

It is incredible that the nation which produced Florence Nightingale should have failed to appreciate the lessons inspired by her genius.

## MEDICAL MATTERS.

### THE CONTROL OF VENEREAL DISEASES.

Dr. Herman M. Biggs, General Medical Officer of the Department of Health of the City of New York, reporting to the Board of Health, points out, in regard to the control of venereal diseases, that the moral and social aspects of the problem do not primarily concern the sanitary authorities. Every system of administrative control of the infectious and communicable diseases must be based on the fullest information obtainable concerning the number and distribution of cases, and he demonstrates that this information can only be obtained by notification and registration. Further, that persons undesirable as hospital patients are just those who constitute the greatest menace to others if left at large, and that hospitals must therefore be provided where undesirable patients refused or discharged from other institutions will be accepted, and that, bearing in mind the interrelation of social position and public menace, the administrative control of venereal diseases, in addition to an educational campaign, may *begin* by work confined largely to the ignorant poor and the social outcast.

Dr. Herman Biggs believes that, considering the far-reaching and frequently fatal consequences of these diseases, and the misery caused by the hereditary transmission of syphilis, it is imperative something should be done by the municipal government to limit as far as possible their disastrous results. Their treatment is often tedious and prolonged. In some cases a cure never results, and many patients, after a short course of treatment, more or less interrupted by the necessities of their occupation, are apt to pass from under observation, and almost always do so as soon as their most obvious symptoms are abated.

The erection of a hospital for the treatment of these diseases will allow of their free and continuous treatment by the most approved and modern methods, methods which frequently cannot be employed in a dispensary with the usual equipment. The chances of cure will thus be greatly increased, and the amount of instruction which can be given to these patients during treatment will be of incalculable value in preventing the spread of these diseases.

## OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

### STATE SUCCESSFUL METHODS OF TREATMENT FOR CONSTIPATION.

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss Gladys Tatham, Sherwood, Roehampton Vale, Putney, S.W.

#### PRIZE PAPER.

Constipation may be treated by (1) various drugs, (2) exercises, (3) massage, (4) rectal injections, and (5) hypnotic suggestion.

The kind, and amount, of medicine is usually prescribed by the doctor, but there are a large number of well-known remedies to relieve constipation. The great danger of indiscriminate dosing is that the bowel will become accustomed to a strong irritant, and will not act spontaneously. Castor oil generally causes severe constipation, for this reason: the bowels are violently irritated by it and act quickly; afterwards the comparatively slight stimulation of the faeces passing towards the outlet of the bowel entirely fails to bring about movements of contraction in the rectum. Perhaps senna gives less reaction than most things, and a small dose of fig syrup is very useful as a mild aperient. Cascara usually causes a reaction unless taken in very moderate doses.

Exercises are very useful to overcome a sluggish condition of the bowels. They should be directed to strengthening the abdominal muscles and improving the circulation, but they ought not to be overdone, or practised without experienced direction.

Massage helps peristalsis, improves and strengthens the abdominal muscles, and frequently cures constipation if associated with a hygienic mode of life. A glass of cold water (or *boiling*) may be taken night and morning with advantage. Bulky articles of diet, such as porridge, brown bread, green vegetables, &c., should be eaten. Honey and treacle are useful also.

Rectal injections are usually given to relieve severe constipation and to evacuate hard or old faecal matter. The usual preparation for a single injection is the old-fashioned soap-and-water enema, at a temperature of 105° F. Also olive oil may be warmed, and about half a pint injected, followed in 15 minutes by the soap-and-water enema. Glycerine injections, or suppositories, are not good, because they irritate the rectum too severely and cause a reaction.

Daily irrigation of the colon with normal saline at a temperature of 100° F. is frequently

*previous page*

*next page*