

criminate expectoration. If only some of the leaders of society would use their influence in the direction of curtailing the length of the garment which clothes the lower part of the lady on shopping bent, one powerful agent in the distribution of germs of all sorts and conditions would cease to wield its influence. Anything more disgusting than the condition of a skirt which has collected its toll from one of our busy thoroughfares can hardly be imagined. Greater experience on the part of our staff is possibly necessary before the Department can evolve a graceful and hygienic dress; but the undoubted danger which lies in the graceful train of her ladyship is one which is great, and easy of removal. Till it has passed away I would remind these microbe-collectors that it is the maid whose duty it is to brush and clean it that runs most risk. They should be careful not to inhale the dust which rises from the "hem of her garment."

BACTERIOLOGICAL WORK.

A vast amount of most useful work has been done, as can be seen by a glance at the report of Mr. Gilruth, Pathologist to the Department, and those of the District Health Officers in their respective districts. The medical men all over the colony are gradually realising the advantage of availing themselves of the help of our officers in the elucidation of doubtful cases. I have on several occasions drawn the attention of the profession generally to our willingness to examine free of charge any specimens which they may care to send. The work in this Department has, in Wellington, been carried out under conditions which ought not to be allowed to continue. The completion of our new laboratory will in some degree lessen the undoubted danger under which Mr. Gilruth and his staff have laboured; but it is absolutely necessary that further provision should at once be made for the carrying-on of experiments upon the larger animals. The present place is quite unsuitable, and it is not saying too much to state that the present laboratory is a menace not only to the health of those working there, but in some measure to the general public. A scheme is, I understand, under consideration at present for the removal of the laboratory out to the country. This I consider is the proper step to take. With suitable and get-at-able paddocks much better work could be done. It is proposed that as soon as it is ready all work with dangerous diseases, like plague, diphtheria, &c., shall be done in the special laboratory. Some of the experiments, more especially those of plague of a mild type, are most interesting. In some cases where the organisms were few and not very virulent the guinea-pig survived the ordinary lethal dose; but when a small quantity of diphtheritic or even streptococcic culture was given along with the *Bacillus pestis* the animal died with all the usual symptoms of plague, and the bacillus was obtained from the various tissues and fluids. All this is set out in Mr. Gilruth's report. The practical bearing of this is great, as it goes to show the interdependence which exists in the microscopic world. It gives an exactitude to what has often been noted before—that while filthy surroundings cannot produce a disease like plague *per se*, yet the vitiated atmosphere may so depress one's power of resistance that exposure to contagion is more likely to be followed by infection. This hunting in couples, so to speak, of pathogenic organisms has been noted in other diseases, but never before perhaps with such practical bearing.

I have to thank the medical officers in charge of the various hospitals throughout the colony for their help, more especially Dr. Crooke, of Christchurch, for the use of his laboratory during my bacteriological investigation of the first case in Christchurch, and Dr. Collins, of Auckland, for the services which he rendered with respect to the case of V., in Auckland.

NOTIFICATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The following diseases have been put upon the list of those which it is required the medical attendant and householder must notify the Health authorities of: Typhus fever, enteric fever (typhoid), scarlet fever, small-pox, diphtheria, blood-poisoning, bubonic plague, tuberculosis, measles, leprosy, cholera, yellow fever, influenza.

As it was obviously unfair that a medical man should be not only required to perform a service to the State in notifying the existence of a case of infectious disease occurring in his practice, but should be liable to a heavy penalty for not so doing, you agreed early this year to pay the sum of 3s. 6d. in respect of each house notified as containing some one suffering from an infectious disease. Since then the system has been working well.

The procedure adopted on receipt of a certificate that a person is suffering from an infectious disease is for an officer of the Department or of the local authority in whose district the case occurs to visit the house and see that all due precautions are being taken. As soon as the case has recovered or been removed the local authority is required to thoroughly disinfect the house to the satisfaction of the Health Department. It cannot be said that all local authorities are provided with efficient servants for this work, but we are gradually shepherding them in the direction of appointing a sufficient number of suitable men as Inspectors for sanitary purposes.

There is one disease upon the notifiable list (tuberculosis) which is treated in a way different from all the others. Medical men are allowed great license with regard to this disease, because until the Government has provided sanatoria for the reception of such cases it would be unjust to do more than counsel the poor sufferer. Only those in that stage when expectoration is free and contains bacilli are required to be recorded. As soon, however, as proper provision has been made for such cases something more may be done.

SANITATION AMONG THE MAORIS.

Dr. Pomare's report will be read with interest.

One serious obstacle in the way of any great sanitary reform among our Native brethren is the poverty of many. They are generally quite willing to fall in with our suggestions that they ought not to all sleep together, that the house ought to have a floor that could be easily cleaned, that they ought not to drink the water from the swamp, that they should put up a tank and catch rain-water; but the invariable answer is, "Kahore te munie." A great improvement has, however, been effected in some parts, and doubtless with perseverance greater reforms will result.