lime salts in such an assimilable form. Eggs are free from purin or purin-yielding bodies, and may be recommended for gouty people; but it is generally believed in India that the habitual use of duck's eggs predisposes one to rheumatism.

The digestibility of eggs depends upon the form in which they are eaten. Raw eggs are not all digested in the stomach; this is perhapsdue to the fact that being bland they hardly excite gastric action. The following table from Hutchison will show the length of time eggs remained in the stomach under different conditions of cooking :—

| | |
|---|---|
| 2 eggs lightly boiled .. .. .. .. | 1¾ hours. |
| 2 eggs raw .. .. .. .. .. | 2 ,, |
| 2 eggs hard boiled .. .. .. .. | 3 ,, |
| 2 eggs omelette .. .. .. .. .. | 3 ,, |

If hard-boiled eggs be finely divided and masticated they can be disposed of as easily as soft-boiled eggs.

Eggs are preserved for a long time by preventing the entrance of the air through the pores, either by packing in saw-dust or salt, or by thoroughly smearing the shell with gum, butter, oil, or by placing in lime water to which a little cream of tartar has been added.

Decomposed eggs are detected by placing them in a salt solution (about 2 ozs. of salt in a pint of water) when they float. Fresh eggs are always heavier than stale ones and when held up to a candle or a light are translucent in the centre while the stale ones are so at the ends.

## PREVALENT DISEASES IN THE WORLD.[1]

*(Reprinted from "The Nursing Times.")*

I RECENTLY saw an article headed, "The War against Disease." Now nurses, doctors, dentists, and sanitarians are the great army which is always mobilised against human disease. It may be useful to inquire what are the total forces against which we are fighting, their numbers and distribution.

Leprosy, cholera, typhus, or jail fever, and dysentery are nearly wiped out, though fearfully common in the past. Appendicitis and hosts of other affections formerly beyond the reach of surgery are now well in hand. Typhoid even fifty years ago killed 17,000 a year in England and Wales, now barely slaying 1,100. Diphtheria and small-pox are falling as rapidly, and the duration of human life is raised by some ten years.

We can estimate with difficulty the armies still in the field. Thus we may take the death-rate of the Registrar-General's report to see how many each disease wipes out per annum. Diseases of the heart and circulation destroy 60,000; tuberculosis and diseases of the nervous system, 50,000 each;

1 Lecture to the Bristol Centre College of Nursing, March 10, by George Parker, Esq., M.A., M.D. (Cantab.), M.R.C.S.

bronchitis, cancer, and pneumonia, 40,000 each; diseases of infancy and the digestive system, 30,000 each. Now if all disease were wiped out, we should find old age or accident as the usual end of life, but here only 32,000 are ascribed to old age. The death-rate, however, gives limited information. If we look at the non-fatal illnesses and try to estimate the annual sickness rate or the number of days even "off work" in the year, we shall be startled at the totals. If we could, for instance, put an end to common colds what a gain there would be. If the 500,000 cases of measles could be stopped, another great gain would follow. If true rheumatism (not arthritis or gout, but the disease we see as rheumatic fever and in the slight recurrences which take place in infected persons) could be extinguished, a great part of the heart disease would vanish, together with much chorea, flat-foot, rhinitis, and adenoids, and other illnesses. It is one of the pivotal diseases on which so many others depend, an endemic plague of the country, the source of endless ills, but often little regarded. Another cause of heart trouble and of many of the strokes which cripple men in the latter half of life, destroying their accumulated skill and power, if not killing them outright, is seen in the group of diseases marked by high blood pressure. When these, together with tuberculosis, venereal diseases, and cancer are conquered, what a gigantic fall in sickness and death will follow!

If we look abroad we find the greatest and best parts of the world still ravaged by preventible disease. We have almost forgotten in England what *Malaria* is. To-day it holds enormous areas in East and West Africa, Central America, India, and the rest of the tropics, and we find that (1) it kills more men than any other disease in the world, (2) it reduces vast populations to a feeble and crippled state in the finest lands of the world.

Yet preventive measures, as at Panama, can wipe it out and change a wilderness to a healthy, populous country.

*The Plague* still ravages Asia, and at times the rest of the world. From at least 200 B.C. it has again and again overrun Europe. Even two years ago infected rats were found in Bristol, when an outbreak was prevented by the vigilance of the sanitary officers. Many millions died from it recently in India, and it exists permanently in two or three districts in Asia among the animals, and thence spreads at intervals by the rat flea and other fleas over the world.

*Dysentery* has nearly died out in Great Britain and Ireland. In the latter place it was so common as to be called "the disease of the country." It rarely occurs now in North Germany, France, North America, and Australia, but over the rest of the world it is more or less present either in the bacillary or amœbic form, and accounts for a large part of the deaths and most of the cases of tropical abscess of the liver.

*Anchylostomiasis*, or hook-worm disease, has reduced vast countries to a feeble condition. The southern parts of the United States, the West Indies, Egypt, Assam, and some other parts of India are widely infected, so that a large part of the population are incapable of heavy work. Anæmic and listless, their condition was only in recent days found to be due to the constant

bleeding which the hook-worm caused in their intestines. It is quickly cured by thymol if the patient can be protected from infection from the soil. Two millions in the southern United States were found to be suffering from it. In India 70 per cent. of 300 millions harbour it, and the same in southern China. There is perhaps an equal amount of infection in Egypt, Natal, and Guiana, and it has even a footing in Belgium, Germany, Cornwall, and Spain. It is the chief cause of the feebleness and inefficiency of the coolies and native labourers in most tropical countries.

*Small-Pox* in countries where vaccination is not enforced still slays millions. Even in Europe, if we take equal populations in protected and non-protected countries, while only 600 deaths per annum occur in the former, 30,000 are found in the latter.

There are still 100,000 *lepers* in India, and 2,000 in little Norway. What the total in the world is cannot be told, but it is a large one.

*Goitre*, or Derbyshire neck, may seem to you unimportant and uncommon, but there are 370,000 in France and probably millions in the Alps, Himalayas, and Cordilleras. The worst cases are the semi-imbeciles or cretins, who number 120,000 in France, 50,000 in Lombardy, and 3,400 in little Switzerland.

*Pellagra*, from deficient food or diseased maize, has spread over the Mediterranean countries, so that there are 170,000 in Italy alone, and in our camps for Turkish prisoners and Armenian refugees in Egypt there were terrible outbreaks.

*Beriberi* attacks great numbers with dropsy and paralysis in Southern Asia, and is akin to the scurvy which in former days wiped out the entire crews of many an English ship.

*Cholera* still keeps down the population of the East. Five times it spread over the world in the nineteenth century, but as a disease carried only by infected water and food it has now less chances of ravaging Europe.

*Yellow Fever* year after year devastated tropical America and the west coast of Africa, but after the American investigators at the cost of their own lives proved that it was carried only by the Stegomyia mosquito it became possible to stamp it out.

I have not time to speak of *Kalar Azar* and other fevers or sleeping sickness now.

*Typhus*, which devastated this country for ages, especially in gaols and great cities, and was rampant abroad in most wars, has vanished here, but still takes toll of other countries. When it ravaged the Austrian and Serbian armies it was found possible to stamp it out because it was carried by infected lice alone. Where these could be destroyed typhus vanished.

Thus there are still in the world mighty armies of our foes, some of them as yet unapproachable, but many of them, like typhus and malaria, only waiting for energetic measures to be wiped out utterly, as they have been in this country. Mere sanitation, cleaning of the cups and the platters, fresh air, whatever that is, and good food are not enough. Most of these diseases are due to germs and definite measures to prevent their transit to fresh human beings have to be employed.

In England we have still to discover how to wipe out, if possible, not only the great diseases, such as tubercle, cancer, and pneumonia, but also insanity, idiocy, nerve and kidney diseases, the primary anæmias, acute rheumatism, the crippling of children by infantile paralysis, and similar affections, the cerebral hæmorrhages of adults, and, indeed, our common colds, before we can be demobilised, and leave the happy child of the future to live his healthful life unworried by any doctors, nurses, or drugs. It may seem a long way to such a goal, but our present victories would be inconceivable to anyone a few centuries ago.

## BIRDS OF THE PLAINS—(OCTOBER).

By M. R. N. H.

NOT that I mean a treatise on several hundred species; but "Birds of an Ordinary not-very-big-compound in an ordinary-Plains-Station in October" seems a rather cumbrous title. But that is all I mean to write about.

Moreover I can't waste time with the House Crow (*Corvus splendens*' indeed! —shabby thievish rascal!) or Pharaoh Chicken, the dirty old black and white vulture who is, as a new colleague of mine from England discovered at first sight, "just like a charwoman" to look at. Or even *Milvus govinda*, the Kite of the Gods or the Pariahs, according as you happen to call him by his technical or his familiar name; though he is a handsome fellow, especially *she*, as *she* is several inches *his* bigger, and much superior in fighting weight.

But it was a joy to get back even from the rich bird population of the Hills, to Bee-eaters on the telegraph wires, Hoopoes and Wagtails on the tennis lawn, and Blue Jays (Rollers) and Mynahs everywhere. And it seems just possible that someone else who is sad to leave the marvels of the Hills for the commonplaces of the compound, may like to be reminded how many of their 'little brothers' there are to know: hence this, in their honour:—

First for beauty and thrill and joy in life, the Bee-eaters, in their varied plumage, crimson tinged with bronze beneath, emerald green and turquoise blue above: slim creatures, with swallow-like dartings and twistings. Swallow-like also though differently placed the two long fine tail-feathers, projected far beyond the others.

But for grace of movement and especially for speed, the dusty old King Crow runs them close, though he is very shabby-looking at present; or rather, there seem to be youngsters about, who have not yet got the lyre-shaped tail full fledged (when *don't* birds breed, in the Plains?).

The Hoopoe is a delightful person of totally different character: a carefully clad old-maidenly person, with mincing gait and an elaborate headdress. But the vigour with which it wields its pick-axe head forbids the simile. Do the close-shut back-turned crest feathers balance the long slightly curved bill? It looks so. I like the creature best with its crest up: as when,