

came to live at Pierrefonds in three contiguous houses, situated in the Rue du Bourg. Twenty of these persons were attacked with typhoid fever. The water consumed in these houses came from under a stratum of clay, which was covered to the depth of two or three metres with very porous sand. To get this water, it was only necessary to dig holes in the form of wells. Under these conditions, the neighborhood of the wells to the leaking cesspools insured the permanent mixing of excrementitious matter with the water serving for domestic use. On the other hand, when heavy rains came on, the water from the roofs diluted the matter in the cesspools, carrying it into the surrounding earth. Twenty days after each heavy rain a new centre of typhoid fever broke out in one of the three houses. The water, therefore, appeared really to have been the vehicle of infection. But, in order to demonstrate this fact, M. Brouardel requested Dr. Chantemesse, director of the Bacteriological Laboratory of the Faculty of Medicine, to examine it. In that belonging to the house where five deaths from typhoid fever had occurred, MM. Chantemesse and Widal found the bacilli, considered by Eberth, Gaffy, Artaud, Cornil, and Babes as pathogenic of this disease. They were unable to discover these micro-organisms in the water from any other well in Pierrefonds. With the view of establishing the specific character of these bacilli, the spleen was punctured with a disinfected trocar, in patients suffering from typhoid fever, on the tenth day of the disease. The drops of blood thus obtained gave rise to colonies of bacilli identical with those in the water from Pierrefonds, the noxious nature of which was thus conclusively proved, while at the same time, according to M. Pouchet,

it was very free from organic matter. This latter observation shows that the bacilli may live for a long time in the ground.

In the report of the above it is stated that, in France as in England, polluted drinking water is being every year more clearly recognized as the most ordinary efficient cause of typhoid fever. In Canada, as we have no such special official investigations, we can only surmise that such is the case—that polluted drinking water is the most common cause of this disease, which destroys the best of lives, commonly, at the most useful age. But what physician doubts that such is the most common if not almost the sole cause of this prevalent, fatal disease? The remedy then, the sure preventive measure, is not difficult of application; and it is largely in the hands of the municipal health authorities. In many localities in this country the precise conditions as to the soil exist which existed in Pierrefonds, and where such do not, other conditions or formations may be but little, if any better.

We would urge upon health boards, even those in the townships, to institute a system of inspection, and to endeavor to persuade or compel householders to look after their well water. It must be remembered that chemical analysis will not reveal the infection of typhoid; and it appears that the infection may escape detection by the microscope. The only certain preventive is in avoiding the possibility of contamination by doing away with all collections of excremental matter. When we think of it, it seems indeed a marvel that the human family ever fell into the habit of allowing such collections of filth as of the universal privy vault. This must be strongly condemned everywhere. There are but few heads