

T H E

MONTREAL MEDICAL JOURNAL.

VOL. XXXIII.

SEPTEMBER, 1904.

No. 9.

MARMOREK'S ANTI-TUBERCULAR SERUM IN THE TREATMENT OF PULMONARY TUBERCULOSIS.

BY

ARTHUR J. RICHER, M.D.,

Montreal.

Since the communication made before the Academy of Medicine in Paris by Marmorek relative to the preparation and the uses of his tubercular anti-toxine, a deal has been written, against it at first, but recently of a more favourable nature. We know of the attack made upon this product by no less an authority than Dieulafoy, and the stir it caused at the time of its publication. It is evident that on the one hand the claims of Marmorek had been misunderstood, while on the other hand the results obtained in Dr. Dieulafoy's clinic must have been misinterpreted. If we look up the documents, the few that are available, we find that at the outset two reasons contributed largely to these unfavourable results. In the first place the immunisation of the animals had not been carried to its full extent, giving a serum not sufficiently potent, which necessitated injections of very large quantities of serum, up to 40 gms., adding to the already depressing disease by super-imposing sero-toxic symptoms. In the second place, at the request of Marmorek, only advanced and hopeless cases were treated, so that should there have been any improvements noted, little doubt would have been left as to the therapeutic value of the serum. Now it seems to me, judging from past experience with anti-toxic serums, notably that of diphtheria, that anti-toxines exercise a toxic influence if given too late in the disease. In dealing with tuberculosis, we are dealing with a disease in which the types manifestly differ. We have, for instance, numbers of invalids with localized or discreet lesions who never show any effect of toxine absorption. Again, it is not unusual to find exacerbations during the course of chronic tuberculosis, in which the influence of the serum seems limited to the recent involvements.

We here offer a small number of observations of various types of the disease treated with Marmorek's serum; and while it is but fair to allow us to draw some conclusions, these observations are not sufficiently complete to make the results final.