

the scope of the treatment. Anthrax used to kill cattle to the extent of 5 per cent., and rousset destroyed 10 per cent. of sheep attacked. Pasteur operating on three million sheep and half a million cattle beasts in one year reduced the mortality respectively to 0.34 and 0.94. One might suppose that in view of these facts so progressive a country as the Dominion of New Zealand would have set up an up-to-date veterinary college. One would be wrong.

Such are the results so far. They embrace but a few of the diseases to which the flesh of men and animals is heir. But science has made a beginning on the right track, and there is no reason to fear that in time the treatment will not be extended with success to every disease under the sun.

The most interesting story in the whole collection deals with a disease well known in this country, the disease known as cretinism. The treatment is older than those to which reference has been made above, and is of a different character entirely. Whereas in those cases the principle is applied of like curing like, in this one the treatment consists in supplying a constituent of the human organism which though absolutely essential to the wellbeing of the system, is by some mischance absent in certain individuals. These pine away in a manner that for many centuries puzzled the medical men beyond the reach of conjecture. Such is a disease of women first described accurately by Sir William Gull, and known to the faculty as myxoedema. It is characterised by slowly advancing puffiness and pallor of the face, dryness of hair and falling out of the same, lassitude of mind and body growing to insanity and helplessness. The victims have to be cared for like children at home or sent to the mental hospitals.

The discovery of the cure was made by Horsley (Sir Victor) in a very strange, interesting and unexpected way. He was engaged on a study of the glands of the neck and throat, the physiology of which was a sealed book to science at that time. Horsley proceeded by the method of depriving various animals of these glands and noting the effects. He began with the thyroid gland, and after failure in many animals he found results of a very decided character in monkeys. In them the removal of the thyroid gland produced the conditions described in women by Sir W. Gull, and known to the faculty as myxoedema.

The next step was to try if the implanting in the human subject of the thyroid gland of some animal would effect a cure in cases of myxoedema. Horsley began by placing the thyroid of a sheep under the skins of patients suffering from the disease. He was delighted to find immediate benefit, but chagrined to discover in the course of time that the benefit depended on constant succession of the supply, a thing quite impossible, in the crude form adopted. He next tried injection of the juice of the thyroid, proceeded to administering an extract of the gland through the mouth, and at length established the settled practice of administering the dried extract of thyroid by tablets. Under this treatment there are no failures, all the victims recover; large numbers have been freed from the mental hospitals and returned to their friends perfectly restored in both mind and body.

A kindred discovery followed naturally. The Swiss physicians called attention to the fact that the "cretinism" so prevalent in their country is really myxoedema in infants born without a thyroid gland. The same line of treatment was adopted, and cretinism is rapidly becoming extinct. Neither this affliction nor the myxoedema, which is due to the same or similar causes, being dreaded as they used to be. Now they are both regarded as curable, and they are regularly and infallibly cured.

The subject of cretinism is of special interest in this part of the world as a remarkable cure was effected here in Wellington by Dr. Anson some fourteen years ago. The doctor had only just commenced practice in the house on Wellington Terrace previously occupied by Dr. Kemp. He was familiar with the new treatment, which was just coming into vogue in the days of his studentship. When, therefore, a case of cretinism was brought to him he had recourse to the thyroid gland of the sheep at once. As the preparations were not on the market at the time, the doctor had to get his material from the nearest butcher's and work it up. He effected a cure, and, as the Maoris say in the very opposite case of the man who kills the first of the enemy in battle, he "established his mana." The cure was very famous and very much discussed in the middle nineties, we remember. Now, of course, the treatment is perfectly well known and practised. Then, the doctor's patients regarded him as a magician, and when anybody looked doubtful, plunged into the true story of the helpless little imbecile who was turned into material for a healthy footballer in a brace of shakes.

Where will these wonders end? We hope in a great cabinet in every house, labelled "Anti-toxin," with ranks on ranks of bottles bearing each the name of a common disease, each ready to send an expedition of well-bred microbes to exterminate disease germs that have got into the system. Why not? Invention is difficult, but practice is simple.

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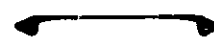
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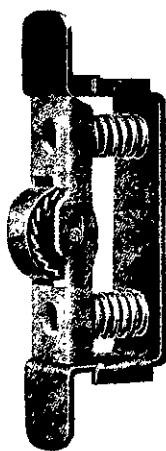
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