

BENJAMIN MARTEN, M.D., ON GERMS.

In 1720, Dr. Benjamin Marten, of London, England, published a small book, a few copies of which still exist. The title of the book was "A New Theory of Consumptives, More Especially of a Phthisis or Consumption of the Lungs."

In speaking of consumption, he remarks: "The original and essential cause then, may be some certain species of animalcula or wonderfully minute living creatures, that by their peculiar shape, or disagreeable parts, are invincible to our nature." He speaks of this entry into the body through the air or by food, and then says, "being there deposited in a proper nidus or nest and being produced into life, coming to perfection or increasing in bigness, may by their spontaneous motion and injurious parts, cause all the disorders that have been mentioned. He then mentions the plague, venereal disease, measles, smallpox, the "common rheum" and leprosy.

He thought if he had proper glasses he could have seen these organisms. He argues that specific diseases must be due to specific causes. As scabies was carried by a small animal that could be seen, he thought syphilis might be carried by a small animal that could not be seen.

He then remarks that it may be difficult to kill in the body these small animalculæ, and even if they could their evil effects might persist for a long time, as he foreshadowed the doctrine of toxins.

One hundred and fifty years had to go by before the "able hand to carry the theory much further than I have done" came in the person of Pasteur. As we read the work done by Dr. Benjamin Marten, we cannot refrain from thinking that he was gifted with a clear vision. He is now coming into his reward.

A COMING CHANGE IN MEDICAL PRACTICE.

The State is taking a hand in the conservation of life and the natural resources of the country quite differently to what it did a few years ago. This is the outcome in a large measure to what the medical profession has done in the way of urging for health boards, the prevention of disease, the erection of hospitals, etc.

It stands to the credit of the medical profession that it has taken such a keen interest in the medical inspection of schools. In all the countries where this has been adopted, the medical men were the first to take it up and urge it.

But medical inspection will fail in its ultimate good results if the inspection is not followed up by treatment. Those who are found to be