

some trifling ailment, the trouble finding equivalent expression in the nursing's loss of weight; (3) a marked decline of the nursing's weight, consequent on the wet-nurse hearing of her own infant's death.

TUBERCULOSIS QUESTIONS.

Tuberculosis questions were prominent at the Conference. Dr. Josiah Bradley assured us that recently it was stated in the Birmingham City Council that 14 per cent. of the milk sent into Birmingham contains the infection of tuberculosis, and that other towns send in similar reports. Much stress was laid by speakers upon the value of education in preventive measures as regards phthisis. Leicester and Newport were quoted as centres giving a training of one month in their respective sanatoria, not from the point of view of curing the patient, but with the object of so training him in cleanliness, in the value of fresh air and sunshine, and, above all, in the efficient disposal of the great source of immediate contagion, the sputum, as to make him innocuous as a source of infection in the first instance; and, secondly, to turn him into a valuable ally in the dissemination of the truth about phthisis amongst others. Dr. Wellesley Harris' popular lecture presented the question from a most interesting point of view. Many of us speak familiarly of the tubercle bacillus. But we form no conscious idea to ourselves of what we mean. The bacillus tuberculosis is a vegetable parasite, so tiny that in one small mass of sputum one hundred million can lie. Its immense power for harm when dried and floating in the air as dust is practically inconceivable. When the tubercle bacillus invades the lungs it enters the air cells, and, given a fitting host, *e.g.*, a subject of lowered vitality, the small growth called tubercle is formed. This enlarges until owing to pressure and the consequent cutting off of nutrition, the inner part breaks down into pus. Then one of two things may happen—the process may stop here, and calcification, or hardening, take place. This is, unfortunately, rare; more usually, the whole breaks down, forming holes and cavities in the lung. Tubercle of the lung we know as phthisis; tubercle of the brain as meningitis; tubercle of the skin as lupus. As to the bones and joints, more especially in children, we believe that the bacillus exists in the blood frequently, apparently harmless. But let the child fall and injure the knee or hip, the capillaries pour out bacilli, and thus destruction is caused. It is interesting to note that, taking the deaths from tuberculosis for the past 40 years, England, which started with the highest

number, now has the lowest number; Scotland has improved; but Ireland, which started with the lowest figure of the three, now holds the unenviable position of highest. Alcohol is one of the greatest causes of consumption, by reducing the vitality of the body. Perhaps we do not all know the naïf but pregnant question asked by the King at the opening of a National Congress of Hygiene—preventable diseases were under discussion—"Why," said his Majesty, "if diseases are preventable, are they not prevented?" Yes, why, indeed, nurses? The answer comes home to many of us out of our own experience.

Dr. Jane Walker, in one of the best papers of the Congress, emphasised, from her own experience, the necessity for not creating the tubercle bacillus loafer. She, like Dr. Paterson, of the Brompton Sanatorium, at Frimley, is a profound believer in the power of work over both the mind and the body of the consumptive patient. "A long illness is a very demoralising thing," she told us. Some of us know it by sad personal trial, and those who do not, have seen it exemplified in their patients. She advocates gardening for consumptives on the French intensive system. Her results are more cheering than is usual in the later cases. Almost complete recovery in cases so bad as to demand from 18 to 21 months' sanatorium treatment, is a triumph. And, what is more, *she is making her system pay*. Carpentering, glazing, French mat-making, mending, packing, are all adjuncts to the garden, and can all be done by the patients themselves. "We are confident," she says, "that in the method . . . the real solution lies. Work that they can do, and that is well paid, opens up a vista of satisfactory, highly-remunerated employment for them which has previously been unknown, except to the very limited few. This plan, moreover, is helpful to the great problem of returning the people to the land."

What a prospect for our poor, often hopeless consumptives!

A. L. B.

A Happy Solution.

We are glad to note that the Belfast Board of Guardians, whilst complying with the orders of the Irish Local Government Board to cancel the appointment of Miss Jack as Superintendent of the Infirmary, have appointed her Matron of the Fever Hospital under their jurisdiction. We hope Miss Jack will find congenial work at her new post.

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