

# The Canada Medical Record

VOL. XVII.

MONTREAL, MARCH, 1889.

No. 6.

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## Original Communications.

### NOTE ON THE SUBSTITUTION OF OXIDE OF ZINC FOR LEAD IN PAINTS.

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In the treatment of a disease the removal of the cause is the hegemony of all physicians. Once the feat is accomplished the malady, for the most part, receives its quietus, the ice-bergs and shoals, the polar-sea-like uncertainty and difficulty encountered, pass away; one navigates his patient into the clear channel of a favorable termination, and all else is plain sailing. But, often unhappily, the vessel of the body becomes shipwrecked against some unforeseen glacier, ere the cause is discovered and removed. The shots which the physician fires from that double-barrelled gun, the armamentarium of the Pharmacopœia, fall short of their aim; the enemy, wily, dread disease escapes, and the patient is killed—by the disease of course. The older one grows in the Practice of Medicine the smaller ones Pharmacopœia becomes and the more one leans on Physiology and Hygiene. Perhaps in the dim future the science of Etiology will have become so exact, the causes so promptly recognized, removed and effectively treated that the many headed

monster yclept Disease, will be relegated to the limbo of the past, and its many quivered poisonous arrows, bereft of their sting. A Medical Millennium will, so to speak, obtain. However, this happy state of affairs is not yet, but a very long way off. We may have faint glimmerings of it, may hear its distant echo as it were "a voice in the rich dawn of an ampler day." I do not mean to infer that eliminating lead from paints is going to bring this dream Elysian about, but, certainly, it will be one link less (though infinitesimally small) in the great chain of Etiological factors that go to make up disease.

It is hardly necessary to say that lead enters largely into the composition of paints. Principally, as white lead, the carbonate and the oxychloride. As is well known, lead is productive of many affections. Painters may put their hands to their face and block up its sebaceous glands with lead leading to a lead acne, or they may touch their mouth, while eating, and lead may be absorbed into the system, and set up a lead cachexia (lead paralysis, drop wrist, colic, peripheral neurites, &c.) The occupants of a newly-painted house may be poisoned by the absorption of lead. Again the fair sex, wishing to make themselves fairer, resort to painting their faces, and start an acne, or induce a lead paralysis. Painters