

- 5th Born alive, frail and delicate.
- 6th Developed signs of general paralysis and dementia at 14, and died 3 years later.
- 7th Living and well, aged 16.
- 8th Living and well, aged 14.
- 9th Living and well, aged 12.
- 10th Died of convulsions, aged 11 months
- 11th Died at 8 months, brain disease and club foot.
- 12th Living and well. (Mott).

After quoting this case as illustrating what a terrible curse syphilis is to some families, it is unnecessary to enumerate other cases equally distressing. My whole object is to impress upon you the necessity of taking some action to lessen the scourge, and with this end in view to ask your support for the legislation which Dr. Collins proposes to put before Parliament.

Whilst on the subject of syphilis it is interesting to recall that it was not until 1905 that the spirochaete which causes it, was discovered, that two years later, Wasserman published his "blood test," which can detect a large proportion of cases, and that two years later Ehrlich issued his remedy, "606," Salvarsan. There is no doubt whatever but that "606" effectively and rapidly causes a disappearance of symptoms; but it is only time that can show whether or not it gives a complete cure in all cases. The disease is one which often remains latent. All symptoms may disappear for years and the patient imagine himself cured, when symptoms of nervous disease appear. Only recently I saw a case of locomotor ataxy in which the patient had seemed to be cured and was free from symptoms for about 20 years, was married and had children apparently healthy. These are very sad cases. It is in these latent cases that the Wasserman test is especially useful. The test is not absolutely certain, but often reveals the disease in doubtful cases.

With regard to the Salvarsan and Neosalvarsan treatment of syphilis, many doctors supplement it with the old-fashioned mercury. Some doctors even rely more on mercury than on the newer remedies; the favourite method of administration being by intra-muscular injections; but oral administration has still many adherents.

THE FREQUENCY OF SYPHILIS IN NEW ZEALAND.

It is impossible to estimate accurately the number of cases which occur each year, but the Special Committee, referred to above, made enquiries from all medical men in New Zealand, as to the number of primary and secondary cases seen in the last two years. The total reported was 1,941, but only about half the doctors replied; of this number, 412 occurred in Wellington.

Little is to be learnt from death certificates, for private practitioners, out of consideration for relatives, often omit using the term "Syphilis." However we know that 451 persons died in New Zealand during the past ten years, from general paralysis of the insane, and we know that Fournier, a great authority on the subject, alleges that 3 per cent. of all syphilitics develop that form of the disease. This would give an average for this Dominion of 1,500 cases annually.

Mental experts state that this disease (acquired or inherited) is the cause of at least 25 per cent. of all mental diseases. We all know that our mental hospitals are all over-crowded. If mental experts are right, the disease must be much more prevalent than is usually supposed.

There is no doubt that many cases never come under the notice of medical men, but are treated by chemists and quacks.

SOURCE OF INFECTION AND PREVENTION.

The Special Committee reported that the replies were practically unanimous that the infection is sea-borne, Australia, especially Sydney, being most commonly mentioned; then the South Sea Islands, with a proportion of cases from other oversea routes. To Sydney, the disease is supposed to be brought largely by the Indian Coolie population of the Islands, and from the East Indies, China, and Japan. There is a prevailing impression amongst the laity that, as syphilis is a loathsome disease, it is found only amongst abandoned persons and that prostitutes are the commonest source of infection. However clandestine immorality, immorality clothed with a semblance of respectability, is a far greater source of infection. It is partly on this account that legislation in the past has failed to check the disease,