
THE CANADA MEDICAL RECORD,

PUBLISHED MONTHLY.

Subscription Price, \$2.00 per annum in advance. Single Copies, 20 cts.

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MONTREAL, SEPTEMBER, 1890.

**SHALL CONSUMPTION BE
STAMPED OUT?**

In order to answer this great question let us consider it under three separate heads: 1st. Is it worth while stamping it out? When we remember that more people have died from this disease than from all the plagues, pestilences and famines during a given period, and when we think of the tremendous expenditures of time and money which have been made in order to keep these latter from spreading, there can hardly be any but the one answer to the question whether it is worth while making this fell disease of the lungs as much a thing of the past as we have made cholera and small-pox. The deaths from small-pox in civilized countries have been reduced to almost nothing, while the death rate from consumption for obvious reasons increases with the degree of civilization. The discoverer of vaccination, as one of the greatest benefactors of his race, has been justly overwhelmed with honors and emoluments; how much more worthy of distinction would

be the discoverer of a means of staying the spread of this most fatal of all human diseases.

2nd. Can it be stamped out? To this question we make the same reply as we have already made more than once during the last two years in these columns: consumption can be cured. At the Tenth International Congress recently held in Berlin, Koch, who was the first to discover the germ or bacillus of the disease, and who has been for several years searching for a means of destroying it or rendering it ineffective, made the announcement that he had at last discovered a remedy. But he did not yet feel warranted in giving his results to the profession. We understand that he has found a germicide which will kill tubercle bacilli without killing the patient. Some seem to think, however, that his discovery lies rather in the direction of prevention by inoculation than in that of cure by germicides. For our part, we believe that in lieu of something better we have the means of stamping out the disease already within our reach. But for its application a hearty and entire belief in its infectiousness by dissemination of germs from the respiratory tract is absolutely necessary. If the profession as a body still believes that it is hereditary; or if it believes that it is a nervous disease or a visitation of providence, or that it is due to a "cold settling on the lungs," then it is useless to talk of even checking its spread. It seems so clear that it is a zymotic disease communicated by germs taken in sometimes by the stomach but in the immense majority of cases by the air passages, that we have no patience to argue with those who think differently. The evidence places the matter beyond controversy. Supposing it were possible that the whole profession at once adopted the view that the disease is infectious and that the public was at once taught that sputa and expired air of consumptives should be disinfected, just as much as the clothes of small-pox patients, and suppos-