

This, however, is not due to our system, but to neglect and want of care in its management. The offensive gases that arise are rather an advantage—like pain in human ailment; it is the warning cry of danger. Place sewer openings at the front doors of our mayor, city engineer, and a few leading officials, and the signal will be responded to quickly.

These remarks apply only to the main sewer, and unless this is efficient all lesser sewers are useless. The question of subsidiary drainage and the connection of houses are subjects for other papers, which I fear would not present such a satisfactory picture as this has afforded.

Correspondence.

"GIVE THE ALARM."

To the Editor of SANITARY JOURNAL.

DEAR SIR—Much has been said in your journal concerning the "starving out of disease germs" as a means of preventing the spread of contagious diseases, and much has been written and spoken of late as to the duty of health boards and sanitary officers in this respect. Allow me to make a suggestion to members of the medical profession as to the practical every-day duty devolving upon them in this important matter. No disease can make an attack where there is no victim. Isolation in all cases of contagious disease is, after all, the only really practicable method of preventing the spread of such disease, and, so far as my observation extends, the average practitioner is sadly emiss in his duty in this respect. The constant desire to avoid occasioning alarm in a neighborhood—through fear of exciting anxiety and perhaps anguish in the home of his patient, he is content—rather he is induced to "make light" of the case; to say nothing about its contagious nature; to tell the neighbors "there is not much

danger" and to get away with as little conversation as possible. The dread of being considered an "alarmist" often militates against his judgment as to what his duty is in the premises, and with an apparent carelessness not by any means creditable to himself or his profession, he fails to drop a word of warning. Silence, upon such occasions, is always construed to mean immunity from danger to all who desire to visit the sick-room or loiter about the premises.

I am aware that in many neighborhoods there exists a strong inclination to ridicule and pooh-pooh the warnings of the medical attendant, but the practitioner who yields to fear of being thus ridiculed or blamed for exciting alarm, and perhaps for "closing up a school," falls upon the other horn of the dilemma, and renders himself open to the accusation that he is culpably negligent in the performance of his duty to the public. In my experience I have in mind several instances in which outbreaks of scarlatina or diphtheria have been confined to a single family, even in thickly-settled localities, simply by "giving the alarm" boldly and fearlessly. I have myself gone to the extreme of feigning anxiety and fear as to the result—forbidding the admission of any but certain named friends to the house—exhibiting my own caution—wearing a special covering when in the sick-room—carefully washing and disinfecting in presence of bystanders, and by every means in my power impressing upon the whole community that *nobody is safe who visits the house*. Friends and relatives and all others who have children at home, or who mingle with children in the neighborhood, must be rigidly excluded. If food, clothing, or other necessities must be had, let them be carried to some point at a safe distance from the afflicted house, and thence by a nurse or other