

siderable expenditure on medical assistance and relief. A vigorous stand must be made against these tendencies. This can be done in three ways. In the first place, vitamins could be incorporated in foods deficient in them, such as margarine; iodine could be added to table salt in the case of populations suffering from a lack of iodine—in the mountainous regions of Switzerland, for example, where goitre is prevalent. In the second place, a census might be made of the minimum dietetic needs of the population, so that production or importation could be regulated to meet these needs; prices would be kept as low as possible, and protective foods would be supplied to children, adolescents, expectant mothers and nursing mothers free of charge or at half price.

These two methods are bound up with national and international economy, and with agriculture, industry and commerce. They raise colossal problems which extend far beyond the scope of the Red Cross.

The third method, however, comes directly within the sphere of the Red Cross, viz., the education of the public in the choice of food. Without upsetting traditional habits, the public can be brought to understand the value of essential foods, and to learn how to derive the greatest possible nourishment from the minimum outlay, e.g., by absorbing vitamins in the form of whey when sufficient quantities of milk cannot be purchased, or obtaining the necessary mineral salts by cooking potatoes in their skins, etc. The housewife, and through her the household in general, must be persuaded to adapt their diet, not only to the family purse and tastes, but also to the nutritive value in calories, vitamins and mineral salts of its constituent elements.

The Red Cross is particularly well placed for the task of disseminating these ideas through its health and domestic hygiene courses, bulletins, brochures, posters, exhibitions, lectures and propaganda campaigns, and with the help of its professional and voluntary instructors, nurses, social workers, and assistant housekeepers.

The Assembly and technical sections of the League of Nations, the International Labour Office, and the International Agricultural Institute of Rome have all given careful consideration to this problem and made important contributions towards its solution. Physiologists, hygienists, doctors and economists the world over are at work on the question. It only remains for the Red Cross to join its efforts to those of the technicians in its traditional role of auxiliary to the public services, by placing its tremendous moral force and propaganda facilities at their disposal.

From the Monthly Bulletin "League of Red Cross Societies."

TREATMENT OF BRONCHIAL DISEASES.

An Inhalarium was opened recently at the Woodhall Spa Baths for the treatment of catarrhs of the nose and throat, chronic bronchitis, bronchial asthma, and bronchiectasis. The apparatus has been installed by Sir Archibald and Lady Weigall and Viscountess Curzon in order that the properties of the bromo-iodine waters at Woodhall may be fully utilised. The only other similar installation in the British Isles is at a London clinic, where, however, there is no natural remedy like the Woodhall waters.

NEW NERVE DISCOVERY.

BRANCH SYSTEM IN THE SKIN.

A new system of nerves in the skin, hitherto unsuspected and apparently closely concerned with the defence of the body against injury, is described in a recent issue of the *British Medical Journal* by Sir Thomas Lewis, the famous expert on the heart and circulation.

"The Medical Correspondent" of the *Morning Post* points out that Sir Thomas starts with the well-known fact that when a small area of skin is injured there develops in many people a much larger area of tenderness which spreads slowly, and may, in 10 minutes or so, reach an oval area of several inches in its long axis.

This development of a tender area has been closely studied with the use of local anæsthetics, and Sir Thomas argues from his experiments that it has nothing to do with the ordinary nerves of sensation or the nerves of what is termed the sympathetic system which supplies the blood vessels of the skin.

If the area which has to be injured is first of all injected with a local anæsthetic and a small crushing injury made in the centre of the small insensitive area, then the development of the large area of tenderness does not take place until the central injured patch has recovered its sensation.

This shows that the phenomenon is not due to the spread of any pain-producing substances, but is conveyed by nerves.

It is argued that it cannot be the ordinary nerves of pain for various considerations concerned with the mode of spread and the localisation of the tenderness. Nor can the phenomenon be due to the sympathetic nerves, since tenderness is easily provoked even when the sympathetic system of the tested portion of skin is known to have been destroyed by some previous operation upon it.

Not a Network.

It is concluded that the new system of nerves is not a network, but a complicated series of branches and these lie actually in the skin itself.

From a series of experiments upon human volunteers along the lines described above, the conclusion is reached that there is a system of nerves in the skin hitherto unrecognised, and for this system the name "nocifensor" is suggested in view of the protective action which this system probably affords.

The exact method in which this phenomenon of a large tender area actually protects the skin is complicated, but there seems little doubt of the validity of the deductions.

PAPWORTH VILLAGE SETTLEMENT.

The Festival Dinner in support of Papworth, the Village of Hope to persons infected with the tubercle bacillus, to be held at Grosvenor House, on Tuesday, 20th April, promises to be a splendid function. H.R.H. The Duke of Kent, K.G., President, will preside.

If by means of the dinner the sum of £15,000 can be raised, Lord Nuffield will, in fulfilment of his existing generous undertaking to Papworth, double every pound of that sum.

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