

It will not suffice as at present for medical colleges and licensing boards to relegate hygiene or public health, or whatever term they choose to apply to this important branch of medicine to a third rate, or even second rate position. To know how to prevent illness is more important than to know how to stop a cough. This latter is the prerogative of the patent medicine man and requires no skill, but to prevent illness requires that the medical practitioner shall have more than the mere knowledge of how to vaccinate, how to properly isolate a case, and subsequently disinfect. It calls for a knowledge of accurate bacteriological, physiological, chemical and the public health laboratory knowledge, as well as the practical application of all that is represented in these groups of medical instruction in so far as they relate to the maintenance of the human body in normal physiological health under all its varying conditions—the study of human environment—all of which knowledge must be given in medical colleges everywhere; and the day is not far distant when “preventive medicine” must rank as the most important subject in the medical curriculum, and curative medicine, and diagnostics and surgical skill and dexterity be merely what they should be, the useful and proper allies of the Goddess Hygiene, and placed in that limbo from which public health is only now coming forth in its might and power to work great and as yet untold blessings for mankind.

Dealing with public health from the municipal standpoint, the fact must be recognized that personal liberty has its limits, and the relation of man to man requires the formation of rules of action which have for their object the preventing of one man taking from another those rights, economic and individual, which are essential to present-day happiness. So, also, are health rights to be obtained through common action, and thereby the better is the guarantee that we shall work together not to injure either our own health or that of our neighbor, and that our neighbor shall not injure our health.

Many are the municipal health laws, codes or ordinances—they are all similar, having been copied from one another. The powers they confer upon municipalities are often very great. Some of the laws are bad by reason of their not conferring upon local authorities the power to enforce the same; others are good. Laws define rights—men enforce them, and law-making is one thing, law enforcement another, and doubtless thousands of lives are being lost every year, millions of dollars being spent on curing disease and caring for those incapacitated from labor thereby, and millions of days are taken from industrial pursuits, and in the end the working life of nations is materially shortened because health laws are not enforced, both by the individual as well as the municipality.

One illustration will suffice. What law will every stop the present waste of infantile life due to the character of the milk supplied in all large cities, unless dairies are systematically inspected and cleanliness enforced, unless milk is kept at a low temperature (50°) from immediately after milking—in the creamery, on the train, at the receiving station, in the milk wagon and milk shop? Not until dealers scald and cleanse their cans, unless licenses are taken from farmers, creameries and retailers who violate the law, and not unless mothers are taught to scald and thoroughly cleanse bottles, nipples, cups and dishes from which milk is fed to infants, will this be remedied.

Here is an illustration of the interdependence of individual and municipal responsibilities. We may discuss the subjects of certified milk, pasteurized milk, clean milk, or, indeed, any other kind of milk, but until the proper authority is vested with full power to control the supply from dairy to consumer along some other channel than through the many by which milk now reaches the consumer. We may inspect and inspect milk until you are dead, for at the best the method is imperfect, and inspection cannot be made perfect.

We cannot guarantee the present imperfect milk of our cities and towns under the most rigid inspection; how, then,

will those who wish to load up the system by pasteurization guarantee that each and every vendor deals out a correctly pasteurized milk?

They want a precise and exact laboratory method to be conducted daily by every dealer under the highest sanitary requirements, and the municipality to guarantee that each dealer sells pasteurized milk that is pasteurized milk.

Can this be done under present methods? Here is a point where we cannot take the word of the individual or accept the guarantee of the municipality, owing to the difficulties of inspection and supervision.

Is it not, therefore, a point where the municipality should, for the benefit of the community as a whole, simply step into the breach and establish a milk depot, or depots, as the size of the municipality may require, to which the milk shall be delivered by all licensed and inspected dairymen, paid by the municipality for the same on a basis of quantity and quality? Let the municipality deliver the milk pasteurized or otherwise as the health authorities decide, in regular routes, with no overlapping in delivery, and let all be upon a cash basis as between the municipality, the furnisher and the consumer, at the minimum cost of inspection and where the maximum of purity will be assured.

In this country the Legislature of each Province is given full control over municipal institutions, it having been evidently thought better to teach each locality to manage its own affairs in keeping with the old proverb: “If you wish anything well done, do it yourself.”

In brief, the situation is this in most civilized countries: When you are born, your name must be registered with the proper city or municipal official; when you are of school age, the municipal authority provides you with a school and teacher, and requires your attendance. Sometimes you are provided with school books free of charge. When you go out upon the streets you find them paved, lighted and cleaned by the council, and you cannot under penalties remove or alter the pavement or pollute the street. Your life and property are protected by police and firemen provided by the council, it demands a tax should you engage in certain classes of business, and should you be fortunate enough to build a house you must submit your plans and secure a permit.

As to conveniences, the council, sometimes assisted by Carnegie, provides you with a free library, it provides officials to inspect the quality of your food and drink, it removes your garbage from your yard and your sewage from your house, and provides you with water, with parks and squares, and a hundred other things, and, if poverty overtakes you, it will aid the charitable in giving you a home, and when the end comes it will, if your friends do not claim your body, bury it, and before doing so register the facts of your death. Thus, from birth to death the municipal council affects our lives. The individual rights of the citizen are vested in the council, and to it for all these privileges we pay taxes, and thereby the rich unconsciously provide many things which have important bearing on the public health which those in more humble walks of life could not otherwise afford. Thus, in benefiting themselves they unconsciously add very materially to the improvement of the health of the masses.

It will thus be seen that in this evolution of municipal government as apart from State or Federal laws the responsibility of the enforcement of a large amount of public health measures has been placed upon municipal authorities, and in the past the central authorities have been satisfied with the enactment from time to time of more advanced public health laws, but the enforcement thereof has usually been placed upon local health authorities, and the central authorities have thus been relieved of any responsibility, though willing at all times to tender advice, usually through the Central Board of Health. With such a system generally prevailing it cannot be said the results have on the whole been satisfactory.

In regard to such an important group of questions embraced under the head of public health, it is essential they