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TYPHOID IN ITS RELATION TO MILK SUPPLIES.

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IT is unnecessary to offer any confirmatory evidence of a fact so well established as the communicability of typhoid fever through the medium of milk. The following instance may, however, throw some light on the modes by which milk may be contaminated, the liability to infection through this source, and the possible spread of the disease by the ordinary channels of distribution.

During four days of the summer of 1899 there were reported to the Health Department of Toronto, five cases of typhoid fever, three of which were on the same street; all residents of the same district, and all obtaining their milk supplies from the same dairy. An investigation was at once made as to the condition of the premises, and the health of the occupants, not only in the city, but on the four farms from which the milk was procured. As a result a number of alterations and repairs were ordered to the dairy, and certain regulations imposed as to the cleansing of ordinary receptacles and the separation and sterilization of bottles returned from infected houses.

Some of these requirements were fulfilled, though without the constant presence of an inspector it was obviously impossible to insure a thorough compliance, more particularly in regard to sterilization and cleansing of utensils and bottles.

Six more cases were reported during the succeeding month, and more stringent precautions were enjoined, but, at this stage, as well as the preceding, the origin of the outbreak was open to doubt, inasmuch as nearly all the cases were on the same sewer area, while in other parts of the city, largely supplied by the dairy in question, there was only one reported case. It was also noticed that in the affected districts there were numerous cases on the routes of other milkmen. These circumstances pointed to a local cause, other than infected milk, and though the authorities did not relax their efforts to require all that the law permitted, or their authority could command, they felt that the position was exceedingly uncertain.