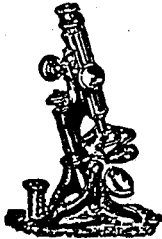


## Medical Matters.

### THE TREATMENT OF MEASLES.



Dr. E. Ward, F.R.C.S., in a contribution to the *British Medical Journal*, on Measles, says:—

Most writers seem to regard the treatment of measles as of little importance apart from the treatment of complications. This view is not correct, for I have known of epidemics in which one practitioner who takes an interest in treatment has a very low mortality, while others practising in the same district have a high mortality. This cannot be altogether a matter of chance.

Every practitioner knows the drugs which are usually given in measles, but it is sometimes forgotten that there are three lines of treatment for every disease.

First, there is *physical treatment*; and it is after this that hospital training generally stops; the treatment I mean by rest in bed, warmth, local applications, and by drugs.

Secondly, there is *mental treatment*, at present largely in the hands of the Christian Scientists. Means are taken to give the patient a suitable confidence in himself and in his medical adviser, and to give him a suitable hopefulness.

Thirdly, *social treatment*. It is necessary to create a suitable social atmosphere around the patient. The relatives must have confidence in the doctor; they must believe that he thoroughly understands the case, and that he is doing all that can possibly be done for the patient.

With children there is comparatively little mental treatment required, but social treatment is very necessary; and it is only by recognising this, and by strict attention to this line of treatment, that it is possible to get instructions carried out properly.

Poor mothers are often very careless with children suffering from measles, for they regard the complaint as trivial; and it requires much eloquence to persuade them to take more care and keep the children warm. The equanimity that Osler preaches is an excellent general attitude for the practitioner; but everyone must be prepared to lay this aside and use such means of persuasion as may occur to him. One practitioner had such a difficulty in persuading the mothers in a certain colliery village to take reasonable care of their children during a measles epidemic, that he told them he would sign no death certificate

if any child died, as it would be the mother's fault. The threat of an inquest was the most effective means of persuasion he could find, and for the children's sake he was certainly justified in using this means.

### THE FEEBLE-MINDED IN ONTARIO.

Dr. Helen MacMurchy, of Toronto, who is known to nurses as the Editor of *The Canadian Nurse*, has presented to the Hon. W. J. Hanna, Provincial Secretary, a most interesting report on the feeble-minded in Ontario, which has been printed by order of the Legislative Assembly for Ontario. The information contained in the report is summarised under the following heads: (1) The care given to the feeble-minded in Ontario at the present time, (2) the work they can do, (3) the degree of education they possess, (4) their history in relation to maintenance in Government or charitable institutions, *i.e.*, what they have cost the Province, (5) their offspring.

In regard to work, a feeble-minded person can do almost any ordinary work that a normal person can do *if under constant supervision*, but to do this the feeble-minded person must be trained in the only possible way, *i.e.*, through manual training and education. According to the degree of education they possess many can read and write, but never really well; an hour or two a day is long enough for school lessons, and the three R's must necessarily be the limit. It is time, strength, and money wasted to attempt to store a mind when there is no mind to store. Of the total number of 1,760 feeble-minded in the Province of Ontario, only 94 are not reported as having been inmates of Government or charitable institutions. Of the others, a good many have been in and out of such institutions all their troubled and troubling lives. As regards the offspring of feeble-minded persons, Dr. MacMurchy states there is very grave doubt as to whether the children of a feeble-minded mother are ever normal mentally. An illustration of a neglected feeble-minded girl and her offspring shows that to a terrible extent the mental characteristics of the mother are repeated in her three children.

Dr. MacMurchy believes that the only satisfactory and thorough method of dealing with the problem of the feeble-minded is to recognise mental defect in children, to train them in so far as they can be taught and trained, and then to give them all through life the care and supervision that will enable them to earn at least a part of their living, and protect them from the crimes and evils that threaten them in the outside world.

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