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MEDICINE.

A Peculiar Outbreak of Febrile Disease.

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On the evening of Friday, 2nd March, a boy, aged 15, an inmate of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Industrial School for Boys, Abercromby Street, Glasgow, complained of headache, and was sent to bed in his dormitory. Next morning he rose with the other boys and made his bed, but being observed to be very unsteady on his legs was sent to the sick-room, where he died at 8 a.m. On 3rd March another boy, aged 14, complained of headache, and was sent to the sick-room and put under treatment. On the 5th, at 1 a.m., he became very delirious, and had to be held down in his bed. He was chloroformed and an enema of 20 grains of bromide of potassium administered. At 3 a.m. the convulsive movements ceased, and he seemed to fall into a natural sleep, but sunk and died at 4 a.m. At 5 p.m. on the 7th another boy, aged 11, reported himself ill, having vomited shortly before, and was sent to bed in his dormitory. The superintendent's wife found him asleep at 6 p.m. A boy sent with tea could not rouse him, and he died comatose at 8 p.m. On the morning of the 8th, when the occupants of the middle dormitory were being wakened a fourth boy, aged 14, was found to be unconscious, and by a quarter past 6 he was dead. Only the second of these four boys had been seen by the Medical Officer of the Institution. These mysterious events, and the fact that 19 other inmates were more or less ill, led him to report the outbreak at the Sanitary Office on the morning of the 8th March; and 12 of the more serious cases were in the afternoon transferred to a separate ward in the Fever Hospital, Belvidere. On the 9th, 14 new cases occurred; on the 10th, 5; 11th, 8; 13th, 2 boys and two girls. These were the only inmates of the Girls' Department who were seized. They were employed in the kitchen in which the food for both departments was prepared.

Before proceeding to give a short statement of the chief clinical and pathological features of this disease it is only right to remark that the difficulties

in the way of obtaining the facts were great, and were but partially overcome. The arrangements for treating the sick are very defective. No records are kept of the history, symptoms, and treatment of patients. The meagre facts given as to the 4 cases of sudden death were got from casual observers, only in one case supplemented by medical observation. The children are very dull and stupid, and practically contributed nothing to the subjective information. On the afternoon of the 8th March two trained nurses were got from the Glasgow Sick Poor and Private Nursing Association, one or other of whom was always on duty and took temperatures and made short notes of symptoms. The 19 children who are said to have sickened on the 8th means more probably all who took ill along with the fatal cases, and were at that date found ill. The numbers given afterwards are however correctly assigned. The more severe cases, in which the temperature was about 100° at the outset, including 12 of those found ill when the outbreak was reported, were transferred to Belvidere, where careful notes were taken by Dr. W. W. Christie.

Summing up the results of this investigation, we find that the St. Mary's Industrial Schools are situated in a densely populated district of the City; that they are enclosed by surrounding tenements and other large buildings, along with a graveyard which was in 1875 described as "greatly overcrowded with bodies, and kept in a state of rank disorder," in which have since been interred 577 bodies; that the free space attached to both, and available for exercise is small; that the internal air-space in both is deficient; that the inmates are children between 5 and 15 years of age, who are the waifs of a large city, weak in constitution, tainted with a proclivity to scrofulous diseases, and generally of low vitality; that the death-rate is in both higher than that of other Industrial Schools which receive the same class of Glasgow children, and higher than that of children of the same age living in the lowest district of Glasgow; that the proportion of the total deaths caused by pulmonary diseases is enormous, and higher than among children of the same age in the worst district of Glasgow; that, in the words of the Government Inspector, "contagious or infectious