

Medical Matters.

THE FUTURE OF TROPICAL MEDICINE.

Professor Ronald Ross, as newly-elected President, delivered an address before the Society of Tropical Medicine recently, at a meeting at which Sir Patrick Manson, K.C.M.G., presided, dealing with the future of tropical medicine. The subject, he said, as reported by the *British Medical Journal*, was a wide one, and required comprehensive and philosophic treatment. He would, in the first place, emphasise the desirability of a careful study of the national history and decadence of the kingdoms and empires of the Old World, and the effects which had been exercised on the prosperity or decay of nations by endemic disease. The work of Mr. W. H. Jones and Drs. Ellett and Withington on the influence of malaria on Greek history was known to them all; and it was only a summary of what had occurred in every part of the world. The physical deterioration which was now so prevalent in large tropical cities he believed was due almost entirely to helminthiasis; and there was no reason why the tropics should not produce healthy and vigorous men in the same way that they produced the strongest and finest specimens of life in the animal kingdom. The scientific history of tropical medicine had also to be carefully studied, and he thought that the publication of monographs on special subjects, and of reprints of classical papers, should receive greater attention. He had long insisted that, in the ordinary medical curriculum, parasitology and perhaps medical entomology should be taught. Diplomas issued by qualifying bodies in Great Britain certified that their holders were qualified to practise anywhere, but that claim could scarcely be justified at present. The future of tropical medicine lay to a great extent in the domain of therapeutics, and fuller research in this direction was urgently demanded. In the tropics, as at home, the housing of the poor was another burning question. It had been shown by one or two of the most advanced nations in Europe that it was possible to have cities without slums, and he was hopeful that the future would banish from their eyes the miserable sights which they now saw everywhere in the tropics. Investigation of possible improvements in the present methods of the disposal of sewage and town refuse was also urgently required; and other measures, such as the provision of wholesome water supplies, the management of wells, and the extinction of vermin in the tropics, were pressing and vital necessities. To achieve these objects sanitary organisation must be completely re-

modelled. The present deplorable condition of things was not surprising; it was only fifty years ago that sanitation on scientific lines had been undertaken at home; and in a sense great improvements had already been made in the tropics. But further advances were most urgently demanded, and it was essential that the sanitary services of practically the whole of our tropical colonies and possessions should be thoroughly organised. At the present moment the health departments resembled the units of an army which had no general; and looking at the question merely from the monetary point of view, judicious expenditure on reorganisation would pay. Let them not fall into the mistake that discovery, great or small, finished their duty; research was not a mere academical amusement consisting in the publication of elegant articles adorned with coloured plates. They had not only to teach, but to beseech, demand, and command. They were apt to take too haughty a view of their scientific work, to stand above and apart from the throng of men for whom they were working. It was for them to descend, to go personally into the battle, and fight hand to hand in order to save their fellow men from grave and imminent dangers.

Sir Patrick Manson, who presided, said that it was true they had not yet got the general public to believe the truths which had been shown to them. The fault was, perhaps, not altogether on one side, and medical men had, he thought, failed to convince, largely from lack of articulate expression and eloquence. Governments had often been blamed for their deliberation in adopting new and extensive measures of sanitation, but it must not be forgotten that circumspection had been forced on them by the mistakes of sanitary advisers. In India, for instance, millions of public money had been wasted on the supposition that cholera was an airborne disease, and if authorities now believed that the most ambitious schemes did not always mean the most rapid progress, they had abundant precedent to justify them.

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE CEREBELLUM.

Sir Victor Horsley, when delivering the Cavendish Lecture before the West London Medico-Chirurgical Society, said that the cerebellum must be regarded primarily as a sensory organ which has an important part in the correct performance of many of our "automatic" actions. Standing, walking, and running are good examples of such actions, which cannot be accurately carried out without a normal, well-balanced cerebellum. The fully developed cerebellum supplies this power unconsciously.

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