

Medical Criticism.

"FIRST ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
PROVINCIAL BOARD OF HEALTH
OF ONTARIO,
BEING FOR THE YEAR 1882.

Printed by Order of the Legislative Assembly."

No. IV.

That the enactments of the Ontario Legislature relating to the Medical Profession would be more honoured in the breach than the observance, we cannot pretend to doubt; the doctors however must be supposed to think otherwise, and it is instructive to observe how industriously they improve the occasion to push their claims, whenever they have an opportunity. We perceive that at one of their meetings, they resolved to draft a circular and send it to the clerks of municipalities, requesting them to inform the Board whether their respective municipalities have complied with the powers conferred on them by Cap. 174, section 466, and subsequent sections of the Revised Statutes of Ontario. By way of educating the municipalities up to the standard of medical requirement, "it was further resolved (at the public expense) to prepare a memorandum (an aid to municipal memory) containing a digest of clauses of 'The Municipal Institutions' Act,' and of 'An Act respecting the Public Health,' etc." What's the use of bamboozling a Legislature, if one doesn't utilize the result? "The Secretary was (therefore) instructed to communicate with the health authorities of the Dominion of Canada, and of the several Provinces thereof, and of Municipal and Provincial Boards of Health, where they exist, etc." It would probably be difficult to communicate with those Boards which have no existence. Instead of frittering away public money on their "proposed Immigrant Inspection Service," we must remind them that members of their own fraternity are appointed to inspect the condition of emigrants, prior to their quitting Great Britain, and in so far as they are allowed to leave their native land in an unhealthy or in a filthy state, which they have been from time immemorial, the dereliction is traceable to the medical officers whose duty it is to see that none are sent but those who are in a suitable condition; this is a matter which, unless the Agricultural Department at Ottawa is as incompetent as the corresponding department for this Province used to be, might easily and "economically" be attended to. The subjoined extract will be found entertaining as serving to illustrate to what an extent a "Committee of the Whole" can sub-divide itself. We would suggest that in future these gentlemen should describe their proceedings as the labors of the Committee of the hole (and corner). "after discussion in Committee of the whole, (we read) various standing Committees were appointed, the following being the Committees —

1. On Epidemic, Endemic and Contagious Diseases, Dr. W. C. Covernton
2. On Sewerage, Drainage, and Water Supply, Dr. W. Oldright.
3. On Adulterations of Food, Drink, etc., Dr. J. Hall.
4. On Heating and Ventilation of Buildings, Dr. J. J. Cassidy
5. On Vital Statistics and Climatology, Dr. W. C. Covernton.*

* These gentlemen, it will be perceived, severally discharge the duties of two Committees.

6. On Poisons, Chemicals, and Explosives, Dr. F. Rae.
7. On Schools and Education in relation to Health, Dr. H. P. Yeomans.
8. On Legislation, Dr. F. Rae.*
9. On Finance, Dr. J. Hall.*

The advantage of having a single individual to propose a measure, to second it, to present it from the chair, and then to carry it unanimously, is worthy of the inventive faculties of the guardians of our health; and when one reflects how difficult it will be for the proposer to call the seconder a quack, and for either to quarrel with the chairman, our gratitude for this unique invention knows no bounds! It is to be feared that the labors of Dr. Covernton's Committee, extending as they do, over epidemic endemic and contagious diseases, vital statistics and climatology, and being a standing Committee to boot, will prove sadly too onerous for that biped; the surgical instrument makers will at least provide the Committee with as many legs as it has subjects to discuss, we should hope, we shall look with anxiety for the reports of these nine Committees, consisting as they unitedly do of six gentlemen. Dr. John Hall, (we observe) in another part of the Report, is said to have resigned his position *owing to the urgency of other duties*, and John Galbraith, M.A., Professor of Engineering in the School of Practical Science, appears to have stepped into Dr. H's place, we trust therefore that Mr. G. will discharge the duties devolving on the Committee on Adulterations of Food, Drink, etc., and those of the Committee on Finance likewise. We perceive that among the concluding activities of "the last session of the first regular meeting" of this august Board, a motion was carried, to the effect that "municipal authorities be recommended to adopt a by-law concerning the proper disposal of garbage"; on the supposition that this "First Annual Report of the Provincial Board of Health" be included amongst the "garbage" we must needs concur in the propriety of its "proper disposal" being a fit subject for deliberation on the part of "municipal authorities."

ADULTERATION OF FOOD.

It is not so easy as it may appear to be, to guard against adulteration of food. We know of a case in this city, where a Professor was called in to analyse a certain class of food; the craft of the vendor led him to supply the Professor with pure samples, and the Professor certified to the excellence of the articles accordingly; The certificate necessarily possessed a commercial value, and was duly advertised; The adulteration of the food which took place when the Professor had turned his back was not advertised.

Adulteration of drugs, which there is reason to fear is very common, is probably more disastrous in its effects than is the adulteration of food; The subject is one which, among kindred subjects, must occupy the attention of the Commission which will probably be demanded in the coming session of the Legislative Assembly, for investigating the working of the Medical Acts.

MUTUAL DECEIT.

If Doctors often deceive their patients, patients sometimes deceive their doctors; we know a physician of this city who has read before a body of his co-professionals, a learned diagnosis, &c., of a case he had been treating, and supposed himself had cured; it so happened that the patient who had been some six months in his hands, thought she had seen enough of him, and placed herself in the hands of another physician, while the first continued to attend her; physician No. 2 effected the cure, notwithstanding the diagnosis, &c., of physician No. 1.