

MEDICAL SCIENCE

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MALARIA AS THE CAUSE OF DISEASE.

AN ADDRESS BEFORE THE ONTARIO MEDICAL ASSOCIATION,
BY DR. MULLEN, HAMILTON.

I PROPOSE to refer to malaria and enquire how far its influence is observed (as a cause of disease) in this Province. In doing this I am not prepared through enquiries in different parts to present information showing the prevalence of malarial influence throughout the Province, but shall only attempt to show to what extent its influence has been observed in my own locality, leaving to others to present to the Association the results of their observations on the extent of its influence in other places. It has been said of life that "what it is we know not, what it does we know well." Of malaria it has appeared to me that we do not know either what it is or very accurately what it does; perhaps, however, some scientist will tell us the special-germ to which it is due, and give us its life history, and someone may be able to show that the potent influences of malaria can be seen in cases where, as yet, I have not been able to detect them. I do not speak of malaria in the literal meaning of this word: for to speak of the disease-producing influences of bad air would offer too wide a field for discussion in our limited time and it might also encroach on the sphere of the public health committees or that of the Provincial Sanitary Board. I shall refer only to the influence of that miasma which is probably best known as the cause of ague. While with us it is mainly known through the ague which is more or less prevalent in the warmer part of the year in many localities of Ontario, it would seem that in some places it is better or commonly known through other effects which have been attributed to its influence. A

lady the other day in course of conversation referred to a friend who was subject to occasional attacks of headache and indigestion; she said that in her former residence in one of the western States, they had so much malaria that it still lingered in her system and sometimes cropped out in this way. Some time ago I had a patient who had lived in Chicago and she brought away so much of the malaria that prevailed there that she felt the almost constant necessity of a quinine mixture to meet the symptoms. Of course it may be said that these are the ideas of the laity, but in their expressions we generally have a pretty truthful reflex of the opinions which have been given by the medical men whom they have consulted. Several years ago a minister of the Gospel, resident in New York, gave me an account of the symptoms in his case, which were attributed to malaria. He had been dosed with quinine almost to the extent of the forbearance of the human body, by a prominent neuropathic physician, who also applied the galvanic current for the relief of the nervous symptoms, but without effect. My friend left that malarially inflicted city, and visiting a part of this Province to the east of Toronto, consulted his old family physician, who knew nothing at all of malaria, for it had not at that date infected that region, from him he received some blue pill and colocinth and some medicines to remedy certain functional derangements shown by the urine, and the malarial poisoning passed away. I do not doubt that the continued residence in a malarious district exercises prejudicial influences upon the health; such influences were noted by the first writer on the Practice of Medicine I ever read, Sir Thos. Watson. He says that in England