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INFANTILE OR SUMMER DIARRHŒA; ITS NATURE AND CAUSES.

The reports of the Registrar-General of Great Britain show that diarrhœa is on the increase in that country. The death returns to the Registrar-General of Ontario also show that this disease is increasing in frequency; especially is this shown if we analyze the total infantile death-rate—from convulsions, enteritis, and cholera infantum. Diarrhœa, and kindred diseases of the alimentary canal, indeed, cause a very large proportion of the deaths in Ontario, especially of young children, and the study of their nature and causes becomes one of the highest importance.

The theory has been advanced that infantile diarrhœa is a sort of typhoid fever, if not actually typhoid. Professor Virchow states, in effect, that the death-rate rises in Berlin in July, August, and September, and this is due to excessive infantile mortality, mainly from diarrhœa, and the rise of this disease he found to be coincident with the fall in the ground water of the Spree. 'It cannot be doubted,' he says, 'that the fall in water levels (*i. e.* subsoil water) is conditioned by the increased evaporation produced by the increasing temperature.' Exactly the same conditions—fall in the ground water—was found to precede an increase in the severe epidemic of typhoid fever which visited Paris two years ago.

In a paper on 'infantile diarrhœa' by W. E. Buck, M. A., M. D., (Cantab), health officer for Leicester and Rutland, in the *Sanitary Record*, the writer in conclusion says, 'I believe there are three factors at least, concerned in the causation of this disease, viz., heat, dampness of soil, and organic impurity.' Dr. Buck says: 'The American physicians are almost unanimous as to dampness of subsoil causing infantile diarrhœa, and they act accordingly. Dr. Lewis Smith, in his book on diseases of infancy and childhood (a really good book, which is not so well known in this country as it deserves to be), says, 'It is thus seen that the prevalence of intestinal inflammation of infancy in the city bears a close relation to the degree of summer heat. That the high temperature of summer is not in itself