

DIPHTHERIA.—From the paper of Dr. McClintock, in *Medical Age* for January, we extract the following important remarks regarding diphtheria: This is no doubt the most dreaded of all the children's diseases. While nearly all the others are decreasing in frequency diphtheria holds its own in the number of persons afflicted. The deaths run anywhere from ten to sixty per cent. according to the severity of the attacks. The attention that is paid to the quarantining of yellow fever, cholera, or small pox is very rigid, and yet no one thinks too much so. But the deaths from diphtheria exceed all these combined. This disease has enormously increased during the past twenty-five years. Scarlet fever in Britain has, on the other hand, greatly decreased. The cause of the disease is the bacillus of diphtheria, the Klebs-Loeffler germ. These germs find their natural soil in the human throat. In many cases these germs can merely keep alive in the throat, but cannot increase, and the person escapes an attack. It may be said the germ multiplies in the human body. There are some conditions that govern its growth and spread. The germ requires a certain range of temperature. It ceases to multiply under 68°F. and is killed by 140°F. Dried in dust it may live for months, and be carried about in this way, or in clothing. These germs cling to moist surfaces, and so do not rise in sewer gas: nor are they found in the breath of patients. The smallest portion of mucous, however, may contain many millions. These germs soon die when exposed to the sunlight. A few hours is sufficient. Sunlight is therefore one of the most effective of all disinfectants. There is but little doubt that the disease is often transmitted through milk and meat, more especially milk. It is now generally believed that when milk is the cause the milk has become infected in some way by persons, and not from the cows. Before the milk becomes cold, the germs may undergo very great increase in number. Sometimes the disease is acquired from pet animals such as the cat or dog. All these cases, however, make up a small percentage of the total. Children are gathered together in so many ways and under so many circumstances, that the opportunities for the spread of the disease are very numerous. Children are in such close contact with each other in the school, on the street, at play, and so often put objects into their mouths that have been in the mouths of other children that every facility is afforded the spread of the trouble. Promiscuous kissing is dangerous, and should be discontinued. The mother and no one else should have the right to kiss her children. Sometimes the disease is carried from one house to another by adults. This is fortunately very rare.