

LEISHMANIASIS.

Certain microscopic protozoa with wagging tails have been given the name of Leishmaniasis as a tribute to that great pioneer in tropical diseases, Sir William Leishman. The various diseases provoked by this group of protozoa have been given the term Leishmaniasis. These diseases are becoming increasingly important in the Mediterranean countries, both from the point of view of human beings and of that of lower animals, such as dogs and cats. The more dangerous forms of Leishmaniasis seem to be spreading from east to west in the Mediterranean with growing impetus. New centres are coming into existence or are being discovered, and the number of reported cases in certain localities grows year by year. Such a development cannot fail to be alarming, and it is in the interest of all concerned that knowledge of these newly discovered diseases should become more general than it is at present.

There are three varieties of Mediterranean Leishmaniasis :

(1) There is the Leishmaniasis of man, dogs and cats which affects the skin and is commonly known as Oriental sore ;

(2) Then there is the internal Leishmaniasis of man, known also as infantile splenic anæmia, Mediterranean kala-azar, ponos, etc.

(3) Lastly, there is the internal Leishmaniasis of dogs and cats.

All these diseases have this in common, that they are due to some member or other of the *Leishmania* genus.

Though Oriental sore is admittedly a benign disease of the skin, there is a tendency to ulceration throughout the whole of its course, and the patient, whether he be human being or dog, is much disfigured. The one variety of Leishmaniasis does not confer immunity to other varieties. Thus the patient who suffers from Oriental sore has no immunity conferred on him by it to internal Leishmaniasis with its serious general infection. When internal Leishmaniasis in dogs was first discovered, the question was asked—Is the parasite found in the dog the same as that which the patient suffering from internal Leishmaniasis harbours? It is now practically certain that the infecting agents are identical, for whether the germ be taken from a human or a canine patient, it gives rise to the same reaction when inoculated into experimental animals. It is also noteworthy that throughout the Mediterranean basin, the two diseases are met with side by side, and the presence of an infected dog or even cat has often been noted in the immediate vicinity of persons suffering from internal Leishmaniasis.

It is now known that sand flies (the phlebotomi) are responsible for spreading the disease. They easily become infected when fed on human Oriental sores ; and it is a remarkable fact that Oriental sores occur on those parts of the human body which are uncovered at night, and which are exposed to the biting of sand flies. They also easily infect themselves on dogs suffering from natural or experimental Leishmaniasis. It is, therefore, probable that dogs act as an important reservoir of the infection.

The detection of infected dogs in epidemic centres is of the greatest importance, for at present the only promising preventive measure is the extermination of infected dogs. Unfortunately, fully half of the naturally infected dogs appear to be perfectly healthy. The remainder may be detected as infected by the appearance of their fur, some of which has fallen out. This is the commonest of all the symptoms. Next in importance as evidence of disease in the dog are emaciation, ulcers on various parts of the skin, and inflammation of the eyes. All these symptoms need not be present at the same time.

It is very disappointing that in centres where the disease in human beings has been systematically combated, the

treatment and cure of most of the human cases has had no appreciable effect on the number of new cases declared every year. This fact suggests that human beings are not important as carriers of the disease.

It would seem, therefore, that what usually happens is that sand flies infect themselves by feeding on the unbroken skin of infected dogs. The sand fly thus infected now proceeds to bite a human being at night and to inoculate him with Leishmaniasis. In addition to the destruction of infected dogs, something can be done by conducting a campaign against sand flies. Dead leaves and decaying vegetable matter likely to form a breeding place for the larvæ of the sand fly should be systematically destroyed. When there is doubt as to the condition of a house dog, too valuable to destroy merely on suspicion, it is well to secure the services of an expert who, by removing one cubic centimeter of blood and subjecting it to laboratory tests, can nearly always say whether the dog in question is infected or not.

Internal Leishmaniasis begins very insidiously with, perhaps, an attack of vomiting and diarrhoea. Later, the spleen becomes enlarged and the patient, often a child, becomes anæmic and suffers from irregular fever, which may be mistaken for malaria. Unless proper treatment is given, the child becomes more and more wasted and anæmic. At one time the mortality was about 90 per cent. Now, however, it has been greatly reduced by the introduction of modern methods of treatment.

(Communicated by the Secretariat of the League of Red Cross Societies.)

MYSELF.

I have to live with myself, and so
I must be nice for myself to know.
I want to be able, as days go by,
Always to look myself straight in the eye.

I don't want to stand with the setting sun,
And hate myself for the things I have done,
I want to go out with my head erect :
I want to deserve all men's respect.

But here in the struggle for fame and pelf,
I want to be able to like myself.
I don't want to look at myself and know
That I'm bluster and bluff and empty show.

I never can hide myself from me,
I see what others may never see :
I know what others may never know,
I never can fool myself, and so,
Whatever happens, I want to be
Self respecting and conscience free.

From the Journal of the Western Australian Nurses.

A WORD FOR THE MONTH.

Man only becomes fully man when he gains cognizance of the Divine, of that hidden treasure which each of us has to discover for himself. . . . Great is the mystery of the Divine, which is manifested in the lives and actions of prophets, poets, and seers. . . . Illumination is not to be sought in abandonment of the world, or in ascetic practices, or in a life of abnegation and obedience, but in doing as well as we can the duties and calls of every day. If we determine to live in an atmosphere of beauty and goodness we shall find the Divine gifts quietly waiting our acceptance.

From "A Pilgrim's Quest for the Divine." By Lord Conway of Allington.

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