REPORT ON CASES OF POISONING AT FOREST GATE DISTRICT SCHOOL.

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Medical Officer of the School.

On June 23rd, at 9 A.M., it was reported to me that about 30 of the boys in the school had been vomiting. At 11 A.M., when seen by me, these children were in bed. They all complained of frontal headache, vomiting, pain in the epigastrium, and in some cases of diarrhoea. In about 10 cases the temperature was raised to 101°, and these patients had rather dry brown tongues, and a pulse of from 100 to 120. The remainder of the children had normal temperature, a clean tongue, and the pulse was about 80. In 3 cases the vomiting was very severe, but there was no sign of collapse. About 20 girls were seen at the same time, but the attacks were apparently less severe than in the boys. During the day of June 23rd about 30 more children were put to bed, but none of them were severe cases. On June 24th there were about 25 more children attacked. These were, on the whole, the most severe cases, about 10 of them showing signs of collapse. On June 25th 15 more cases, 2 severe, occurred; on June 26th about 8; and on June 27th 7 more cases, none severe. Since then there have been cases resembling the ordinary summer diarrhoea in children, about 2 or 3 a day. Two children died.

E. P., aged 14 years, was seized on June 23rd, and was one of the most severe cases. When seen by me he had been vomiting very freely. Temperature 101°, pulse 110, full; tongue brown, moist. He sat up in bed and said he felt better. During the afternoon he was sitting up in bed reading. The vomiting had ceased. In the evening he had some cocoa. When seen at 10 P.M. he had some water and said he felt better. He was found dead at 5.30 A.M., June 24th. I was sent for, and saw him at 6.30 A.M. The body was still quite warm, the limbs flaccid, the features calm, jaws tightly clenched, and some bloody foam coming from the mouth.

Post-mortem Examination (fifty-four hours after death).—Blood vessels in brain congested, rather more fluid than normal in ventricles, brain matter soft. Lungs congested, no sign of disease. Heart: ventricles firmly contracted, empty; valves normal. Stomach: signs of fairly severe inflammation over the whole of its surface, no erosion. The same appearances were seen in the intestines as in the stomach extending over a considerable portion of the small intestine. The liver, kidneys, and spleen congested, but healthy.

H. F., aged 14, was attacked on June 24th with severe frontal headache, vomiting, purging, and pain in the epigastrium. Temperature normal. Tongue dry and brown. Pulse 140, very feeble. She was seen at once by me, and removed to the infirmary. A special nurse was in attendance. In her case the vomiting was very severe, and the girl collapsed. Small doses of iced water were at once vomited, and small nutrient enemata with brandy returned. Two hypodermic injections of morphine gr. 1/4 and atropine sulph. gr. 1/100 stopped the vomiting; brandy, ether, and liquor strychniæ were injected by hypodermic syringe, but the girl did not rally, and died June 27th. For the last two days the temperature was subnormal, and the girl very restless; the pupils were large and sluggish to light.

Post-mortem Examination (twenty-eight hours after death).—Brain congested, but less marked than in the case of E. P. Lungs normal. Heart healthy, ventricles pale, non-adherent clot in left ventricle. The stomach and intestines presented the same appearances as in the above case. Liver and kidneys normal. Spleen rather enlarged.

About 140 children in all complained of being ill, and were put to bed, but at least 40 showed no signs of sickness or any illness whatever. About 80 children were sick two or three times, and then said they were quite well again. In 20 there were signs of serious mischief; the vomiting and purging were excessive, and there were signs of collapse. The treatment adopted was rest, water, and milk and water until the sickness abated, and the action of the bowels either increased or quieted as seemed necessary. In a few of the cases small doses of hydrocyanic acid, sodium bicarbonate, and aromatic spirits of ammonia seemed to do good. Brandy by the mouth and rectum was given where necessary.

The whole of the children except the two mentioned above well, and have returned to their ordinary duties and diet. In all the cases the vomiting was green bilious. No blood in any vomit or stools. The diet for the school was:

On Wednesday.—Breakfast and tea—Bread and butter or dripping, and milk and water and cocoa made with milk. Dinner—Salt meat (cold), bread, and water.

Thursday.—Breakfast and tea as on Wednesday for whole school. Dinner for boys and girls (over 7 years)—Soup made of stock from the salt boiled beef of the previous day and bones from the officers' dinners of previous day, flour, onions, water. Infants' dinner, bread pudding.

None of the infants were attacked—chiefly the elder boys and girls. None of the children in the infirmary who had the soup suffered at all. The boy E. P. had his dinner at the lodge, and it consisted of meat (salted by the lodge-

keeper), potatoes, and blackcurrant jam; he had no soup. The girl H. F. had soup with the school.

The meat is sent daily by a London contractor, is inspected thoroughly by the superintendent, and at once cooked. I have on many occasions been present at the inspection of the meat, and have always, so far as the eyes and nose can tell, found it good. The superintendent had a portion of the salt meat cooked for his own table, and has suffered no inconvenience whatsoever from its consumption.

The above are the chief features of the case, and I think the immunity of the infants from any gastric or intestinal trouble, and the difference in their diet on the Thursday, a most important one.

The abdominal viscera and their contents have been sent for analysis.

In only 20 cases were there any severe symptoms, and in only one case, that of H. F., was I apprehensive of a fatal result. The children attacked all denied at the time of their sickness having had anything whatsoever except their ordinary diet. The soup is cooked in an iron copper.

MEDICO-PARLIAMENTARY.

HOUSE OF LORDS, Tuesday, July 4th.

Adulterated Butter.—The Duke of ST. ALBANS asked whether the Danish Government had proposed a conference with the view of framing a convention to deal with the international trade in adulterated butter?—The Earl of ROSEBURY said a proposal of the kind was made, but owing to the doubt expressed in the departments principally interested, Her Majesty's Government did not embrace it with any great alacrity. The correspondence was still proceeding.—Lord RIBblesdale said that the Board of Agriculture had considered the question from the point of view of the producer and not of the consumer or distributor. The Board thought the end in view could be much better secured by Parliament than by the philosophic and scientific inquiry recommended, but they would be glad if the Danish Government made a practical suggestion on the subject, and they would see how far they could embody it in a Bill.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, Monday, June 26th.

Medical Officers and Foreign Service.—Dr. MACGREGOR asked the SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR, in view of the fact that there were now fifty-three surgeon-lieutenants of the Army Medical Staff, whose commissions dated from January 30th, 1892, to January 30th, 1893, who had completed their courses of instruction at Netley and Aldershot, and were therefore eligible for foreign service, whether it was intended to send as many of these officers as were required for the reliefs to India during the next troping season, or whether it was proposed to send back to that country surgeon-captains who had returned home within the last two or three years after a tour of six years in India.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said that about one-fourth part of the annual army medical relief for India was composed of junior surgeon-lieutenants. The Indian Government objects to a larger proportion, as these young officers have not sufficient experience for many of the duties required. They are, further, more susceptible to enteric fever than their seniors.

Thursday, June 29th.

Accommodation for Fever Patients in London.—Mr. FOWLER, in answer to Mr. COHEN, said he was informed by the managers of the Metropolitan Asylums District that the number of beds available at the present moment for small-pox patients was 1,100, for cases of scarlet fever and enteric fever 2,459, and for diphtheria and other cases 238. All scarlet fever and diphtheria beds were occupied.

Monday, July 3rd.

Importation of Milk.—Mr. H. FOWLER, in reply to Mr. W. LONG, said he was informed by the Board of Customs that during the present year the value of the liquid milk and cream imported into the country was £630. Of that, £613 represented the value of milk of Holland, and £17 from Denmark and Sweden.

The Use of Varicellous Lymph.—Sir W. WEDDERBURN, for Mr. HOPWOOD, asked the Secretary of State for India whether Surgeon-Major King had been punished for vaccinating with lymph varicellous, or small-pox in fact, inoculated into the cow, and thence taken to vaccinate human beings? Whether he was aware that it was recommended in the *Manual for Vaccination* in use for pupils in the Madras Vaccination Department, printed at the Fort Press, and issued under the authority of the Indian Government? Whether the Government was aware that such lymph was in circulation to a large extent throughout England by reason of the experiments of Mr. Badcock, many thousands in number, and of Mr. Cecily and others; that it was approved by Sir John Simon and Mr. Marsden before the Committee of this House in 1871, and by others; and why it was now prohibited, and a practitioner like Surgeon-Major King, so misled, punished.—Mr. RUSSELL said Surgeon-Major King was censured and transferred from civil to military duty for having used, without authority from the Government of India, a form of lymph not sanctioned by the Government for use among the native population. The Secretary of State had not seen the *Manual for Vaccination*, said in the question to be used by the pupils in the Madras Vaccination Department, and is not aware that the use of lymph varicellous is recommended in it. He is aware that the lymph has been used in this country, but the Government having decided that a particular form of lymph should be used, Surgeon-Major King was transferred for having used without permission another form of lymph.