

**THE INFANTILE PARALYSIS SCARE.**

The Chautauqua Reading Hour

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The panic about infantile paralysis is due to its mystery rather than to its peril. In its suddenness it is like "the pestilence that walketh in darkness." Its medium of spread has frankly baffled our best physicians. The main facts that are known are these. It is a disease that atrophies the spinal cord and produces paralysis, most commonly of the legs. Epidemics in this country have been somewhat constant, though scattered, since 1907. They occur usually in the late summer and early autumn. The disease in this continent is confined chiefly to the northern states and to Canada. Of children from one to ten years of age but 4 per cent die of it. It is rarely fatal. Second attacks do not occur. Only a very small number of the attacked are left severely and helplessly crippled.

**WHAT Baffles Us.**

The things that baffle are many. Supposedly it is contagious, yet evidently it is slightly so. At its height its prevalence is never anywhere near as great as that of other common diseases. Males are more subject to it than females, yet it is females who have the care of the sick. The majority of cases cannot be traced to any known contact, either direct or indirect, with any previous case. In fact, it is not uncommon to hear of babies being stricken who never were away from their homes in their lives. It does not seem to follow the main arteries of travel. For instance, epidemics in Minnesota, Kansas, Iowa and Nebraska followed the epidemic in New York city, but Chicago, the point of transfer for all these States, was free. Its rapid spread over wide areas is as noticeable as it is unexplainable.

Its most striking peculiarity is its confinement to the very young. Most of those who have it are between six months and three years of age. Ninety per cent are under six.

It does not seem to develop as one would expect among exposed groups. Of 2070 persons known to be exposed only 6-10 of one per cent developed the disease in frank paralytic form. This is less than 1-15 of the number that would be expected in similar exposure to scarlet fever. Seldom does one in a thousand take it who has been exposed.

It is not strange that there are still those who claim it is not contagious at all, or that in England it should be felt that quarantines are useless.

**THE BRIGHT SIDE.**

Some reassuring facts deserve to be stated.

Even when there are a number of genuine cases there is no doubt that many supposedly sick of it are really ill from another cause. This is always true in a panic. The secretary of a certain board of health stated that he was certain that many incompetent physicians who lost children reported their deaths as due to infantile paralysis, knowing that the hasty burials would conceal their own ignorance. The malady is easily mistaken for rickets and scurvy and congenital paralysis. More than one scare has been occasioned by an isolated death from some entirely different disease.

Towns that have usually to be immune to an epidemic seem usually to be immune for two years. Nobody knows why, but it is suspected that it is due to the exhaustion of susceptible material.

**HOW IT MAY BE CARRIED.**

Our best knowledge at present is that the disease is borne from place to place, occasionally by those affected, possibly by flies and fleas, but probably more often by adults not themselves ill who are unconscious "carriers." When so carried, it strikes only those few among little children who are for some mysterious reason "susceptible."

This is not the place to discuss methods of treatment. It is so far a disease that chiefly requires good nursing. If it comes to your own home, your first care should be to secure a nurse who is skilled, obedient and acceptable to the sick child.

**WHAT ABOUT PREVENTION?**

It is our duty to be loyal to the mandates of our own state board of health. The state boards now are in such close communication with each other that their relations are practically uniform and are in accord with the demands of the most enlightened medical science. The supplemental acts of local boards are often foolish and occasioned by local panic. To paralyze business, intercourse and commerce by a shotgun quarantine is usually needless, except perhaps in a few border localities. To close an open-air Chautauqua and allow an indoor fair to go on, as happened in one town, was senseless partiality. The effects of such local arrangements has often been unwitting cruelty on the one hand and bold and perhaps dangerous running of the gauntlet on the other.

**PUBLIC HEALTH IS PRIVATE SAFETY.** Public and private cleanliness is the best antidote we know. If a town has a thorough and persistent clean-up campaign, it is unlikely to develop an epidemic. To keep down the dust is to keep down diseases. Flies, bedbugs and rats, the carriers of fleas, are suspect, and ought to be slaughtered on many accounts. If the disease is proportionately more prevalent in small than in large places there is no known reason except that larger cities today spend more money on keeping clean.

In the home healthiness is a defence. The little children should be guarded from debilitation by the so-called "spring diseases." In summer we should avoid overeating, overheating, fatigue and injuries. Make your home inaccessible to flies. Keep the children's noses and throats sprayed with a mild antiseptic. See that the house is always well aired everywhere. For those who have reached school age there is practically no danger.

**Miss Rankin Will Champion Children.**

"One of the things I want to do is to represent the National's children in Congress," remarks Miss Jeannette Rankin, of Montana, first woman Congressman, in the Christian Science Monitor. "The children have never been represented there. Interests of all sorts are cared for, but the child has been left to fare as best he might, sometimes being blessed with someone in Congress who, now and then, would remember his interests, and more often not."

"Now, there isn't any piece of legislation which does not, directly or indirectly, affect the welfare of the child. In doing what comes to my hand to do in Congress I intend to remember that. Specifically, I shall stand for widening the sphere of usefulness now exerted by the Children's Bureau under the Department of Labor. That Bureau should be equipped and empowered to do all things necessary to increase the child's opportunities in all directions. This touches on education, of course, and child labor, and even the conduct of public charities. The child's education should be made of the greatest possible use to him. Passage of the child labor law has not left it unnecessary to continue the fight for child labor. I shall do all in my power to promote the interests of the child."

Miss Rankin is expected to bring to bear on this question the experience she had in Seattle finding childless homes for homeless children. She is well equipped, too, to represent the suffragists in Congress, for she has several times done legislative work for the National Woman Suffrage Association.

Miss Rankin favors State-wide and national prohibition. She is a most enthusiastic advocate of direct legislation, and she never tires telling about the strides her home State, Montana, has taken along this line. She believes that the initiative and referendum should be adopted everywhere. She believes, also, that the voter should have the right to name his own candidates for public office. There is so much of this direct voting in Montana, she points out, that politics out there is quite different from politics in some States. Every voter feels that he is a politician, in the best sense of that word, because he has a direct interest in civic government. And Miss Rankin is such a firm believer in the people, in the inherent power and right of the majority to rule that she would like to see a wider use of direct legislation and choice of political standard bearers. As a public speaker, Miss Rankin has proved that she possesses considerable power. What she has to say is presented in a clear, logical manner, and this force is supported by an individuality which is genial and frank at all times. She is not the sort of a suffragist the comic papers like to caricature. Rather is she quite womanly, and quite as apparently capable of "taking care of herself," as the saying goes, in any situation that confronts her in Congress.

**Prime Minister Attended Cobbler's Funeral.**

About a fortnight ago an old man died in Wales.

He had lived a homely life, full of homely works, among a homely people. He had been the village cobbler of week days, and had led the worshippers in the village church on Sundays. In all his life, from the day he took up the leadership of the flock in Cricieth, until age bade him lay by his pastor's staff, he had missed but three Sundays from the pulpit to which came the hymn of the sea washing the coast of Wales.

He spoke the soft unintelligible tongue of his people. He lived the life that had been found good in those regions. He loved God trustingly, and dwelt close to the consciousness of all prevailing good. He was capable of any sacrifice, and made great and wise ones.

He raised a foster-son. So sure was he of the gentleness of God that he died with a mingled prayer and kindly jest upon his lips.

When he came to be buried his simply earthly pageant was completed in the way that was familiar to him.

A rain fell softly from above; the surf boomed against the Black Rock below Cricieth. Four men bore him in an oak box, built plainly and sturdily for the uses of eternity. The new pastor at Cricieth read comfortingly in the soft Welsh tongue.

When it was done the foster-son of the cobbler-pastor of Wales, the legatee of the love, trust, hope and clear ideals of the older man, left the cemetery, walking bareheaded down the hill.

It was David Lloyd George, prime minister of England; a nation's bulwark of wisdom and hope and energy; the greatest democrat in the most democratic monarchy the earth has ever produced.

An old road mender stopped in his work and watched the wind rumpling the gray mane, the rain falling unheeded upon the bared bowed head.

He remembered a boy who once played in the field around Cricieth. So goes the world. A man broods over a boy, loves him, gives into the younger soul all he has. The boy becomes a man and broods over a nation, giving it all that was given him. Well, well, so pastor-Cobbler Richard Lloyd was dead and buried! And there walked Davy Lloyd George, grown gray and prime minister of England!

The old road mender spat on his hands and went back to work.

**A Business Girl.**

Cohen—So Sadie has broken her engagement. Did she give you back her ring?

Cohenstein—No, she said diamonds had gone up, and she would give me what I paid for it.—Boston Transcript.

**Pals.**

Po—"Your roommate says that he is a practical socialist."

Dunk—"He must be. He wears my shirts; smokes my tobacco and writes to my girls."—Pitt Panther.

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