

CURRENT MEDICAL LITERATURE

SICKNESS SURVEYS.

The first sickness survey conducted by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company was made in Rochester, N. Y. The work was then extended and similar studies were conducted in North Carolina, Boston, Mass., and the Chelsea district of New York City. The company has just issued a report on the Sickness Survey of Principal Cities in Pennsylvania and West Virginia, which is the Sixth Community Sickness Survey. The authors are Dr. Lee K. Frankel and Dr. Louis I. Dublin. A separate report is made on the sickness survey of Pittsburgh, Pa.

In the general report, the health status of 374,001 persons was obtained by the company's agents. The agents were asked to record only serious cases of sickness. They discovered 7,333 cases, making the sickness rate 19.6 per 1,000.

It was found that sickness was responsible for the loss of at least 2 per cent. of the effective working time of the wage-earners. This causes not only loss of wages, but frequently is a source of misery and destitution. Of the 7,333 persons reported ill, 6,908, or 94.2 per cent., were unable to work, and 5,384, or 73.4 per cent., had a physician in attendance, 25 per cent. of the sick were in bed at home, 8.2 per cent. were in hospitals, and 61 per cent. were ambulant cases, unable to work. Those sick, yet able to work, constituted 5.8 per cent.

Accidents and injuries were the chief cause of sickness in this survey, amounting to 602 cases, or 11.2 per cent. Then came "rheumatism," which amounted to 433 cases, or 8.0 per cent. "Rheumatism" probably refers to such diseases as neuritis, tuberculosis, gonorrheal and post-traumatic diseases of the joints, bones and muscular system and function neuroses. Influenza caused 392 cases of sickness; pneumonia, 307 cases; diseases of the stomach, 183 cases; functional disorders of the nervous system, 181 cases; tuberculosis of the lungs, 180 cases; colds, coryza and rhinitis, 166 cases; bronchitis, 156 cases; normal childbirth, 125 cases. There were other causes of sickness, such as asthma, diseases of the heart, tonsillitis, appendicitis, cerebral hemorrhage, apoplexy and paralysis.—*American Journal of Public Health*.

THE WASSERMANN REACTION.

J. H. Larkin, I. J. Levy and J. A. Fordyce, New York (*Journal A. M. A.*, June 1, 1918), reply to the article by Drs. Symmers, Darlington and Bittman, in *The Journal A. M. A.*, Feb. 2, 1918, p. 279. According to Larkin and his collaborators, the test has fallen into disrepute with