

THE SERUM TREATMENT OF DIPHTHERIA.—Belin (*Munch. med. Woch.* October 19th, 1897) reports upon the cases recently treated in Koht's clinic in Strassburg. A vigorous local treatment was employed previous to the introduction of the serum treatment, but not since. Five hundred and twenty-nine cases of diphtheria were treated in 1896, and of these only 56, or 10.6 per cent., died. There were among them 286 severe or moderately severe cases, and the mortality among these was 19.6 per cent. (1) Of the 243 slight cases none died. (2) Of 98 severe or moderately severe cases 6 died; 3,000 units of Behring's serum were generally injected in these cases. (3) Of 10 severe septic cases 6 died, but 4 of these were moribund on admission. (4) In 181 cases the larynx was involved, but in 29 of these the disease was relatively mild; 42 recovered without tracheotomy, whereas 132 were tracheotomized. In 99 cases tracheotomy had to be done immediately after admission. Of those not operated upon none died, and among the tracheotomized 44, or 33 per cent., died. The results obtained after tracheotomy showed a very considerable improvement upon past experience; the greatest number of these cases belonged to the severe or severest form of diphtheria. Owing to overcrowding broncho-pneumonia claimed some victims among the tracheotomized. A distinct diminution in the mortality was observed among children admitted on the fourth and fifth days of the disease and later. In two fatal cases clotting was found in the heart; the author has observed four such cases in all since the introduction of the serum treatment, but never before. The effect of the serum treatment was undoubtedly favorable. The beneficial action on the local lesion was obvious. In diphtheritic croup the signs of stenosis disappeared much more rapidly than formerly. The general condition of the patient quickly improved, but the

good effect on the pulse and temperature was not so obvious. The serum treatment only failed in cases of the severest sepsis, but the author is convinced that even here recovery is not impossible if the treatment be commenced early. Perhaps the doses given were not always large enough. No unfavorable result could be distinctly attributed to the serum treatment except the rash. Some careful observations were made upon the appearance of albumen in the urine, and upon an increase in its amount; the idea of the serum exercising some effect on the kidney could not be definitely excluded. A skin eruption was seen in 2.8 per cent. of the cases. In six cases it resembled scarlet fever, in five urticaria, in one measles, and in three a polymorphic erythema. The presence of a scarlet fever epidemic made the diagnosis between a scarlet fever and a serum rash at times difficult. Post-diphtheritic paralysis would appear to be more frequent since the serum treatment was introduced; here it was present in 20 out of 526 cases. Relapse is also more frequent; it was noted on four occasions. The above evidence, distinctly in favor of the serum treatment, is the more important as the first experiences of the treatment in this clinic did not speak much in its support.—*Brit. Med. Jour.*

BACTERIOLOGICAL RESEARCHES CONCERNING A FATAL CASE OF FEBRILE RHEUMATISM, COMPLICATED WITH ENDOCARDITIS, PERICARDITIS, AND CHOREA.—At a recent meeting of the Paris Academy of Medicine, a report of which is published in the *Indépendance médicale* for November 24th, M. Iriboulet and M. Ceyon made the following communication: At the autopsy of a child they had procured some blood from the inferior vena cava, a segment of the mitral valve, and one of the spinal cord, with which they had obtained, in sterilized milk, anaerobic cultures of a special microbe, accompanied by