

showed the ratio of the aromatic to the total sulphates to be approximately as one is to nine, while under circumstances of gross feeding, more especially excessive protein intake, the ratio was one to five, or even one to four in extreme cases. Only a limited number of observations was made, but the significant fact was elicited that a high conjugated sulphate ratio was almost invariably a precursor to fever, and in two out of the ten cases observed this fever was declared ultimately to be enterica. The series of observations was too small from which to generalise, but I suggested at the time that it was a line of enquiry worth following up. Except in that annual report, which was printed by the Government of India, my ideas were never published, but officers who attended my lectures at Netley and at the College in London will recall that I referred to this aspect of the question as a field too much neglected, as it is clear that few are able to get out of the narrow bacillary work in enteric etiology. Similarly, in view of the apparent elective affinity of the enteric germ for bile salts, it would be interesting to know whether there is any relation between hepatic activity and enteric incidence.

The appearance of Colonel Thomson's paper tempts me to refer to the conception of enterica which many fail to grasp, that without a suitable soil in which to grow the causative bacillus is non-pathogenic. Is it not time to break away and try new lines of enquiry? and among the first to be followed I suggest that of metabolism as a possible predisposing cause of enteric incidence. It is obvious that such an inquiry will entail much labour and application, but it will not be wasted if it do but tell us how far the altered climatic conditions and more liberal regimen of the Tropics affect the metabolic normals of the European soldier. On these points we are absolutely ignorant at present.

I am, &c.,

R. H. FIRTH,

November 11th, 1908.

Lieutenant-Colonel, R.A.M.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS."

SIR,—With reference to my remarks on "Enteric in West Africa" (p. 504 of the November number of the Journal), I write to say that they have been wrongly reported. What I actually said was as follows: "In West Africa, in my opinion, the British troops consume more proteid than in India. I have had the opportunity of serving in both countries, and my experience is that the men are much hungrier, and more inclined to consume large quantities of food, in West Africa than in India.

"During 1905 no cases of enteric occurred amongst the garrison, and during this period the strength of the European troops was about 150."

I am, &c.,

*Royal Army Medical College,
Millbank, November 11th 1908.*

H. W. GRATTAN,
Major, R.A.M.C.

JRAMC

Correspondence for J R Army Med Corps 1908; vol 11

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