

Medical Matters.

THE PRESENCE OF 'BILHARZIA HAEMATOBIA' IN EGYPTIAN MUMMIES OF THE 20th DYNASTY [1250-1000 B.C.]

Dr. Marc Armand Ruffer, President of the Sanitary, Maritime, and Quarantine Council of Egypt, Alexandria, contributes a most interesting note on the above subject to the *British Medical Journal*, in which he says:—

Thanks to the kindness of Professor Elliot Smith, Professor Flinders Petrie, and Professor Keatinge, I have obtained several organs from mummies of the eighteenth to the twentieth dynasty, and I may state at once that such diseases as atheroma, pneumonia, renal abscesses, and cirrhosis of the liver are plainly recognisable. In the renal abscesses and in other lesions I have stained micro-organisms with methylene blue, fuchsin, haematoxylin, and even by Gram's method.

At the present time there is perhaps no disease more important to Egypt than that caused by the *Bilharzia haematobia*. So far no evidence has been produced to show how long it has existed in this country, although medical papyri contain prescriptions against one of its most prominent symptoms—namely, haematuria. The lesions of this disease are best seen in the bladder and rectum, but unfortunately these are just the two mummified organs which I have not been able to obtain so far. Nevertheless, in the kidneys of two mummies of the twentieth dynasty I have demonstrated in microscopic sections a large number of calcified eggs of *Bilharzia haematobia*, situated, for the most part, among the straight tubules. Although calcified, these eggs are easily recognisable and cannot be mistaken for anything else. I may add that I showed some of my sections to Professors Looss and Ferguson, whose paramount authority on such a subject cannot be disputed, and both confirmed my diagnosis.

I have examined microscopically the kidneys of six mummies. The kidneys of two were apparently healthy; the left kidney of another was congenitally atrophied; those of the fourth contained multiple abscesses with well-staining bacteria and other lesions, which so far I have not diagnosed; those of the fifth and sixth showed bilharzia eggs, and the latter had other lesions as well, which, owing to the shrunken state of the organ, I am unable to define accurately as yet.

Renal disease, therefore, was not infrequent among Egyptians living over three thousand years ago.

The method by which mummified tissues can be prepared has already been described by Dr. Ruffer.

THE MEASLES MICROBE.

The *Medical Review* of Munich announces an important discovery by a German doctor, Professor Sittler, who claims to have discovered the measles microbe. According to the doctor the microbe develops in the throat, the nose, the buccal glands, and the bronchial tubes. The treatment accordingly will be strictly internal with the object of destroying the microbe.

X-RAYS AND DIABETES.

The *Globe* reports that at a meeting of the Société Médicale des Hôpitaux Dr. Menetrier gave an interesting account of the effect of the Röntgen Rays upon diabetic patients when applied to the hepatic region. The effect is most marked in the more severe form of the disease, with general debility and loss of flesh. In these cases the application of the X-rays is followed by a considerable increase in the glycosuria within the next 24 hours, and sometimes for several subsequent days, and a fall in the number of red blood corpuscles. Thus in one case the amount of sugar excreted in 24 hours rose from 1,000 to 1,600 grammes, and the number of red corpuscles fell from 3,470,000 to 1,170,000, or a loss of 2,300,000 corpuscles per cubic millimetre. Later the glycosuria diminishes and the red corpuscles increase.

CEREBRAL EVOLUTION THE PHYSICAL BASIS OF PSYCHIC DISTURBANCES AND SOCIAL DISCORD

Dr. I. O. Allen, in the *Dietetic and Hygienic Gazette*, contends that to make progress in the study of mental phenomena every explanation that explains must have a physical basis, for every psychic state has its physical basis, and there is evidence that much of that which is rated as psychopathic is but the peculiar expression of peculiar brains, for whenever the mental expression is in harmony with the physical state, no matter what that physical state may be, that mental expression is natural and normal to that particular state. For every anatomical, and physiological difference of brain matter, there is a corresponding difference in mental expression; and these *mental expressions must be considered normal so long as they are true to the physical state*, even if the physical state is abnormal. This would indicate that our psychic disturbances and social discords are not due to a mental pathology, but rather to cerebral states and our want of knowledge concerning the brain, its capacities, faculties, and functions. If we know anything we know that different brains differ physically in capacity, faculty, and function, and must of necessity differ in mental expressions; and that the highly organised brains have evolved from primitive brains.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)