

PUBLIC HEALTH

# Control of Throat Infection Would Check Rheumatism

## Operation of Law Requiring Domestics to Have Health Certificates Also Described to Public Health Association

**T**HE CONTROL and reduction of rheumatic diseases depend to a considerable extent upon the control of throat infections with the germ known as the hemolytic streptococcus, relative of the scarlet fever germ, Drs. I. Pilot and D. J. Davis of the University of Illinois College of Medicine told the American Public Health Association at its meeting in Washington.

Sore throat is most often due to infection with this germ, and is frequently complicated by arthritis and other conditions which may be classified under rheumatic diseases, it was pointed out. Epidemics of sore throat are followed by an increase in the amount of these rheumatic diseases. Patients whose tonsils remain large and red after attacks of septic sore throat often complain of rheumatic pains in the joints. Persons without tonsils seem to be susceptible to the streptococcus infection also, although they seem to be troubled with symptoms of a head cold rather than with a sore throat. Such persons, however, are also subject to rheumatic complications.

Sore throat due to infection with the various types of hemolytic streptococcus is a communicable disease as is scarlet fever, and patients afflicted with such throat infections should be isolated and quarantined, as if they had scarlet fever,

in order to prevent the infection spreading to others, the physicians warned.

Studies of the amount of rheumatic disease in different climates show that there is little of it in warmer, dry regions and much of it in colder, more humid sections.

### "Typhoid Mary"

Cooks, nurses and other domestic employees in Newark, N. J., are now required by law to have a health certificate, the city's health officer, Dr. Charles V. Craster, told members of the Association. The ordinance, passed in 1930, is intended to protect children and other residents of the city from the chance of acquiring tuberculosis, typhoid fever or other communicable disease from servants.

The story of "Typhoid Mary" showed the danger to individual households of an undetected typhoid carrier employed as a domestic cook, Dr. Craster pointed out. The wide public interest aroused by this story of the typhoid-carrier cook who spread the disease by unconsciously contaminating the household's food led the New York and Newark health departments to require medical examination of food handlers.

By the new Newark law, all domestic employees must file with the department of health a certificate from a duly licensed physician setting forth that such

a person is free from tuberculosis and any other communicable disease. The examination is good for six months. Provision has been made for free examination at the health department clinics. Penalty for failure to comply is a fine of \$25 for the first offense and \$50 for the second. Both employee and employer are liable. When a servant is found to be suffering from tuberculosis or a venereal disease in the active or contagious form, she is not allowed to continue in employment.

During the first eight months of 1932 10,161 examinations were made. There have been revealed 39 cases of skin disease, including impetigo, scabies, seborrhea, acne vulgaris, psoriasis and purpura; 115 cases of syphilis; and 34 cases of tuberculosis.

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BIOLOGY

## Sharks May Have Saved World for Vertebrates

**S**HARKS, which men hardly rate as friends now, may have done our race a good turn long before it ever came into existence. These tigers of the sea quite possibly ended the world-dominance of an alien animal group, the nautiloids, and prepared for the ascendancy of the vertebrates, and finally man.

This suggestion is advanced by Dr. Augustus F. Foerste, who has just joined the staff of the Smithsonian Institution to make a study of its great collection of fossil nautiloid shells.

The nautiloids, represented now by only a couple of relatively small species, once bossed the seas of the earth. They were animals related to octopuses and squids, but lived in great coiled or straight shells. With their strangling tentacles and crushing parrot-like beaks for attack, and their strong stony armor for defense, they were the robber barons of the ancient seas, scores of millions of years ago before the Coal Age.

Then their empire fell, and fell suddenly. Nobody knows just why their end should have rushed upon them when they were apparently at the height of their success. Certainly nothing that swam the seas could have attacked a full-grown big nautiloid and got away alive. But Dr. Foerste suggests that the sharks, more active and alert even though weaker, ate up their eggs and young faster than they produced them, and thus brought about their downfall.

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NAUTILOIDS, ONCE RULERS OF THE WORLD

—Field Museum