

Medical Matters.

ON PREVENTIVE MEDICINE.

THE MEDICINE OF THE FUTURE.

Sir James Barr, M.D., LL.D., F.R.C.P., F.R.S.E., who this month delivered the Address on Medicine at the annual meeting of the Canadian Medical Association, which is published in full in the *British Medical Journal*, said many wise and interesting things. Referring to the process of vicarious charity, at the expense of the medical profession, which, he says, has gradually grown so that in the present day at least a fourth of the population of England receives free medical advice, he asks: "Why should all this charity be necessary? Why should such a large proportion of the population be pauperised?" and proceeds: "It would seem to me that it is because we are producing an inferior breed, because we are not raising up a healthy, independent race. The struggle for existence is not merely an individual question, but it is becoming more and more a national question, and the nation which produces the finest race is sure to win in the long run. As Professor Arthur Thomson says, what children usually die of is their parents, and what a nation dies of is lack of men.

"In future medical men must not be content with treating the diseases of the community, they must point out the lines along which the nation is to be improved by encouraging the multiplication of the fit, and controlling the increase of the unfit. The public must be taught that the health of the nation is its most valuable asset, and that the maintenance of health is of much more importance than the treatment of disease. This departure in placing physiological processes before pathology involves a higher form of medical education than that prevalent in our medical schools of to-day—an education in which only men of the highest intelligence should take part."

In regard to the campaign against tuberculosis it is somewhat startling to read the opinion of Dr. D. W. Hunter, of the Royal Albert Asylum of Idiots, quoted by Sir James Barr:—

"Until we have some restriction in the marriage of undesirables the elimination of the tubercle bacillus is not worth aiming at. It forms a rough, but, on the whole, a very serviceable check on the survival and propagation of the unfit. This world is not a hot-house, and a race which owed its survival to the fact that the tubercle bacillus had ceased to exist would, on the whole, be a race hardly worth

surviving. Personally I am of opinion, and I think such opinion will be shared by most medical men who have been behind the scenes, and have not allowed their sentiments to blind them, that if to-morrow the tubercle bacillus were non-existent, it would be nothing short of a national calamity. We are not yet ready for its disappearance."

Referring to the fact that it is claimed "we know that the disease is not hereditary," the lecturer said:—

"We know nothing of the kind, although we are constantly having it dinned into our ears by medical men who ought to know better. We know that the tubercle bacillus, which is a necessary element in the production of tuberculosis, is not transmitted in the germ plasma, but the long, narrow, flat chest, delicate lungs, and feeble resisting power to the tubercle bacillus and to many other germs are undoubtedly inherited, just as much so as the shape of your nose or the colour of your hair. Medical men who are shutting their eyes to the truth, and encouraging matrimony and the propagation of the species by mental and physical weaklings are incurring a fearful racial responsibility, and their action should be condemned in no uncertain language."

THE MICRO-ORGANISM OF WHOOPING COUGH.

This organism, says the *International Hospital Record*, is a small, short bacillus, with rounded cells. It stains feebly and shows polar granules with carbol methylene blue. It decolorizes by Gram's method. It is non-motile, aerobic, and grows very slowly and feebly when first isolated, and only on a specially devised medium, composed of glycerin, potato, gelatin, and blood. But after several generations it will grow fairly well on other media, and does not require hemoglobin, unlike the influenza bacillus, which it somewhat resembles.

FLIES AS CARRIERS OF INFECTION.

The Local Government Board has issued reports made on the results of experimental investigations designed to prove the extent to which infection may be carried by flies. Experiments were made to measure the possible range of flight of flies, and further observations were recorded on the ways in which artificially infected flies carry and distribute pathogenic and other bacteria. The experiments and observations quoted in the report show definitely that artificially infected flies, both house-flies and blow-flies, are capable of infecting fluids, such as milk and syrup, on which they feed and into which they fall. In the case of the house-fly, infected with certain micro-organisms,

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