

from one individual to another—that is, smittle; sometimes it apparently passed by and the "contact" escaped, but one could not tell. It will be said that now much more is known, and that in cocci, bacilli, and spirilla any microscopist can see the causes of smittleness or infectiousness, which were hidden from his ancestors; but there is a danger that even the modern pathologist knows not why or how they actually produce disease, or why they do so at one time to the height of an epidemic, and why at other times they lie quiescent. Smittle is still a "small etymology" which has something of terror for us, when we think of our ignorance of its ultimate nature and mode of working or leaving alone. When a doctor in India meets a swarm of flies which have been resting on a group of lepers and are now winging their way towards him he confesses to at least a feeling of apprehension; influenza gives the nation an annual scare; and pneumonic plague is a horror.

Smittle and smit are met freely in the literature of Scotland and the north of England, and are in every day employment in the tongue of the people. Andrew Wyntoun (1350?—1420?), the Scottish historian, who fortunately wrote his *Chronicle* in the vernacular and not in Latin, used smit in the figurative sense of moral contamination as well as in the literal meaning of a spot or taint or infection. With the meaning of infected, smit was used, as Jamieson pointed out in his *Scottish Dictionary*, in the Acts of James I of Scotland, the disease referred to being leprosy: "that the Bishopis, Officialis, and Denis inqyre diligentlie in thair visitatioun of ilk parochie kirk, gif ony be smittit with lipper." Smit was even admitted to the high rank of a proverb word as in the saying, "ae scabbit sheep will smit a hail hirsell" (flock). In the sense of pollute, Whyte Paterson uses smit⁴ in the sentence, "for I ne'er wad lat wrang smit my lips." Smittle (in Scotland, at least) has generally been more restricted in its meaning, and has uniformly indicated infectious or to infect. Wright, in the *English Dialect Dictionary*, has given many illustrative quotations: "Such was the dread of the smittal disease, that they wouldna let them into the toons wi' the corps"; "there never was a plague, either on beast or body, mair smittal than that [rinderpest]"; "our trouble seemed a smittal one." The last quotation comes, it is interesting to note, from a book written by a medical man, D. M. Moir of Musselburgh, better known as Delta, the popular contributor to *Blackwood's Magazine*. Similar usage obtains in the north of Ireland: "hoo did ye get the maisels?" "a wus smit at the skael"; "they say the coul's smittal."

In the dialects of Northern England smit and smittle have wider meanings than in Scotland and Ireland. Sometimes they have the signification of infect as in the Lincolnshire question, "are measles smitting?" the Yorkshire phrase, "she's gotten fever, an'll smit tha," and the Westmorland "small-pox are very smittle"; but they have also the sense of similarity, as in the Yorkshire phrase, "she's the smit of her mother"; or that of smutted, as in "smitted clothes are the plague of the housewife on the washing day"; or that of "marked" like sheep. Farther away from the original meaning is that of "likely," as in the Northumberland "it's a smittal spot for a salmon"; and still farther is that of "sure" or "certain as a stock-getter" in the Cumberland expression, "as smittal as t' smo'pox," said of a successful male animal kept for breeding purposes. One can, however, trace the connexion in idea.

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REFERENCES.

¹ *Studies in Lowland Scots*, p. 314. ² *Op. cit.*, p. 210. ³ Henderson's *Scottish Proverbs*, 1881, p. 87. ⁴ *The Proverbs Rendered in Scots*, 1916, p. 35.

ACCORDING to a recent census the increase of the population of Paris during the last ten years is confined exclusively to the foreign inhabitants, the number of whom has increased from 158,000 in 1911 to 169,527 in 1921. The female population is largely in excess of the male. The differences between the two sexes is greatest between the ages of 20 and 30.

THE fourteenth Congress of the Italian Psychiatric Society will be held in Rome from October 19th to 21st, when the following subjects will be discussed: (1) Nosography and pathogenesis of the psychoneuroses, introduced by Professors Modena of Ancona and Morselli of Genoa; (2) pathogenesis of so-called essential epilepsy, introduced by Professors Besta of Milan and Roncoroni of Parma; (3) schizophrenia and pseudo-schizophrenia, introduced by Professors G. Montessano of Rome and Kolijlinskij of Genoa; (4) pathological anatomy of psychasthenia, introduced by Drs. Arctini of Arezzo and Pilotti of Rome.

England and Wales.

CONGRESS OF OBSTETRICS AT LIVERPOOL.

THE British Congress of Obstetrics and Gynaecology will be held in the Medical Institution, 107, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool, on Friday, June 30th, and Saturday, July 1st. The following bodies will take part: Royal Society of Medicine (Obstetrical and Gynaecological Section), Edinburgh Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society, Glasgow Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society, Midland Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society, Royal Academy of Medicine (Obstetrical Section), and the Ulster Medical Society. The proceedings will include a discussion on the results of treatment of eclampsia, and operations at the Liverpool Royal Infirmary. The Congress dinner will be held at the Midland Adelphi Hotel on the evening of June 30th.

LIVERPOOL STANLEY HOSPITAL.

The annual meeting of the Liverpool Stanley Hospital took place on May 22nd, and, as in the case of the other three general hospitals of the city, the report for the past year showed a deficit. At present the debit balance stood at £8,012; there had been a diminution in expenditure, but unfortunately the cost of maintenance was still much in excess of that incurred in pre-war years. The treasurer remarked that the absence of new subscribers who realized their responsibilities was a notable state at the present. There was a gap left by those good citizens who had supported the hospital in years past, to be filled up by the rising generation, if the voluntary system was to be maintained. The hospital was thoroughly equipped and able to meet the wants of the northern area of the city. The committee had now in hand sufficient money to enable them to provide accommodation for patients of moderate means, and this sum, amounting to £20,548, was to be devoted to the new building for the reception of patients on a contributory basis. It was pointed out that forty years ago the hospital was in some straits financially, but was speedily relieved through the generosity of Liverpool citizens, and the committee looked forward to a similar effort by the public.

CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD.

The Central Midwives Board for England and Wales met on May 31st, and held a special penal meeting, followed by the ordinary monthly meeting. Sir Francis Champneys presided. Seven midwives were cited to appear, and the names of three were removed from the roll. The Board agreed to consider carefully an inquiry from the town clerk of Kensington as to whether, in view of the prevalence of ophthalmia neonatorum, a direction to midwives might be issued from the Board as to the routine application of a suitable silver preparation to the eyes of all newly born infants. The Board decided to take into consideration at its next revision of rules the following resolution received from the inspectors of midwives and teachers of practical midwifery: (1) That the period of training of pupil midwives be lengthened; (2) that midwives approved by the Central Midwives Board to teach practical midwifery possess definite qualifications besides that of holding the Central Midwives Board certificate.

Scotland.

PROFESSOR CALMETTE AT EDINBURGH.

AN address was delivered on June 7th before the members of the Medico-Chirurgical Society of Edinburgh, with Professor Sir Robert Philip in the chair, by Professor Calmette, of the Institut Pasteur of Paris, on "The protection of mankind against tuberculosis." He said that after he had demonstrated the specific character of the tuberculosis virus and its inoculability to different animal species, Villemain, finding it difficult to transmit tuberculosis to the dog, the cat, and the sheep, was the first to raise the question whether any animals were immune to this disease. Later, after the discovery of the tubercle bacillus by Robert Koch, it was found that almost all the mammalia could be artificially infected, but that a small number of species could contract tuberculosis spontaneously, and that some others were so highly resistant as to be immune even to artificial