profound changes in regard to dietetics. We may consider the last century as a transition period. At no time in the past have the civilised nations consumed so much meat, eggs, milk, and especially sugar as during the last century, and the use of the latter article is growing from year to year. The number of predigested, prepared,

dextrinised foods is increasing daily. The high efficiency of the dental art and the greater stress laid upon the proper mastication of food, all these factors produce certain changes in the human organism, which manifest themselves by a reduced quantity of the fecal matter and less frequent need for emptying the bowels. The tendency of civilised life in general and of modern dietetics in particular, is toward the production of lesser quantities of fecal matter and less frequent intervals of evacuation."

The Nursing Conference at St. George's Hall, Mount St., W.

THE SESSION ON MENTAL NURSING.

At the last session of the Conference which took place on the evening of November 24th, Dr. Robert Jones, President of the Medico-Psychological Association, presided, and Dr. G. M. Robertson, Medical Superintendent of the Stirling District Asylum, Larbert, N.B., presented a paper on "Observations on the Introduction of Hospital Nurses to Asylums and the Hospitalisation of Asylums."

He was followed by Miss Satchwell, Matron of the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, and Member of the Matrons' Council, who holds the certificate of the Medico-Psychological Association, who presented a paper on "Mental Nursing."

In his opening remarks, the Chairman said that it had been stated that Mrs. Bedford Fenwick was not in sympathy with mental nursing, but this he knew was entirely incorrect, and ought not to be said.

There were to-day in this country 120,000 persons certified as insane and there were 20,000 persons engaged in looking after them. The greater proportion of these nurses and attendants worked in public asylums, others in private asylums, or as private nurses.

Great advances had been made of recent years in the progress of scientific knowledge with regard to the insane, and there was a corresponding improvement in the training of mental nurses. The Medico-Psychological Association was a Society composed of medical men and women engaged in the treatment of the insane, and had been instrumental in bringing about both legal and custodial improvements. It had also inaugurated an examination for asylum nurses, after courses of lectures and demonstrations in anatomy, physiology, hygiene, and sanitation, as well as a minimum of three years' personal service in asylums.

The late Government appointed a Select Committee of the House of Commons to inquire

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