

of aneurism are due to it. It may produce angina pectoris in conjunction with aortic disease. In connection with the nervous system, it may attack the brain and spinal cord, causing paralysis, blindness, deafness, loss of speech and memory, mental debility, epileptiform convulsions, and many other symptoms. Late forms of syphilis are general paralysis of the insane, optic atrophy, and "tabes dorsalis," or locomotor-ataxy. It is also held to predispose to certain forms of cancer, and also tuberculosis.

The Report emphasises the fact that "everybody ought to know that no grave disease responds more readily to early and efficient treatment than syphilis, either as to complete cure or prevention of subsequent complications."

Of the after-effects of gonorrhœa, ophthalmia neonatorum is—as nurses and midwives know—the most serious. This disease—which is responsible for so much blindness—is held to be due in 70 per cent. of cases to gonorrhœa; and among 1,100 cases of blind children, 24.35 per cent. were the result of gonorrhœal ophthalmia.

It is important for nurses to remember that when infants are thus affected, the mother, nurse, or other children, are liable to be secondarily infected through touching or wiping their eyes with infected fingers or cloths. It is the duty of those in authority to warn nurses of this danger, and of nurses to guard the relatives of any such case they may be nursing from possible infection.

The economic effects of venereal disease are so serious that the full text of the Report thereon is reproduced in the "Synopsis," and also the Summary of Recommendations. We commend this "Synopsis" to the attention of our readers, together with the first Annual Report of the National Council for Combating Venereal Diseases, containing the presidential address of Lord Sydenham of Combe on its work.

The Hon. Secretaries of the National Association for Combating Venereal Diseases are Dr. Otto May and Mrs. A. C. Gotto, and the Secretary, Miss H. F. Norry.

THE FOLK LORE EXHIBITION.

Any departure from the obvious is a delight in these material days. Those who are interested in such matters and, indeed, more especially those who are not, are invited to visit the Folk Lore Exhibition at the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum, 54A, Wigmore Street, W., opened on Monday last.

The collection has been made and lent by Mr. Edward Lovett, of Croydon, who is a member of the Council of the Folk Lore Society. Mr. Lovett is an enthusiast about his hobby, and it adds much to the interest of the exhibition if he himself explains the uses and history of the various charms and amulets.

The collection would appear to the ordinary observer to belong to barbaric times, or at least to

have been found in remote parts of the country, but the astonishing fact is that the large majority has been collected in London within the past ten years.

Mr. Lovett, on a recent visit of our representative, pointed out that the collection consisted for the most part of natural objects, which were found in the homes of the very poor. But this by no means excluded the fact that there is latent superstition among the educated classes, for whom mascots and lucky charms are manufactured in the form of jewellery. In the present perilous times, he said, very few cars or aeroplanes are without a mascot.

These manufactured articles, he said, corresponded much more nearly to the symbols found in Egyptian tombs than did those natural charms found in poorer London to-day.

Slum district nurses will be acquainted with the blue bead necklaces worn under the frocks of little children as a preventive of bronchitis and sore throat. These are sold only in the very poorest shops of the poorest parts. In the same emporiums are to be found the coloured glass witch balls, "for luck," the owners of which will seldom part with them although unaware of their significance.

Perhaps the most interesting item of information was that in relation to the caul of a new-born infant. Most midwives are aware of the superstition that the possession of a caul is a safeguard from drowning. Before the days of improved navigation these cauls were much sought after and fetched high prices. But as the risk at sea became less the price was correspondingly lowered, so that it was possible to buy them at 1s. 6d. During the present war a caul was offered for sale at a shop near the docks at £2 10s. Mr. Lovett, on enquiring the reason of this high price, was informed that during the submarine menace the demand for and price of cauls had enormously increased.

The origin of the acorn ornaments on umbrella tassels is traced to the fact that the product of the oak is regarded as a protection from lightning. An umbrella frame is, of course, a conductor, and hence the acorn ornament.

The belief in the transference of disease common to savage races in many parts of the world still exists in London to-day. Mr. Lovett was recently told by a woman who dealt in second-hand clothes that she had cured several cases of whooping cough by cutting off some hair from the back of a child's neck who was suffering from the complaint, placing it between two pieces of bread and butter, and giving it to the first passing dog to eat. The disease would then pass from the child to the dog and the former would be cured.

All nurses who have the opportunity should make a point of paying a visit to this most interesting collection. The elimination of sentiment and imagination from the life of a nation must inevitably reduce it to the level of materialism, though all such must, of course, be properly safeguarded.

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