

advanced in agriculture. Their food became gradually changed; the proportion of fish to other food was greatly reduced; cereals were planted; bread and vegetables took a more prominent place in their bill of fare. The country was farmed, forests became fields, and cattle were raised for food. Fish were so little used that in the reign of Henry VIII. a law was passed compelling the people to have fish at their tables four times a week to prevent the ruin of the fishermen.

Leper hospitals were established, chiefly along the seaboard, where the disease was the most prevalent, but as the malady left us these were closed. The Orkneys were the last lingering places for the disease; the Cornish fishers suffered from it up to a late date. I hear that even yet, endowed leper houses exist in Cornwall. Still a few cases are to be found in the Orkneys. A gentleman sent me a very old book in which I found a paragraph to the following effect: "Leprosy is due to two causes, one an inherited taint, the other the use of fish as an article of diet, especially salmon and the livers of any of the different varieties."

Fish were not so well cured then as they now are, and consequently must have been less wholesome. Less fish is now used. There are more consumers to share the disproportionate increase in the supply of fish. More meat and less fish is the prevailing fashion. The largest leper house in Norway is at Bergen, and here is also the largest fish market in the world.

*Ætiology.*—All cases of leprosy are, in my opinion, due to dietetic causes, to a special poison introduced into the blood by some article of diet containing it. What is this article of diet? Fish is blamed, and the "fish theory" seems to me to be the most plausible.

*Hardship* has been quoted as a cause. This does not accord with the histories of my cases. English officers sent to India, surrounded by every comfort, now and then become lepers. They suffer no hardship.

*Climatic Influences* cannot be a cause, as leprosy is a disease of all climates. It is to be found amidst the sunny hills of India, along the cold sea coast of Norway, among the tropical isles of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans; it survives the cold of the Orkneys and of New Brunswick, how then can climate be adduced as a cause, except in so far as it may affect the food?

*Contagion* is given as a cause, but this I cannot admit. The contagiousness of leprosy has yet to be proved. I do not even believe it to be contagious in any erratic manner, as by co-habitation or sexual intercourse. In the olden time it was confounded with scabies and syphilis, and upon these errors it established its contagiousness. Medicines that obtained reputations for the cure of leprosy may have done so on their merits in scabies and syphilis.

*Fish Diet* is the next cause to be taken up. Fish to cause leprosy may be decomposed; they may be of a poisonous species; they may be used at a season when fish, especially in the tropics, are unwholesome; they may be salted; they may be improperly cured; they may be apparently harmless in moderation, but poisonous in excess. Some fish are injurious at certain seasons of the year. Some are more poisonous than others.

*Locality* as a cause. Leprosy affects chiefly dwellers on the sea board, and along the banks of rivers. It is said to occur inland where no fish are caught. But the people may eat salted or cured fish, and I believe, furthermore, that many cases called leprosy are simply cases of leucoderma.

The patient whose history has been related was brought up in India by a native nurse. She wanted for nothing. She underwent no hardship. The natives of the district were subject to outbreaks of leprosy. Several were lepers at the time of her residence there. The people ate largely of salt fish. Her father did not use it himself more than twice a month,