

**Mr. Jonathan Hutchinson and the Outbreak of Leprosy in Switzerland.**

Mr. Jonathan Hutchinson's indefatigable industry in endeavoring to convince people of the truth of his well-known fish hypothesis of the causation of leprosy is once more in evidence. To his recent journeys of investigation in Africa and India he has now added a short visit to the Rhone Valley to investigate an outbreak of leprosy there. The result of his inquiry has been to confirm prognostication which he expressed previously in the *Times*. He finds that in the villages in which the disease is present cured fish of poor quality is imported and eaten in considerable quantities. It is consumed not by the well-to-do, but by the peasants. It is imported to add something savory to the vegetable diet of the fast days, especially of Lent. He hopes soon to be able to supply custom-house statistics as to the quantity of cured fish imported into the Valais. He already knows that it is large and of two qualities—high-class and coarse—and that the latter makes up the bulk, and entirely goes to the peasants. It consists chiefly of herrings, but "stock fish"—that is, dried cod, tunny or some large fish cut up into blocks—are also used. Another fact which he regards as ominous was disclosed: The fish comes only in the winter and spring months, because it will not keep in warm weather. There is every reason to believe that the development of railroads has much increased the supply. That the supply on the present scale is recent may be inferred from the fact that it is not known of except on the spot. Mr. Hutchinson was assured in the most positive terms before reaching Leuk that there was no fish-eating by the Swiss peasantry. They were said to be too poor to buy the imported article, while the fresh fish of the streams are too valuable for the peasantry to think of eating them. He was told it would be useless to seek fish eaters in the mountains. His informants were leading physicians in the cities and high officials, who believed themselves well informed. Not until he got to Leuk itself had he any hint as to the reality. When he got there it was with the belief that it was hopeless to expect to obtain any direct evidence in support of the fish hypothesis of leprosy. In India a precisely parallel experience repeatedly fell to his lot. When the custom-house officials in Berne, at his request, for the first time, attempted to estimate the quantity of fish destined for the Valais, they were astonished. There are no cases of leprosy in the town of Leuk itself, but in two or three of the adjacent villages. All were