

THE CANADA LANCET

Vol. XXXV.

JANUARY, 1902.

No. 5

THE ETIOLOGY AND EARLY DIAGNOSIS OF PULMONARY TUBERCULOSIS.*

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IT is not a matter of wonder that the subject of tuberculosis should be receiving, as it always has, so much attention from the members of our great profession all the world over. For does not this dread scourge claim as its toll year by year about one-fifth of those who go down to death? More than all the other infectious diseases put together. Not satisfied with this, it insists, too, that its victims be taken in great part, at that time when it is most sweet to live and most hard to die. The most important causes of the disease and its early detection I desire to treat of in this paper. I feel rather relieved that at the present juncture I need have nothing to say as to the part played by the tubercle bacillus in meat or milk, for we must all be agreed that as far as pulmonary tuberculosis at least is concerned, the tubercle bacillus received into the system by the ingesta must play a very unimportant part in its etiology. The direct inheritance of the disease must also be very rare indeed. The only direct cause worth while troubling ourselves about is the inhalation of dried sputum beladen with the tubercle bacillus. This is practically the only source of pulmonary tuberculosis.

But there are other causes which we speak of as predisposing which are all important to us, for by removing them we will so cripple the enemy, so remove him from his base of supplies, that he will be forced to quit the open field and content himself with the meanest kind of guerilla warfare. What are these causes?

1. Insufficient ventilation and sunlight.
2. Insanitary condition of dwellings, workshops and factories.
3. Density of population.
4. Occupation.
5. Alcoholism.
6. Previous attacks of certain diseases.

* Read before the Canadian Medical Association.