

the germs from these carriers far and wide. It was in this way probably, and by dust, that the bacilli were so fatal in South Africa. There were 57,684 cases of typhoid fever, of which 19,454 were invalided and 8,022 died. More died from the bacilli of this disease than from the bullets of the Boers. Let this terrible record impress upon them the importance of carrying out with religious care the sanitary regulations. One great advance in connection with typhoid fever had been made of late years. An attack of an infectious disease so altered the body that it was no longer susceptible to another attack of the same disease; when a person had once had scarlet fever, small-pox, and chicken-pox, he was not likely to have a second. He was immune, or had what is called immunity. Against small-pox all of them had been vaccinated—a harmless, safe, and effective measure.

THE EFFICACY OF INOCULATION.

He wished, continued Sir William Osler, to ask them to take advantage of the knowledge that the human body can be protected by vaccination against typhoid fever. Discovered through the researches of Sir Almroth Wright, the measure had been introduced successfully into our own Regular Army, into the Army of France, the United States, Japan, and Germany. The appalling incidence of typhoid fever in the volunteer troops in America during the Spanish-American War resulted largely from the wide prevalence of the disease in country districts, and the camps became infected; and because we did not then know the importance of the fly as a carrier, and other points of great moment. But in the Regular Army of the United States, where inoculation had been practised now for several years, the number of cases had fallen from 3.53 per thousand men to practically nil. In a strength of 90,646 there were in 1913 only three cases of typhoid fever. In France, the enteric rate among the unvaccinated was 168.44 per thousand, and among the vaccinated .18 per thousand. In India, where the disease had been very prevalent, the success of the measure had been remarkable. In the United States, and in France, and in some other countries this vaccination against the disease was compulsory. It was not a serious procedure; one might feel badly for twenty-four hours, and the site of inoculation would be tender, but he hoped he had said enough to prove that, in the interests of the cause, they should gladly put up with this temporary inconvenience. If the lessons of past experience count, any Expeditionary Force on the Continent had much more to fear from the bacillus of typhoid fever than from bullets and bayonets. Think, again, of South Africa, with its 57,000 cases of typhoid fever! With a million men in the field, their efficiency would be increased one-third if we could prevent enteric. It could be prevented. It must be prevented; but meanwhile, the decision was in the hands of those whom he addressed, and he knew it would be in favour of their King and country.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS.

We have received several letters from our International colleagues asking if it is likely that the great international gathering of nurses will take place next June at San Francisco. So far we have received no intimation from the United States of America, deciding to postpone it. It is certain, however, that unless this terrible War is settled more speedily than we anticipate, contributions from Europe for the International Nursing Exhibition cannot possibly be sent over on any very great scale, at the early date upon which we were invited to have them transported. On the other hand, this great nursing event is not timed to take place until eight months hence—already delegates from many countries have arranged to attend—others are saving money for the purpose, and if all this misery is at an end, and Peace either signed or within measurable distance—what a happy reunion the nurses of the world might have. Truly, nursing has no nationality, and no shadow of bitterness towards one another can possibly arise. The sick and wounded, friend or enemy, is our sacred charge, and any woman who can harbour an unkind feeling for any soldier who falls at his country's call, little appreciates either a soldier's duty or her own. For our part we have thought much, and in deep sympathy with dear Sister Agnes Karll, and our many German sisters, whose kindness and generosity to us, when as their guests in their native land, we enjoyed their boundless hospitality in 1912, that to meet them all again, in a neutral world across the Atlantic would indeed be cause for rejoicing. If Peace has come by June, 1915, the members of the German Nurses' Association will, we know, be as happy to greet us in international amity at San Francisco, as the delegates of the great British Confederation of Nurses from home and overseas, will be to greet them. And Columbia will give us all her benediction. May this be the happy consummation to our present patriotic duty.

In a letter just received by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick from Miss Annie W. Goodrich, President of the International Council of Nurses, she writes:—

Shortly after my return to New York I found a telegram from Dr. Criswell asking for instructions concerning the nursing exhibit. At an informal meeting at which Miss Dock and Miss Foley, chairman of the American Exhibit Committee, were present, it was the consensus of opinion that, owing to the War, it would be better to give up all thought of an exhibit, and I there-

previous page

next page