

attacked by various oily emulsions, but the utility of this measure is much lessened by the fact that the first intimation of the infection of a house is the report of a case in it and that it is the exception to have a succession of cases of plague in one room. Hence really there are only two ways of escaping plague when once the epidemic has begun—namely, evacuation and inoculation. The former, though largely resorted to by the people themselves, is often unavailable for many reasons; thus we must rely mostly on inoculation. All plague prophylactic is now stored by Maynard's system of bottling, which works without trouble of any kind; tests have shown in 497 brews that no contamination occurs after bottling. Now the results of inoculation are highly satisfactory. Haffkine's antiplague vaccine has been used. No bad results have been reported. From the replies sent out by the numerous medical officers on the subject we see that the health of the inoculated has been, if anything, better since the operation was performed; where the epidemic was severe about 5 per cent. of the inoculated were attacked but only 1 per cent. died. Previous inoculation was found to modify the type of the disease and to reduce its severity greatly. The answers were also unanimous in stating that inoculation was a very great protection against plague and that in no case had any harm resulted and that immunity lasted for about a year. Thus the case mortality and the case incidence have been markedly reduced, no matter where the people lived—in town in their own homes, in camps, or under the best sanitary conditions. Truly a triumphant vindication of Mr. Haffkine's invaluable method of treating plague. Time in this case has certainly brought its undeniable revenge.

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## Looking Back.

FROM

THE LANCET, SATURDAY, April 24th, 1830.

THE ordinary and efficient means by which the aberrations of the human mind are detected, are minute observation of the individual's conduct, inspection of his written documents, and protracted conversations to develop his delusions: and these examinations, on many occasions, require to be frequently repeated, before the insanity of the person can be exposed. For these tedious processes Dr. Burrows<sup>1</sup> has a remedy, which must be considered a peculiar endowment, the operation of which constitutes the greatest of modern improvements, and may be viewed as a short cut to the discovery of madness. We find, page 296, that—

“Mania, especially, is characterised by a peculiar odour; it is not the *hircum olet* of Horace, but is a smell quite unique, and when once recognised, it can never be mistaken for any other; it has been compared to the scent of henbane in a state of fermentation, but I know nothing which it resembles.

“This odour does not always attend on mania, and it differs in intensity. Personal cleanliness of the skin, and frequent changes of body-linen, much modify, and perhaps may remove it. Where it is generated, it is easiest detected by going in the morning into the chamber of the lunatic before he has risen, and before fresh air has been admitted. The maniacal odour is not noticed by every writer on the signs of insanity; nor, as I have said, is it always present; but I consider it a pathognomic symptom so unerring, that if I detected it in any person, I should not hesitate to pronounce him insane, even though I had no other proof of it.”

This delicate and prodigious discrimination of the olfactory organs, removes other practitioners, not similarly gifted, to a distance truly humiliating, and confers on the simple perception of the lowest sense an instantaneous decision of a tainted intellect, which physicians, in general, are obliged to explore by the powers of the understanding, by comparison, by reason, and by judgment. We are not informed, by exact admeasurement, to what distance this perfume extends; but it must follow, that in states of convalescence, its emanations will be comparatively feeble, and formidably predominant in cases of relapse. In the reign of James the First, when witchcraft was in fashion, an individual, of the name of Hopkin, boasted, that he possessed an infallible tact for the discovery of these agents of the devil, and which he actually exercised under the confidence and patronage of those who ought to have known better.

<sup>1</sup> Excerpt from review of “Commentaries on the Causes, Forms, Symptoms, and Treatment, Moral and Medical, of Insanity.” By George Man Burrows, M.D., Member of the Royal College of Physicians of London, etc. London: Underwood. 1828. 8vo, pp. 716.