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TALKS ABOUT TUBERCLES.

The New Movement to Inoculate for Consumption—New York's Scientists and Their Opinions of the Disease and Its Treatment.

Medical matters are not generally considered specially entertaining or interesting topics for the general public, but when there comes to the top a question—whether medical or otherwise—that directly appeals to the tenderest susceptibilities of about three millions of fellow-citizens who can read it would seem entitled to something more than a mere passing mention. Here is a case in point. A recent cablegram states that a new movement has been on foot in France with a view to practically demonstrating whether consumption can be cured or prevented by inoculation. And this is a subject of much widespread interest from the fact that one-seventh of the whole population of North America—because it is much more prevalent in the temperate zone—are now actually sufferers from this disease and are doomed to die from it.

In New York city—taking the vital statistics for the year 1883—out of 33,932, the total number of deaths, 2,847 males and 2,413 females died from phthisis or consumption, the great majority of them in the very prime of life—that is to say, between the ages of 20 and 35. This means for the whole country nearly one-third of the whole adult population. Statistics show that more than 200,000—of whom one-half will die within the year—are now known to be sufferers from this disease, to say nothing of the vast number whose ailments are wrongfully or willfully attributed to other causes. For the medical practitioner, who gains one-third of his income from this practice alone, is invariably a gentleman, and however conscientious in his duty, shrinks from dealing the deathblow to every hope by informing his patient that consumption has marked him for his own. With all this immense practice and the knowledge and experience that must be gained in it the faculty admits, in effect, that no remedy has yet been discovered which will materially check the progress of the disease, and therefore, if M. Verneuil's experiments should prove that inoculation is a successful mode of treatment, a popular monument many times grander than the statue of liberty ought to be erected to his honor.

Sydenham, a medical expert of two hundred years ago, writes: "When this disease is confirmed it for the most part proves incurable." This statement, however, although generally accepted, by no means arrested scientific investigation; on the contrary, it was thereby stimulated, and nearly every medical publicist since then has had some opinion to express upon it. Of course, there are various forms of consumption. The most fatal and most important, because it is hereditary, being called tubercular. Also many of the other forms of disease are liable to and nearly always do, in the long run, become tubercular. The tubercle itself is a vegetable deposit on the lungs, which was discovered in 1803 by Bayle, and Laennec's introduction of the practice of auscultation and the use of the stethoscope, a few years later created a tubercular public opinion that the little mole was the sole cause of the disease. Prof. Virchow's discoveries in cellular pathology threw doubt upon this, but most practitioners still hold to the tubercular idea, and the disease of that name is what we have to inquire into. And here comes in Koch, who, among his other valuable discoveries, finds that the tubercle is a germ which he calls tubercular bacilli, and this new movement in France is to find out a way to "attenuate" or make thin the virus of this germ so that it can be used for the prevention of consumption in the same as vaccine is so successfully applied to the prevention of small-pox.

Now, what are the chances that M. Verneuil's plan of inoculation will prove a success? To calculate this one must take the opinions of the best authority on the subject, and also see if the germ itself has anything to say. Let us interview the germ first. When not riding the breeze in search of victims he may be found at his private lodgings in the pathological laboratory of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, corner of Twenty-third street and Fourth avenue. There Dr. Prudden, the director, keeps him and his congeners in cages and feeds them on beef tea, oysters, blood pudding, and other stimulative luxuries. After his almost insatiable appetite is appeased, and he can be handled without danger, Dr. Prudden takes him out and puts him under the microscope, that the visitor may have a good look at him. With a magnifying power of 800 diameter—that is to say, increasing his size by about ten thousand times—one perceives a little rod about the forty-second part of an

inch in length, and you are informed that at New Year's, when they march in single file to salute their president, a line of two thousand would about cover the space of a pin's point. That's getting him down to dots, isn't it? Prof. Chandler told the plumbers that in the smallest drop of Mr. Germ would have as much room to swim in as a whale in New York harbor. It is as hard to properly estimate such infinitesimalism as it is to grasp the illimitable distances of celestial space. And yet what a mighty mite it is! From eighty million to one hundred million of the earth's human inhabitants, to say nothing of the animals, are doomed to death by him. By him and his family. And, by the way, what a funny way he has of raising a family. As he grows in age he simply lengthens. When he has doubled his length he shakes the latter half off and says: "Go and grow a son of your own." He does this every twenty minutes, so if you have any mind for figures you can easily calculate how long it would take him to sink a ship.

The late Dr. Austin Flint, one of the leading experts on the subject of consumption, believed in this germ theory, and so does Dr. Zernansky, his follower in the chair at Bellevue hospital, who has been lecturing on the heart and lungs for ten years. He says that the tubercular germs are invariably found in the sputa or expectorated matter of those who inherit consumption, and in those cases where the history of the family is known, vaccination might prove a preventive. But the disease is not like hydrophobia, which can be traced to a distinct cause and a distinct period. Mr. Verneuil may possibly—and Dr. Zernansky emphasizes the last two words—succeed, and thus prevent whole families from dying out; but physicians must wait patiently for the experiments before expressing an opinion. Most of the leading practitioners expressed a similar reluctance, and they also seemed adverse to speaking of the present mode of treating the disease.

"Oh, we generally get them away from the city," says one. "What they need is to breathe a clear, rarefied atmosphere. The Adirondacks suit some; some they don't. Crowds go to Aiken, S. C.—it is dry there—and to Las Vegas, Colorado, and Florida. Claude Bernard discovered that sulphur, when absorbed, is excreted through the respiratory mucous membrane, and that doctrine has led thousands to drink the sulphur water of the Eaux Bonnes, in the Pyrenees, and the less wealthy a similar water which is found at Red Sulphur Springs, W. Va."

"Yes, says Dr. Zernansky, "All we can prescribe is a general tonic treatment. We try to force the health up to a certain standard, and as long as we can keep it there the disease can not advance."

"Precisely," observed Dr. Janeway, when the above was quoted to him. "Keep the patient healthy and he eats up the germs, and thus prevents them eating him up."

What a grim little joke! Yet it will be sufficient to produce many a gleeful cough or coughing laugh—the consumptive always laughs at his cough and coughs when he laughs. The members of the Aiken Death club, as they sit and pool their tissues on the next fatality, will take in bets that the little joker germ won't cover their right bower this deal. For at Aiken they "pursue with eagerness the phantoms of hope" and back their fancy on their neighbors' early demise at one and the same time. In Florida, as they lazily bask in the sunshine, they will try to fathom the mystery as to whether said germ is of the nature of a caterpillar or a cabbage. The form of salutation at Royal and Eaux Bonnes will be "Comment va votre petit chon?" and at Red Sulphur, as the coughing stand aside to let the coffin pass, the invitation to drink will be: "Let's water the plants." They are brimful of morbid jokes, these sad consumptives, the telling of which always reminds one of the boy in the dark, who whistles to show he is not afraid.

There are some authorities who do not accept this germ theory in its entirety. Dr. J. R. Leaning, for instance, who has published several monographs on phthisis, does not think the theory as yet well proven. The germs may be present, and invariably are, in cases of tubercular consumption, but these are not in his opinion the cause. Generally, however, the germ theory is accepted, and, presuming it to be correct, what are the chances of making the virus practical for inoculation? Prof. Herman M. Biggs, who has probably given more careful study to the germ life than anyone in the country, modestly gives his opinion that they will not be able to produce this virus, and that if they do succeed there is no probability of their being able to prevent consumption by inoculation. "You must

first settle this point," says he, "that one attack gives insusceptibility. If you do not get that there is no possibility of your getting a preventive vaccine. In all of the ordinary contagious diseases you do get this insusceptibility after a first attack, but in consumption it is not known at all. On the contrary, there are well-known cases where persons have been cured of tuberculosis in one organ and have afterward had it in another—in fact, they were more liable to it than those who had never had it."

Then again consumption is so insidious, it takes so long a time to develop that it is impossible to trace it back to its original cause. This naturally leads to the question if it is an infectious disease, and Prof. Biggs emphatically declares that it is. But it requires more intensity and much longer exposure than any other virulent disease. Half a minute, for instance, is sufficient time to catch small-pox, while for consumption it would take a very long and constant exposure, not taking into account the at present unexplained fact that a certain number of people are insusceptible to it. Dr. A. B. Mott thinks the question is whether consumption is a scrofulous disease, as has been held by certain authorities, and if so the advisability of inoculating any one with a disease so formidable is very questionable. Dr. E. C. Janeway also says that the introduction of such very small quantities of tubercle matter would be a very dangerous proceeding. The subject should be thoroughly tested on animals, and so far no such tests have been made and proper safeguards discovered that human beings so inoculated may not be liable to tuberculosis. Dr. Delafield, whose studies on "Pathological Anatomy" is just going to a second edition, points out that the great difficulty about first testing it on the lower animals will be that they are not so liable to consumption as human beings, and therefore it will be particularly difficult to reason from experiments on them what the results would be on human beings. Dr. O'Gorman, of Newark, expressed the same opinion as others who were called upon, that we were going too fast, that there had been no tests yet made, and it was too soon to say anything about the inoculation theory.

Several of the medical gentlemen mentioned above raised another important question: Suppose the attenuation of the virus to be possible—and it does not at all follow that because one particular bacteria can be attenuated by manipulation that another can—who shall be vaccinated? Healthy persons are vaccinated to prevent their taking small-pox; for hydrophobia, also, inoculation can be practiced before the development of the disease, but in consumption there is no evidence that the person is liable to the disease, except upon the grounds of inherited tendencies, until the disease is actually developed, and then it would be too late. To inoculate generally as a preventive, similar to the course pursued in regard to small-pox, would be altogether unwise and risky. There are so many insusceptible to the disease, and the danger of implanting tuberculosis would be too great. As an instance of the danger, it is reported that a nurse in Germany in washing a glass which had contained the expectations of a consumptive cut her hand, and tuberculosis was the result. There are many cases reported.

So it appears from the opinions of leading authorities that it is altogether too soon to speculate upon the results of the new movement, however one may desire to plant one more hope in the ever-hopeful breast of our consumptive fellow-citizens. The possibilities of practical benefit from the proposed experiences are illimitable, but at present the only real advantages derived from the study of tubercular bacillus are the aids to proving the hygienic conditions of those affected by disease and those who may become so.

—New York Herald.

Hints About Flowers.

One of the best methods to start rose cuttings is to stick the cuttings about an inch deep into moist clean river sand with good well prepared soil below to receive the roots as soon as they strike.

Red spiders are easiest destroyed by laying the plants carefully on their sides in the open air, and using a hand syringe on them as powerfully as they will bear. If a little sulphur is used in the water, it is still more effective.

The tuberoses will bear but little cold. The temperature should not fall below 50 degrees, or there will be trouble by rotting of the center. It is a native of the Malay Archipelago.

If you wish your house plants to flourish, put a few drops of spirits of ammonia to each pint of water used in watering them.—St. Louis Magazine.

A JUGGLER'S TRICKS.

Two Wonderful Performances by a Native of India.

When he entered the room he spread a white cloth upon the floor and sat down upon it with his back to the wall, the door of the room being on his right hand. His spectators were disposed in the following fashion: "Mr. Smyth sat on a chair nearly in the middle of the room, I was sitting on a sofa near the door, the Parsee merchant stood in the doorway about arm's length from me. The servants stood about in groups, the largest group being between the door and the conjurer. As soon as he had settled himself he turned to the Parsee and asked for the loan of a rupee. The peddler at first demurred a little, but, on being guaranteed against loss, he produced the coin. He was going to put it into the conjurer's hand, but the latter refused and told the Parsee to hand it to Mr. Smyth's bearer. The bearer took it; and, at the request of the conjurer, looked at it and declared it to be really a rupee. The conjurer then told him to hand it to his master. Mr. Smyth took it, and then followed this dialogue:

Conjurer—Are you sure it is a rupee? Smyth—Yes.

Conjurer—Close your hand and hold it tight. Now think of some country in Europe, but do not tell me your thought.

Then the conjurer ran over the names of several countries, such as France, Germany, Russia, Turkey and America—for the native of India is under the impression that America is in Europe. After a moment's pause Mr. Smyth said he had thought of a country.

"Then open your hand," said the juggler; "see what you have got, and tell me if it is a coin of the country you thought of."

It was a 5-franc piece, and Mr. Smyth had thought of France. He was going to hand the coin to the conjurer, but the latter said:

"No; pay it to the other sahib."

Mr. Smyth accordingly put the 5-franc piece into my hand. I looked closely at it, then shut my hand, and thought of Russia. When I opened it I found, not a Russian, but a Turkish silver piece, about the size of a 5-franc piece or of our own crown piece. This I handed to Mr. Smyth and suggested that he should name America, which he did, and found a Mexican dollar in his hand. The coin, whatever it was, had never been in the conjurer's hand from the time the rupee was borrowed from the Parsee merchant. Mr. Smyth and his bearer had both of them closely examined the rupee, and Mr. Smyth and myself turned over several times the 5-franc piece, the Turkish coin, and the dollar; so the trick did not depend on a reversible coin. Indeed, it could not, for the coin underwent three changes, as has been seen. I only add, for the information of those readers who do not know India, that a rupee is only about the size of a florin, and therefore about half the weight of a 5-franc piece.

He did another trick almost equally as wonderful. As before, he was seated on a white cloth, which this time, I think, was a tablecloth, borrowed from the mess sergeant. He asked some one present to produce a rupee, and to lay it down at a remote edge of the cloth. The cloth being three or four yards in length, the conjurer could not have touched the coin without being seen, and, in fact, did not touch it. He then asked for a signet ring. Several were offered him, and he chose out one which had a very large oval seal, projecting well beyond the gold hoop on both sides. The ring he tossed and tumbled several times in his hands, now throwing it into the air and catching it, then shaking it between his clasped hands, all the time numbing half-articulate words in some Hindoostanee patois. Then setting the ring down on the cloth at about half arm's length in front of him, he said, slowly and distinctly, in good Hindoostanee:

"Ring, rise up and go to the rupee."

The ring rose, with the seal uppermost, and, resting on the hoop, slowly, with a kind of dancing or jerking motion, it passed over the cloth until it came to where the rupee was on the remote edge, then it lay down on the coin. The conjurer then said: "Ring, lay hold of the rupee and bring it to me."

The projecting edge of the seal seemed to grapple with the edge of the coin; the ring and the rupee rose into a kind of wrestling attitude, and, with the same dancing or jerking motion, the two returned to within reach of the juggler's hand.

I have no theory to explain either of these tricks. I should mention, however, that the juggler entirely disclaimed all supernatural power, and alleged that he performed his tricks by mere sleight-of-hand. It will be observed that he had no preparation of his surroundings, no machinery, and no confederate.—S. S. Robinson, in Boston Herald.