

tively little has been done toward the prevention of the spread of diphtheria in this manner.

HOW DIPHTHERIA MAY BE SPREAD IN SCHOOLS.

It is not alone by the breathing of infected air that diphtheria may be communicated from child to child in school. Indeed, those who deny that the air is often or ever a medium of communication of the disease, and who are at all familiar with the thoughtless ways of little children in school, must yet recognize that the possible means of communication by almost direct contact are many. Who has not seen a schoolboy with his mouth full of marbles, just taken from a mate? Children often borrow and lend pencils, which, by instinct, they wet in the mouth or hold in the mouth; they borrow sponges of one another to wipe their slates, which they moisten with saliva. In so democratic a community as a primary school-room, it is a common thing for all the children of the room to drink from the same cup; their clothes commonly hang in close contact in closets and ante-rooms. They manifest their likes and dislikes by biting or refusing to bite from the same apple; and little girls often pledge eternal friendship by that classic symbol, "sharing gum." Though these things may occur outside the school, they are the more frequent the more children are brought together, as they are in schools.

DIPHTHERIA IN LYNN, MASS., IN 1876, AS RELATES TO THE SCHOOLS.

My attention having been attracted to a diagram in the eighth report of the Massachusetts State Board of Health, relative to diphtheria in Lynn in 1876, I was led

to study the *cause* of the rise and fall of the line indicating the increase and decrease in the number of cases. The meteorological conditions, which were carefully given, did not seem materially to have affected the course of the disease, and I was led to write to Dr. J. G. Pinkham, author of the article and diagram, inquiring at what time the schools opened in the fall. He replied that "the schools opened September 4, after six weeks' vacation." This seemed to me to explain the fall and subsequent rise of the line, as it was coincident with the closing and opening of the schools. Afterwards I wrote and inquired if there was a vacation in February or March. He replied that there was a vacation, "beginning February 29 and ending March 6." I have prepared a diagram illustrating what seems to me to be the relations of the schools to diphtheria, as it occurred at Lynn in 1876.

Starting at the month of January we find the number of cases to have been twelve. This was "almost the beginning of the epidemic." If we say the beginning of the outbreak was in December, 1875, the line would begin in that month; and I understood the winter term of school began December 6, 1875. In February there were thirty-two cases. In March there were but twenty-five, showing a decrease, owing, I think, to the vacation in the first week in March. The line rises in April to thirty cases, and in May to thirty-eight, and in June to fifty-two. There was a vacation from May 25 to June 4, but it does not seem to have had much effect in lessening the number of cases, though the number might otherwise have been greater. It is