

too much. I believe that in true cases of gout this is by far the most important detail to watch—not so much to place the patient on a meat-free diet, but to make sure that he does not at any time overload his stomach.

In all these cases, as indeed most diseased conditions, it is, in my opinion, of most importance to see that the patient only has three meals a day. If you make inquiry, you will be, I am sure, surprised at the number of people who never give their stomachs a rest. They are continually eating small amounts between their meals, and also taking supper just before they go to bed. This, in my opinion, is an extremely grave mistake to make: it must sooner or later break down the digestive organs. The consequences of prolonged indigestion and of intestinal putrefaction are manifold, but I am convinced that one of the most serious, and perhaps the most frequent, consequences is either gout but more usually rheumatic diseases and *Sciatica*.

All these subjects are to be carefully considered if we are to cure rheumatic diseases, and more especially *Sciatica*, and it is no easy matter when we have to try to persuade a patient to abstain from things that he has been told to take by every friend and "Tom Noddy" he meets. There is no subject that I know of which the public seem to think they know so much about as *Sciatica*, and indeed all Rheumatic conditions. You should take lots of "salt." "Eat pounds of raw celery" another will say, or do not eat rhubarb or strawberries; they create so much acid.

I need not tell you that I believe all these suggestions are pure humbug.

Now before we close I will ask you to briefly consider the question of *clothing* in cases of *Sciatica*. I am still of the opinion that linen should be worn next the skin, and I am glad to see that Dr. Luff also now advocates this form of underwear. The Belfast Irish linen mesh I think is the best, and if, as some patients seem to think is the case, it is too cold, a covering of cotton or silk can be used also. It is of great importance that a sufferer from any form of rheumatism, but especially from *Sciatica*, should be warmly clad, and the linen gives that free ventilation which is so important, and which prevents the drying of the sweat on the skin, and so leaves the patient less prone to extremes of cold and heat over the skin.

One last word. It is also of great importance to see that patients who suffer from chronic *Sciatica* have not got flat feet. I believe that the effect of all rheumatism is to weaken the ligaments around the ankle joints, and if a

person has a very flat foot they may have most obscure pains, not only, as you might expect, over the foot itself, but, what is more important, up the legs, and even referred up to the thighs. It would not do to mistake these pains for *Sciatica*.

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## OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

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DESCRIBE (a) ONE DISEASE DUE TO BACTERIA IN THE AIR, (b) ONE DISEASE DUE TO BACTERIA IN WATER AND SOIL, (c) ONE DISEASE DUE TO BACTERIA IN FOOD.

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss J. G. Gilchrist, Gilmore Place, Edinburgh.

### PRIZE PAPER.

Bacteria are intermediate bodies between the animal and vegetable kingdom. The pathogenic or disease producing organisms are extremely small in size, capable of marvellous resistance, retaining their vitality in some cases for years until called into life by coming in contact with conditions favourable for their growth and development, which is, for this particular group of organism, the various parts of the human body, which become favourable resorts for invasion when in a non-resistant state of health.

### SMALLPOX.

(a) The most dreaded air-borne disease is Smallpox, which, though now comparatively rare in this country, might assume an epidemic from an isolated case. This disease is infectious from the initial to the desquamating stage. The infection may be spread indirectly through the air, clothes, or furniture. The incubation period is about 12 days with a sudden invasion, followed by the characteristic eruption on the third day. Small shotty papules appear on the face and wrists, which on the sixth day become vesicles and on the ninth day pustules, the last-named stages being the most infectious. The face is much swollen and the eyes greatly affected, causing intense misery to the patient. The temperature is usually high, and pulse rapid, as in all fevers. The pocks usually dry up and form crusts, and until these scabs have been removed from the body, the patient is not free of infection. Smallpox hospitals are usually built as temporary structures in fairly remote and favourable surroundings as regards prevailing winds, in view of proximity to other buildings, and a prescribed area, being usually strictly fenced off, as a safeguard to others from entering into

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)