

The views of Professor Adami, of Montreal, are well known. For years he has taught what is known as the law of adaptation. By this is meant the acquiring of a sort of soil that does not favor some diseases. Both he and others have pointed out that certain diseases act with terrible severity in a new soil. Measles among children of some island where the disease was formerly unknown is a most fatal malady. So with tuberculosis when it is introduced among people who have not been subject to it in the past. It would seem that in the course of long centuries a sort of racial immunity is acquired. Is this a phase of heredity? Surely it must be regarded as minus heredity, or a lessening tendency to the disease, syphilis and smallpox are much severer diseases among savages than among the civilized. As Dr. Adami puts it, if the Ancient Greeks came upon the earth now, tuberculosis would in all probability make short work with them.

Turning to a paper by Dr. Latham, of St. George's Hospital and the Hospital for Diseases of the Chest, on the heredity of tuberculosis we meet with this sentence as the last one of his very able paper: "There is some evidence to suggest that the diminishing incidence and mortality of the disease may be in part due to a partial immunity inherited in the course of generations from tuberculous ancestors in whom the disease has been cured. The theory that there is an inherited predisposition to tuberculosis is based on insufficient evidence."

Another paper of those on this subject is that by Dr. E. F. Bashford, Director of the Cancer Research Laboratory, on the heredity of cancer. He shows that among males 1 death in every 11 after the age of 25 is due to this disease, and among females 1 in every 8. If one has no more than the tendency found in the community at large, the foregoing figures would show the likelihood of death by cancer. In the experimental study of cancer it has been shown that mice can be rendered refractory or liable at will. German mice may be modified by prolonged sojourn in Norway, and English mice by prolonged sojourn in Germany. There is here constitutional conditions that are favorable or unfavorable to the growth of cancer; and that these constitutional tendencies can be modified at will. Such constitutional conditions or changes may be acquired by man.

Dr. Bashford concludes by stating that "With nothing but negative evidence of the part played by inherited constitutional conditions before us, and with positive evidence of the important part acquired constitutional conditions can play in furthering the growth, perhaps the development, of cancer, we shall more profitably spend our time if we frankly seek to ascertain how they are acquired, than if we continue to preach the doctrine that they are inherited and that it is hopeless to contend against them."