

in the early stages that much, if any, benefit can be hoped for. It is claimed by leading medical journals that if we compare the best results which Dr. Koch claims with the returns of any of our large chest hospitals and other institutions for the treatment of consumption, we shall find that a very large proportion of cases in the first stage are there relieved of all symptoms in about the same period of time; that the cases of limited excavation are improved and often remain quiescent for months and sometimes for years before the disease again becomes active, but that the cases of advanced disease fail to respond to all forms of treatment alike. Much of the success of hospital treatment depends upon hygienic remedies,—efficient nursing, regularity of life, and freedom from all sources of irritation. Dr. Koch expressly warns us that these conditions are just as essential in the successful application of his remedy. Koch repeatedly insists on the facts: 1. That he cannot kill the bacillus that is the cause of the disease. 2. That he cannot remove the bacillus without removing with it the tissues in which it grows. 3. That he can remove these tissues only when they are in suitable situations.

Furthermore, some of von Bergmann's cases are said to have already relapsed. It is also stated that in a case of lupus under the care of Dr. Levy, which was shown as an example of complete cure, the disease recurred with great intensity a fortnight after the discontinuance of the injections.

Finally, at a meeting of the Berlin Society of Public Hygiene on November 24th, Dr. Köhler summed up as to the discovery by saying that the remedy is unquestionably of considerable importance as an aid to diagnosis, but that, as regards curative efficacy, the medical profession must suspend its judgment till more definite information, both as to the details of the treatment and its results, is forthcoming. While a correspondent of a leading medical journal writes: "Nobody reading carefully Koch's own words would for a moment be wild enough to lend him the thought that he has found yet the means of curing consumption."

Of the many communications from

Berlin to the last issue of the *British Medical Journal* (Nov. 29) which we have just received, one writes: "Berlin at the present moment must be the place in all Europe where tubercle bacilli most do congregate. Hotels, lodging houses, and hospitals, public and private, are full of patients in every stage of phthisis, and suffering from every form of tuberculous affection, who have come to the German capital as to a Pool of Bethesda." Another that, "Thousands of sufferers will quickly and eagerly clamour for relief or cure; is it too much to say that thousands will be doomed to disappointment and to death?" Another, "It is now known that some cases of death have actually occurred apparently as the result of the treatment." Again, one more says: "Koch indeed seems—for the present, at least—to have withdrawn from the clinical field into his laboratory, where he remains somewhat like Achilles in his tent. He is thoroughly disgusted with the appearance of a vulgar "boom" which the whole thing has assumed, and he is particularly annoyed at having been driven by circumstances, very much against his will, to bring his results, unfinished as they are, prematurely before the scientific world. He has now firmly made up his mind to remain silent till such time as his investigations are completed." It must be remembered that he was urged against his will to read his paper at the late International Congress in Berlin.

In conclusion we would say, the leading medical journals enjoin caution. The *New York Medical Journal*, of Dec. 6, concludes an article thus: "It still remains to be seen whether Koch's treatment of tubercular disease rests on a wonderful discovery or on a delusion; but, whatever may turn out to be the case, it will undoubtedly lead to processes that will eventually develop our mastery over disease most notably." And further: "It is impossible to disregard or disbelieve Robert Koch, save after careful and prolonged investigation. So great is his name—so great his genius. We most earnestly hope that in this matter the medical profession will wait patiently and calmly for more facts."