

them what sort of troops the enemy was employing in that particular sector. Now, if youths of seventeen were found it would be evidence that the enemy was short of seasoned troops and was forced to use up his immediate resources. But if boys of fourteen, say, were captured, it would be evidence that his possibilities of resistance were well nigh hopeless. So it is with the blood corpuscles. When the patient is hard pressed by disease he has to discharge certain types of cell from the factories before they are matured, and the extent of the immaturity is a measure of the failure of resistance of the patient. This is not confined to diseases that are due to microbial infection, but may occur when the resistance is deficient from many different causes. On this point research is still in progress, but we know enough of these intermediate types of cell to be of considerable service in prognosis.

There are certain diseases which are always ultimately fatal, but which often give few clinical signs of their presence. Here the examination of the blood is of great service. Quite recently I had a good example of this. A film of a patient's blood was sent to me for examination without any note on the nature of the illness. I found large quantities of intermediate forms, including some of the most primitive type of all, the lymphoidcyte, so I reported that the patient was very seriously ill and would most certainly die shortly. This elicited an indignant letter to the effect that as the patient had nothing the matter with him except slight anæmia, the examination must have been conducted with gross carelessness! A fortnight later, however, the patient developed hæmorrhages from his gums and bowel, and died in a few days from acute lymphatic leukæmia, and the rash practitioner got it hot from the relatives, whereas he might have developed a local reputation for the gift of prophecy if he had only believed the pathologist!

There are many obscure diseases which attack the factories of the corpuscles, and therefore cause a steady diminution in the resisting powers of the patient, which can only be detected by examination of the blood. Research is constantly adding evidence of their frequency, and it is probable that many of the tragedies which result from the death of the patient after an "entirely successful" surgical operation, which was not urgently required, might have been averted if the preliminary investigation of the patient had included inspection of a blood film; in fact, the possibilities of this procedure are only in their infancy.

## MEDICAL MATTERS.

### HOW TO COMBAT VENEREAL DISEASES.

The committee of representatives of Red Cross Societies assembled at Cannes have now made public the recommendations of the committee on venereal diseases, which are of far-reaching importance.

The committee recommends the sex education of children, the education of the public in the principles underlying the combating of venereal diseases. It favours early marriages, the custodial care of the feeble-minded, the isolation of infected individuals, and the report system in regard to early preventive treatment.

The committee further recommends (1) the abolition of official recognition and toleration of prostitution, the repression of street soliciting, and the control of restaurants, hotels, and other public places in connection with their use for promoting prostitution; (2) control of the use of alcohol; and (3) free treatment, and the distribution of officially approved remedies, and the establishment of dispensaries for the treatment of patients suffering from venereal diseases.

### RABIES.—OFFICIAL INSTRUCTIONS TO THE BITTEN.

In connection with the cases of rabies which have occurred in this country, the Local Government Board has arranged for the Pasteur treatment to be given in London at certain medical institutions, the names of which are intentionally withheld. Nurses should acquaint themselves with official directions for people who are bitten by dogs. They are:—

(1) Place the bitten part if possible under a running tap for a few minutes. Warm water is better than cold.

(2) Go to a doctor and have the wound cauterised with carbolic acid or some other disinfectant.

(3) Notify the police, giving the fullest particulars possible for identifying the dog.

Pasteur treatment can be obtained through the medical officer of health of the district in which a bitten person lives.

By arrangement with the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries the names of all persons reported to officers of that Department or to the police as having been bitten by dogs suspected of being mad will be sent at once to the Medical Officer of Health of the district in which the bitten person lives. The necessary action will then be taken under the direction of the Local Government Board.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)