A RAPID METHOD OF DIAGNOSIS IN MALARIA.

By J. CROPPER, M.D.

The following is a method which I have found useful in practice, and this must be my excuse for bringing it before the Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene.

It has often been said to me that it is impossible to examine every case of malaria in out-patient practice, owing to the length of time required; but I feel that in order to become thoroughly acquainted with the diseases of any locality this is necessary.

I have not seen the method described, it is as follows:—

Thick films are made on the slide without even a coverslip, so thick that the blood when allowed to run to one side is seen of a bright red colour. This is rapidly dried and examined directly under a drop of cedar oil and a $\frac{1}{2}$ in. immersion. (The drying of this film causes the only delay).

In a dry country such as Persia, films will dry in the open air without any special treatment in about half a minute. In a damper climate they should be exposed to the sun, turned upside down. In damp and cold weather they should be dried gently over a spirit flame. In any case one can begin the examination before the *whole* film is dry, and very often the information got is sufficient before the thicker edge is properly "set."

I have often proved the existence of malaria (verified of course by a properly stained slide), in one minute by the watch from the time of drawing blood. The thicker part of the film is best examined first, and from the character of the pigment the species of malarial parasite can after a very little practice be diagnosed in most cases with great ease, almost as easily as in a wet film.

If no characteristic pigment is found in two minutes, the case is most likely not one of malaria; in any case of doubt of course the other methods are available, but probably not more than one case in ten of untreated malaria would escape detection.

I do not pretend for a moment that this is a method by which beginners can study malaria any more than that of Sir RONALD ROSS;

but it is very rapid and accurate, and one moreover which avoids nearly all the pitfalls inseparable from those more commonly used, and indeed from Sir RONALD ROSS's method, which I have tried. At starting of course a student should carefully compare his dry slides with slides carefully stained in the usual way. This gives confidence and is a valuable check to the work.

I have no hesitation in saying that once this method is given a fair trial, it will be found of real use in out-patient work in tropical countries, where stress of work makes every minute of the greatest value.

NOTE.—The diffuse and fine dots of tertian, the compact and coarser dots of quartan, and the peculiar arrangement of the pigment in the crescents in tropical malaria are very characteristic, not to mention pigmented leucocytes. They are as well seen as in a wet film, the chief point being to be sure that the pigment is on the same level as the red corpuscles, and disappears totally on focussing up or down.