

it was rare. There appears to be little reason to doubt that all infectious diseases tend to diminish in virulence with successive generations and centuries—some more rapidly than others. A race gradually acquires an immunity or resisting power to a disease. The history of measles—a comparatively mild disease with us—shows it to be of frightful mortality when attacking people unaccustomed to it. Until recently it has been a plague to many of the Indian tribes in Alaska. In other non-caucasian races where the disease has existed for centuries the mortality is not nearly so great even where the environment is much worse and physical strength much less.

Manner of living is undoubtedly a causal factor. Although some of the Indians have homes as good as their white neighbors, far too often their houses are far from being sanitary. Particularly in the north during the cold season a large family will cook, eat and sleep in one over-heated, unventilated room; a member of the family having tuberculosis spits on the earth floor where the sputum dries and is pulverized and is soon floating in the air to be breathed into the lungs of the others; perhaps two or three young children play about on the floor. No attempt is made to prevent other members of the family from contracting the disease. Bed clothing becomes very dirty and badly infected and household refuse is not properly disposed of; the food is insufficient in quantity, improperly kept and lacking in variety. Under such conditions a poorly nourished body, lacking in resisting power, becomes an easy prey to this disease. Proper early treatment is neglected. Many will visit the agency or school physician and ask for medicine for a cold; an examination discloses the true nature of the complaint, but the correctness of the physician's diagnosis is doubted and his advice unheeded. In many of these cases the disease would be arrested if the physician's instructions were followed.

On some reservations the Indians believe the disease is caused by an evil spirit and the Indian medicine man is sought to drive away the spirit by chants, beating of tom toms and rattling of gourds.

In many cases the course, duration and clinical features of the disease are quite different in the Indian than in the caucasian. Many times an adult brave will succumb after a duration of two or three months. Ordinarily the disease runs its course in the adults in nine or ten months while in children the time is much shorter. In these particular cases the symptoms noticed are fatigue, shortness of breath, pallor, rapid pulse, rapid consolidation and destruction of lung tissue and delirium—the patient finally dying of heart failure from sepsis.

Observing the destructiveness of the disease among the Indians, and realizing the ineffectiveness of an education that failed to raise the physical standard, a campaign against the disease was begun. At pres-