

AN EPIDEMIC OF WATER-BORNE TYPHOID.

TO DAY there is no question as to the typhoid bacillus of Eberth being the actual and only cause of typhoid fever, nor yet is there any doubt but that it must enter via the mouth in food or drink in order that it may bring about the disease. As a carrier of the infective agent water readily takes the first place, the great majority of the cases in this country being due to it. Occasionally the disease is milk-borne, the milk becoming infected with the bacillus from contaminated water, or from the infected hands of milker, etc. Other foods may in like manner become infected chief among which may be placed, oysters, lettuce, water cress and the like. Food may become infected by flies or other insects which have previously been in contact with infected excreta. To this latter source several outbreaks in military camps have been traced in recent years. That typhoid is even air-borne remains yet to be proven. In this connection I wish to insist on the fact that sewer gas never is a direct cause of typhoid but only a potent predisposing factor.

The epidemic to which I wish to direct attention occurred in Kingston during this past winter, (1903). Typhoid fever has never developed as a distinct outbreak here since the water pipe was extended to its present position in the harbor. Isolated cases have developed in the city but comparatively few in residents using the public water supply, most cases being from the outskirts of the city where some wells are still to be found or are cases treated in the hospitals from country, all deaths occurring being returned in the city's records.

The case and death rates for the past five years will be found in Table I.

TABLE I.

YEAR.	CASES.	DEATHS.	MORTALITY PERCENTAGE.
1898	8	4	50
1899	10	3	33.3
1900	18	4	22.2
1901	28	7	25
1902	17	4	23.5