

TUBERCULOSIS DISPENSARIES.

BY LIEUT.-COLONEL S. E. EVANS, I.M.S.

PART VI.

HAVING decided that the patient is to be treated at the dispensary, he is given a blue form on which any prescription that may be necessary is written, a white form telling him the days and hours he must attend and directing him to be careful to bring the blue form with him every time, and a green card containing the 'Rules for Consumptive patients and those looking after them'. It will be observed that these rules deal chiefly with measures to prevent infection and with homely adaptations of the open air method of treatment. These points will best be considered when we are dealing with domiciliary treatment but it will be noticed that directions as regards coughing have been forgotten. The patient should always cover his mouth when he coughs, *not* with his naked hand but with a cloth or handkerchief. Such articles should either be burnt or soaked in disinfectant and then boiled as soon after use as possible. They should not be placed in the soiled linen cupboard with other clothes or sent to the laundry. The patient is also advised as to diet, smoking, alcohol, and told to take his temperature regularly morning and evening, jot it down, and bring the records with him every time he calls. He is informed that if he comes to the dispensary at a particular time he will receive a thermometer for eightpence and be taught by the nurse how to use it. It may also be necessary to supply him with a sputum flash.

Before proceeding to follow the patient to his home it may be as well to note one or two points connected with his subsequent visits to the dispensary. In following the progress of the case the temperature, pulse, weight, general feeling of well being, the condition of the digestive tract, and the amount of sputum as evidenced by the 'number of spits', are the items to watch. The intelligent interest patients will take in these matters and the care with which they will record their temperatures and the number of 'spits' is quite remarkable. Finally, if after a period of observation it is found that he is a suitable case, he will be put on a course of tuberculin and get the injections when he calls at the dispensary. The question is often raised whether this little operation cannot be left to the general practitioner. All who have had anything to do with the treatment of pulmonary tuberculosis—Tuberculosis and tuberculin dispensary and sanatorium and hospital authorities alike—are agreed that this cannot be done. It is dangerous in the hands of any but those who have made a special study of the subject.

On the day following the patient's first application for treatment the nurse visits him in his home. The duties which she performs there have already been enumerated. Stated briefly these consist in taking note of and advising in the matter of his general environment; pointing out the steps necessary to prevent the spread of infection; advising as to the best way of

carrying out the doctor's instructions as regards personal treatment (diet, fresh air, rest and exercise); and preparing the way for his visit and for the mustering of the family (contacts) for examination. As regards this last point it is sometimes found more convenient to arrange for the examination of contacts at the dispensary.

In a day or two the medical officer in charge visits the home. His attention is directed to. 1. Improving the general sanitary condition of the dwelling. 2. Undertaking the domiciliary treatment of the sick. 3. Examination of contacts.

Domestic Sanitation. Attention is paid to general cleanliness, the free admission of air and light by every available means, overcrowding, the separation of the things used by the patient from those used by the rest of the household and their disinfection or destruction and the disinfection of the house.

General cleanliness, the free admission of air and light, and overcrowding need no special comment. The local authorities may be appealed to in cases of gross overcrowding but the provisions of the law seem to be inadequate and workers in this connection have to resort to appealing to the good sense of the occupiers. The patient should have a room to himself. The furniture should be as scanty and simple as possible. All curtains, bed-hangings, carpets, rugs, pictures and other unnecessary articles should be removed. Windows should be left open top and bottom and, in some cases, removed entirely. Separate table utensils should be reserved for the patient and sterilised by boiling after every meal. All soiled linen, both bed and personal, should be stored apart from that belonging to the rest of the family and washed separately and on a separate day, the process beginning by boiling. A jar or cup containing 5 per cent carbolic solution should be used for spitting into. At least twice in the twenty-four hours this vessel should be filled with boiling water; the contents emptied down the W. C. and then thoroughly cleansed again with boiling water which should be similarly disposed of. When coughing a cloth or handkerchief should be held before the mouth. Cloths should be burnt immediately, handkerchiefs boiled once a day. They should on no account be placed in the soiled linen closet with the other clothes. The bedside table should be sponged every day with carbolic solution or other disinfectant. In addition to these items of special disinfection, the public health authorities should carry out a general disinfection of the premises and contents and may be appealed to do so. According to Dr. A. Middleton Hewat, the following are the generally accepted conditions under which the health officer should undertake disinfection of tuberculous houses:—1. On receipt of notification, (a) All rooms in the patient's house (b) all bedding which has been used by the patient, and which is going to be used by other members of the household and (c) the work place of the patient should be disinfected. 2. At frequent intervals, all rooms occupied by the patient since the first disinfection should be re-disinfected. 3. On removal of the patient to a sanatorium or other hospital, the house, bedding, clothing, and all utensils should be disinfected. 4. On removal of the patient to ano-

ther house, the house previously occupied should be disinfected. 5. On death of a patient the house, bedding, clothing &c. should be disinfected. In Scotland, by Sec. 46, 47, 48, of the Public Health (Scotland) Act, 1897, the medical officer of health has full powers to disinfect tuberculous houses. In those towns in England where pulmonary tuberculosis has been made a 'dangerous infectious disorder' within the meaning of the Public Health Act, 1875, the powers of the M. O. H. are the same as that for all infectious diseases. In towns where voluntary or no notification is in force disinfection is subject to the consent of the tenant but this is as a rule not difficult to obtain if the infectious nature of the disease, and the urgent need for disinfection in the interests of the household are pointed out to him.

(To be continued.)

THE POETRY OF MATTHEW ARNOLD.

By A. B. JOHNSTON, M.A.

PART II.

Rabindranath Tagore once wrote that he left his readers to make their own interpretations. What is the significance of *Sohrab and Rustum*? Arnold leaves the reader to guess. Browning writes in "A Death in the Desert."

"For life with all it yields of joy and woe,
Of hope and fear—believe the aged friend—
Is just our chance of the prize of learning love."

So *Sohrab and Rustum* have learned love, but at a cost; for the cup is dashed from Rustum's lips at his first sip, and from the warm hearted Sohrab, pierced by his father's unwitting spear.

"Unwillingly the spirit fled away,
Regretting the warm mansions which it left,
And youth, and bloom, and this delightful world."

Was it worthwhile? What comes after death? On that depends the answer. Poetry may put questions which philosophy cannot answer.

Is Browning right

"On earth the broken are,
In the heaven the perfect round."

Or in the "*Ring and the Book*," when Pompilia says

"O lover of my life, O soldier saint,
No work begun shall ever pause for death!
Love will be helpful to me more and more
I' the coming course, the new path I must tread."