

Eleven people died in one house of the pneumonic plague. The disease was carried by infected rats which traveled from Korat, where the bubonic form prevailed, in freight trains loaded with rice, to Ban Phagi, 100 miles away, where plague in the pneumonic form broke out ten days later than at Korat. The reason the pneumonic form was not so prevalent in Siam is that the people live practically in the open air, so that personal contagion is greatly eliminated.

CHARLES S. BRADDOCK, JR., New York.
Late Chief Medical Inspector, Royal Siamese Government.

A Correction of the Carnegie Foundation Report on Medical Education in Montreal

To the Editor:—Permit me to utilize your columns in order to rectify an error in Bulletin 4 of the Carnegie Foundation, dealing with Medical Education in the United States and Canada. I refer to my account of the medical department of Laval University, Montreal. This institution is entirely distinct from Laval University, Quebec, which also has a medical department. The Quebec school, however, publishes in its catalogue certain data respecting the Montreal school, and I inadvertently give in my account of the Montreal school some material taken from the inadequate statement in the Quebec catalogue.

The staff of the Montreal school numbers 50, of whom 20 are professors.

The number of beds in the two general hospitals used should have been given as 200, and an additional statement that the school has several supplementary hospitals should have been made.

The lectures on chemistry for medical students are given by a professor in the medical faculty.

ABRAHAM FLEXNER, New York City.

Queries and Minor Notes

ANONYMOUS COMMUNICATIONS will not be noticed. Every letter must contain the writer's name and address, but these will be omitted, on request.

AGAR-AGAR IN CONSTIPATION

To the Editor:—Please describe the use of agar-agar in the treatment of constipation.
X. Y. Z.

To the Editor:—Please give references to the literature on the agar-agar treatment of constipation.
J. K. B.

ANSWER.—A small proportion of constipated individuals owe their constipation to a too vigorous digestion, which removes from the intestinal contents all the soluble and nutritive constituents and leaves a mass which becomes hard and dry, and in which bacteria fail to produce the acids which normally stimulate the bowels to move. This difficulty is often increased by a too nutritious diet; that is, the patient is not in the habit of eating enough food with debris in it, such as whole wheat or graham bread and the vegetables and fruits which have indigestible fibers.

For this condition agar-agar is prescribed because it is an insoluble and indigestible substance with a marked affinity for water; consequently, when a considerable quantity of it is taken it absorbs water in the intestinal canal, and thus renders the feces soft and bulky. The softness ensures easy passage and their bulk stimulates the action of the bowel on the principle that tension of a muscle arouses its contractile power.

Agar-agar is found in commerce in the form of strips, which must be ground or cut into small pieces for use. It can also be obtained in the form of a coarse powder. It is administered in a dose of from a teaspoonful to a tablespoonful, or more, once or twice daily, mixed with some form of food, such as cereal, stewed apples, etc.

The following articles discuss this subject:

- Schmidt, A.: Explanation and Rational Treatment of Habitual Constipation, *München. med. Wchnschr.*, Oct. 10, 1905; abstracted in *THE JOURNAL*, Dec. 23, 1905, p. 1992.
- Mangelsdorff: Agar-agar in Habitual Constipation, *Therap. Monatshefte*, May, 1908; abstracted in *THE JOURNAL*, June 20, 1908, p. 2117.
- Gompertz, L. M.: Chronic Constipation Clinically Considered, *Am. Jour. Med. Science*, October, 1909.

- Martinet, A.: Agar-agar in Chronic Constipation, *Presse Médicale*, Paris, March 30, 1910.
- Gompertz, L. M.: Agar-agar Treatment of Chronic Constipation, *Practitioner*, London, May, 1910; abstracted in *THE JOURNAL*, July 2, 1910, p. 89.
- Morse, L. J.: Agar-agar in Treatment of Constipation in Childhood, *THE JOURNAL*, Sept. 10, 1910, p. 934.

WORKS ON PRODUCTION OF CLEAN MILK

To the Editor:—I note in *THE JOURNAL* (January 7, p. 48), an editorial on milk production, in which you refer to an article in *Hoard's Dairyman*. Please give me the address of the publishers, and the names of publications and publishers of any other recent works on the production of clean milk.

W. B. SUMMERALL, Atlanta, Ga.

ANSWER.—*Hoard's Dairyman* is a periodical published in Chicago, at 164 Dearborn Street.

The following are some of the books which may be consulted on this subject; the Hygienic Laboratory bulletin gives a very complete bibliography:

- Pearson: *Jensen's Milk Hygiene*, J. B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia.
- Spargo: *The Common Sense of the Milk Question*, Macmillan Co., New York.
- Milk and its Relation to the Public Health, Bull. 56, Hyg. Lab., U. S. Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service, Washington, D. C.
- Ward: *Pure Milk and the Public Health*, Taylor and Carpenter, Ithaca.

WATER SUPPLIES AND TYPHOID

To the Editor:—Three or four years ago *THE JOURNAL* published a comprehensive article on the water-supply of cities, showing the sources of water and the death rate from typhoid during the year. I have probably loaned the article and am not now able to locate it with the indexes at hand. Can you give me the date on which it appeared, and also any more recent articles along this line?

G. L. KING, Alliance, Ohio.

ANSWER.—The article referred to is probably one which appeared serially in *THE JOURNAL*, May 18 and 23 and June 1 and 8, 1907. Other articles on the subject which may be of interest are as follows:

- Typhoid Epidemics at Ithaca; special article in *THE JOURNAL*, March 21 and 28 and April 4, 1903.
- Typhoid Epidemic at Butler, Pa.; special article in *THE JOURNAL*, Dec. 12, 1903, p. 1476.
- Fulton, J. S.: Typhoid Fever and Hindrances in its Prophylaxis, *THE JOURNAL*, Jan. 9, 1904, p. 1.
- Johnson, W. S.: Quality of Public Water-Supplies, *THE JOURNAL*, Aug. 31, 1907, p. 762.
- Clark, H. W.: Filtration of Public Water-Supplies, *THE JOURNAL*, Aug. 31, 1907, p. 704.
- Dutton, W. F.: Responsibilities of Municipalities in the Ohio Valley for Epidemics of Typhoid Fever, *THE JOURNAL*, Oct. 31, 1908, p. 1496.
- Breitenbach, O. C.: Choleraform Diarrhea of Cold Weather—"Winter Cholera," *THE JOURNAL*, Oct. 31, 1908, p. 1496.
- Soper, G. A.: The Discharge of Sewage into Tidal Waters, *THE JOURNAL*, April 17, 1909, p. 1221.
- Evans, W. A.: Lake Michigan Water for Drinking Purposes, *THE JOURNAL*, Oct. 2, 1909, p. 1091.
- Wood, H. B.: The Economic Value of Protecting Water-Supplies, *THE JOURNAL*, Oct. 2, 1909, p. 1093.
- Lumsden, L. L.: Epidemiologic Studies of Typhoid Fever, *THE JOURNAL*, Oct. 16, 1909, p. 1257.
- Typhoid Fever in Milwaukee and the Water-Supply; special article in *THE JOURNAL*, July 16, 1910, p. 211.
- Fell, G. E.: The Currents at the Easterly End of Lake Erie and Head of Niagara River, and Their Influence on Sanitation of City of Buffalo, *THE JOURNAL*, Sept. 3, 1910, p. 828.
- Dutton, W. F.: Present-Day Problems and Progress in Prevention of Typhoid Fever, *THE JOURNAL*, Sept. 3, 1910, p. 834.
- Typhoid Fever in Detroit and the Water-Supply; special article in *THE JOURNAL*, Oct. 8, 1910, p. 1284.
- Typhoid Fever in Des Moines, Iowa, and the Water-Supply; special article in *THE JOURNAL*, Jan. 7, 1911, p. 41.

WHY THE FETUS DOES NOT DROWN IN THE LIQUOR AMNII

To the Editor:—Why is it that the fetus does not drown in the bag of waters?
H. K. M.

ANSWER.—Until the fetus is expelled into the world the lungs are in a condition of complete atelectasis. No respiratory movements have occurred; hence there has been no opportunity for the liquor amnii to enter the air cells. The fetus obtains its oxygen through the maternal blood and cannot drown. After expulsion there does not remain a sufficient amount of liquid in the air passages to interfere with breathing.