

MEDICAL MATTERS.

THE CAUSES OF DISEASE.

The President of the Local Government Board has authorized the following special researches to be paid for out of the annual grant voted by Parliament in aid of scientific investigations concerning the causes and processes of disease:—

1. Further investigations (a) as to the distribution of tubercle bacilli in children having died between the ages of two and ten years, and the special characteristics of such bacilli; and (b) in collaboration with the General Register Office, on the incidence of different forms of tuberculosis in different parts of the country, according to age, sex, occupation, and other conditions.

2. A continuation of a research into the causes of premature arterial degeneration in man.

3. A joint investigation into the virus of Poliomyelitis.

4. A continuation of an investigation into the micro-organisms known as non-lactose fermenters occurring in the alimentary canal of infants.

5. A continuation of the investigation by Professor Nuttall, of Cambridge University, on fleas and on the range of flight of the domestic and allied flies.

SLEEPING SICKNESS RESEARCH.

According to reports received from the Commission on Sleeping Sickness working in Rhodesia it has now been proved beyond doubt that the tsetse fly known as *glossina morsitans* is a carrier of the disease.

The special significance of the proof that *glossina morsitans* as well as *glossina palpalis* is a carrier of the disease lies in the fact that, while the latter is to be found only in clearly defined and generally narrow limits in the region of water in certain parts of Africa, the former is met with throughout the continent in wide and not so well defined areas, and is, therefore, much more difficult to deal with.

A NEW LOCAL ANÆSTHETIC.

Dr. F. W. Forbes Ross describes in last week's *Lancet* a new local anæsthetic which, if injected into the part to be operated on, removes all sensation of pain for 14 days after the injection. Far from having any bad effect on the heart or other organs of the body, it is actually a tonic, and counteracts the effects of shock.

The preparation consists of a solution of quinine and urea hydrochloride, which can be easily obtained, and the effect lasts long enough

in most cases for all painful results of an operation to wear off. The action of cocaine and stovaine is fleeting.

THE DELETERIOUS EFFECTS OF CHRONIC CONSTIPATION.*

By W. ARBUTHNOT LANE, F.R.C.S. Eng.

(Concluded from page 467.)

The muscles become soft and degenerated, and the person is unable to perform any exertion without becoming quickly exhausted.

The heart muscle is influenced in the same way, the circulation becoming feeble and the extremities cold, blue, and ill-nourished. The patients feel the cold very much and in some cases they complain that they lose feeling in their legs. Their ears are also reddish blue in colour, like liver in advanced cases. This is exaggerated by a very defective respiratory capacity. These poisons seem to exert a special deleterious influence on the respiratory centre, damping down the breathing capacity of the patient, obviating thoracic respiration as much as possible and confining it to the abdominal type.

In consequence of the deficient thoracic respiration and the muscular debility, these children become round shouldered and develop lateral curves.

The patients lose fat at first slowly, but after a time very quickly. This is a most serious result. It makes the sufferers look prematurely wrinkled and aged.

It also deprives them of a padding or support which is of vital importance to them, and especially to the woman, who is at a serious mechanical disadvantage as compared to man, in that she has a relatively much longer abdomen and a much more capacious pelvis.

The removal of fat associated with the degenerative change in the muscles of the abdominal wall brings about a dropping of all the organs.

The kidneys become movable and the blood contained in their vessels is blocked by the consequent interference with its back-flow into the large vein of the abdomen. This produces much pain in the back and tenderness of the organ overgorged with blood. The dropping may produce a kink of the ureter so that urine is dammed back in the pelvis of the kidney, interfering with its function and producing pain and disease in this organ.

* Read before The Nurses' Social Union Health Conference, Bristol, 8th June, 1912.

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