

in his opinion the dark-skinned races are destined to outlast the lighter or Aryan group, and still another anthropologic specialist pronounces the opinion long since favored by certain of his European confrères, that in this country we are reverting to the type of the red man, thus affording us Americans at least a chance to get into the ranks of the majority when Truthful James' question as to whether the Caucasian is "played out" is finally answered in the affirmative.

Possibly, however, the future of the human race is not so altogether dark; there may be something better ahead than these scientists can foresee, that is, looking at it from our point of view. Just now it seems to be the fashion to take a pessimistic view of things; the times are out of joint to a large class of modern thinkers on social and other topics, and this may be only one of the signs of the times in this particular line. Degeneration of individuals and races is much more the theme of popularizing writers at least, and these prophecies may be rather incidents of the prevalent tendency than the results of the fullest scientific consideration of all the facts and possibilities.

It is a well-known and established principle that race progress and race retrogression depend rather on adaptation to environment than directly on cerebral development, however marked that may be. Europeans degenerate in the tropics and the Aryan Hindoo with all his metaphysical subtlety, is, in all essentials, an inferior to his more practical Anglo-Saxon rulers. In the human species, moreover, the law of natural selection is only in part efficient; to a certain extent it is annulled, as LAWSON TAIT and others have long since pointed out, and there are a host of moral, social and political conditions that make or mar its progress. The environment therefore is a complex of conditions, only a small part of which are so thoroughly understood as to afford a basis for foretelling the outcome of any race or people beyond their immediate future. A scientific authority will hardly add materially to his reputation by venturing such prophetic utterances, except it be avowedly as a mere tentative opinion.

A recent French writer, Professor SCHRADER, has, in the *Revue Mensuelle* of the Paris School of Anthropology, offered some views in regard to this question of race advance or retrogression that are at least hopeful as to the future possibilities of what we have been accustomed to call the inferior races. He holds that, given a better environment, the most inferior race may become superior to all others, and that a race long resident in a certain *milieu* becomes best suited to it and, granted equal facilities, has the advantage over all others there resident; as an example he refers to the native population of Mexico, which though conquered and oppressed for centuries is now rising and furnishing the ruling class again in their country. There appears to be a degree of truth in this last

statement, but the view he with others seems to hold, that the climate and soil affect the race type to produce that most suitable to them, which is that of the aboriginal inhabitants, is less encouraging. "Is it an illusion," he says, "that reveals to us in the physiognomy of the Yankee the hard bony face of the redskin?" This generalization of the idea that physical environment molds the human type is a favorite one with some European anthropologists, and its particular application is almost invariably made to this country and its European descended population. The physical peculiarities of the American aborigines are, after all, not so altogether objectionable; we can endure at least the contemplation of this prophesied fate of our race in this country, when we think of that of the portion of it that has displaced the Bushman and the Hottentot.

Speaking seriously, however, it may be repeated that speculations of this character are too indefinite and uncertain to be depended upon; they are much like Mark Twain's figurings on the length of the Mississippi—attempts to furnish the largest returns of theory from a minimal investment of facts. When in the distant future they, or anything like them, come to realization it will be as probably the result of factors not yet imagined as along the lines fancied by these prophets of science of the present. It is perfectly possible even that events may occur, as they have in the past, to check civilization and put the world some steps backward in its march, but it does not seem very probable that any very serious retrogression is at present imminent or that the inferior races are just now very rapidly coming to the top. It is safer and really more scientific to watch developments and to let such uncertain generalizations from the limited facts alone.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Treatment of Typhoid Fever.

CLEVELAND, OHIO, Oct. 12, 1897.

To the Editor:—Will you permit me to second the wise suggestion which appears in the JOURNAL, of October 2, under the caption "A Way to Settle the Respective Merits of the 'Brand' and 'Woodbridge' Treatment of Typhoid Fever." Permit me, also, to assure your correspondent that I cheerfully accept all of his conditions and I will meet such a commission as he advises, whenever it may command my services and wherever it may choose to hold its sessions, whether in some typhoid stricken city in the United States, in England, on the Plains of Thessaly, or wherever the disease may occur; only show me the patients and I will supervise the treatment of as many cases of typhoid as may be necessary to enable the commission to make a *final* and *decisive* report. No one shall be taxed either for my services or for my expenses.

With the possibility of verifying the clinical diagnosis of typhoid fever by the diazo-reaction of Ehrlich and by the serum test of Widal, it ought to be possible to "settle" this much discussed question at once and forever. After having expressed myself in full accord with "M." on all of the essential

points of his communication will he permit me to enter a mild protest against the, no doubt, unintentional injustice of including me in the deprecation of "the redolent with personalities" phase of a recent controversy. No one can abominate more than I do the "bitter personalities," yet it has been my lot to have been the recipient of more captious, unreasoning and even insulting criticisms, than perhaps, any other living man, and I would have been more than human or less than man if I had not resented some of them, but I appeal to the medical profession to witness that even in the heat of debate, and under the provocation of the grossest misrepresentations my speeches and my written communications have always been as free as possible from "offensive personalities," even in the controversy to which "M." alludes. I did not correct the erroneous statements or false inferences which referred to myself alone, although some then were calculated, if given credence, to do me grievous harm and as soon as the "mud pelting" was directed toward me alone, I at once *dropped* the correspondence.

Again placing myself at the command of the commission suggested by "M." I remain

Your most obedient servant,

JOHN ELIOT WOODBRIDGE, M.D.

Woodbridge Versus Typhoid Fever.

SAN DIEGO, CAL., Oct. 9, 1897.

To the Editor:—I heartily concur with your correspondent "M." that the time is opportune to determine the status of Woodbridge's method as an abortifacient of typhoid fever. Certain it is that no just conclusion can be attained through acrimonious discussions in the medical journals, and meanwhile, possibly, humanity suffers. I would therefore suggest an appeal to the Académie de Médecine of Paris, members of which would doubtless be willing to pass upon a subject of such importance. There hospital and other facilities are unsurpassed, and it is well known that in times past its members have solved many problems of interest to the medical and scientific world.

For example, says Pareira, homeopathy has been fairly put to the test of experiment by some of the members of the Académie, and the result was a failure. Andral tried it on 140 patients, in the presence of the homeopaths themselves, adopting every requisite care and precaution, yet in not one instance was he successful!

At a later period, I believe members of the same distinguished body, with the active concurrence of Gull and Spurzheim, investigated the claims of phrenology and declared many of them untenable.

Within the recollection of the writer, specimens (roots) of the *sarracenia purpurea*, at that time a much vaunted remedy for smallpox among whites and Indians of Canada, were forwarded to the Académie and after a thorough trial were found to be inert.

I propose then that Parke, Davis & Co., already widely and favorably known for their interest in the advancement of materia medica, etc., transmit the necessary literature and a sufficiency of their Woodbridge tablets to the Académie de Médecine, requesting a thorough investigation of their possibilities in typhoid fever. I am sufficiently interested to assist in paying the expense if necessary. C. M. FENN, M.D.

An Interesting Case.

FORT SMITH, ARK., Sept. 28, 1897.

To the Editor:—In 1895, while in charge of the U. S. Jail at this place, I treated a very interesting case. A strong, robust young man, during the progress of a fight, received a severe contused wound about two inches in length and laying bare the frontal bone just over the right eye, which in spite of the ordinary

antiseptic treatment proceeded to suppurate very freely, and, notwithstanding bichlorid douches and iodoform dressings were faithfully employed, the process was not stayed, but rather increased. On the third day after the injury, in an insignificant little scratch on the cheek two or three inches below and to the outer side of the eye, erysipelas developed and rapidly spread until the whole face was involved, and at the second removal of the dressing after the wound became involved in the erysipelatos process, I found it firmly sealed by a dry scab and presenting no evidence of pus. Being anxious to see the outcome this was not disturbed and the face was lightly covered with absorbent cotton saturated with bichlorid of mercury 1 to 2,000, which application I had been using in the treatment of the erysipelas. Now from this fourth day there was not an untoward symptom or a drop of pus in or about this wound, and when the scab dropped off I found a nicely and perfectly cicatrized scar. The stitches were allowed to remain in the wound nineteen days, and when removed, notwithstanding there had been stitch abscesses developed during the first two or three days, were found firmly impacted in the tissues, requiring some little effort in their removal, and I firmly believe had they not been reinfected from without they would have remained indefinitely in the tissues without producing any irritation or inflammation.

This case was reported at the time at our local medical society with the prediction that a toxin would be found which when introduced into the body would be fatal to the germs of suppuration and infection, and it seems that my prediction is thus early about to be verified. W. R. BROOKSHER, M.D.

Report of Three Cases of Asphyxia from Submersion.

GREENVILLE, TEXAS, Oct. 16, 1897.

To the Editor:—I deem it necessary to preface this letter with some preliminary remarks bearing upon this unfortunate affair. These cases consisted of one prominent wealthy man, and two young women. There are various rumors and fine-spun theories by the laity, relative to the causes and reasons why this drowning occurred.

The examination of the bodies was not made at the place of drowning, which was due to oversight on the part of the coroner. I was summoned to make examination of the bodies after they were brought to town, which was about ten hours after the accident.

I obtained the following facts from reliable members of the searching party, as follows: The drowning occurred Wednesday about 10 P.M. on June 18, 1897, about six miles northwest of Greenville, in a "pasture pool." There were two men and two women, and one of the men was fortunate to escape alive and report the affair.

One of the searching parties arrived from the neighborhood about two hours afterward and they observed one of the bodies floating. The searching party from Greenville arrived upon the scene about 1 A.M. and immediately removed the floating body, it being in shallow water. Rigor mortis had not set in in this case. The other two bodies were not removed until 4 A.M., and they were found in ten feet of water and rigor mortis had taken place. I made a careful examination of the bodies and found that all three of these cases presented practically all the external signs of asphyxia due to submersion and gave my opinion, based upon the statement of the only eye witness and searching parties, that they met their death by accidental drowning.

The special point of scientific interest was why one of these bodies was found floating two hours after accident, and two were at the bottom of pool. The floating one was found in about five feet of water at an inclined angle, with the face at the surface of the water. The other two (the man and the