

ple in regard to the laws that control mental and moral being is needful to complete the work of customary education. The more freedom citizens have, so much the more profound must be their knowledge—knowledge of things concerning both body and mind—to prevent liberty becoming licence, and to attain the best result possible.

THE CANADA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, though neither numerically, nor perhaps proportionately, so strong as the British Medical Association, is a very fairly representative body, consisting as it does chiefly of the leading spirits of the profession in the Dominion. It will meet next year here in the Capital, under the presidency of Dr. George Ross, of Montreal, editor of the Canada Medical and Surgical Journal and holding a high position in the Medical Department of McGill University. The Association has on many occasions passed resolutions and appointed Committees with the view of bringing about Federal legislation on behalf of the public health. It was not want of will and interest in the subject that prevented more decided action on the part of the Committees, but want of opportunity and ability to meet and carry out their desires. It is to be hoped that at the meeting next year the subject will again receive the consideration of the Association and that some means will be evolved by which the Government may be urged to take practical action.

#### WATER SUPPLY POLLUTION—IMPORTANT POINTS IN THE COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

The following are a few extracts from the Report of the Special Committee on the "Pollution of Water Supply," appointed last year, to the American Health Association at its meeting in Memphis during the second week of the present month. They are very suggestive and worthy of special consideration in view of the present practice of pouring sewage into rivers: "Your Committee considers itself warranted in believing that although the presence of sewage in wells and other underground water reservoirs may generally be indicated by chemical investigations, such investigations will usually fail when the character of a river or lake-supply is under question. . . . In-

fecting sewage, although present in exceedingly minute quantities, may give origin to dangerous epidemics. . . . Filtration through the soil is capable of destroying the organic constituents of the matter of healthy sewage which may be contained in a water, but this purifying process has, so far as your Committee has examined the evidence, no influence on the germs of certain diseases, which enter the well with all their powers for evil undiminished, so that, although the water may show on analysis only those inorganic remains which indicate antecedent sewage pollution, it may be as dangerous as though it were rankly tainted with recent sewage. Bringing these considerations to bear on the sewage-pollution of rivers and other large bodies of fresh water, your Committee is inclined to the belief that the failure of the chemical processes to detect minute traces of the contaminating matter is of no practical importance. For protective and preventive purposes the knowledge that sewage entered the water seems all that is required. The sewage, if not infected at one time, may become infected at another, and is therefore an ever present impending danger to the health and lives of the consumers. When the constant and extensive prevalence of typhoid fever is taken into consideration with the vast numbers of the contributors to the sewage outflow of a large city, the sewers of that city cannot be safely assumed to be uninfected. Hence, the sewage of a city entering a river above the point suggested as the intake for the water-supply of another community, should suffice to disapprove of all such suggestions, irrespective of chemical analysis or any other considerations. As the well water may become freed from the ordinary organic matter of sewage during its percolation through the soil, so the running water may have its ordinary sewage matter destroyed, by a retroversion of its elements to inorganic forms; but there is evidence to show—the Plymouth epidemic for example—that this purifying influence cannot be relied upon to protect from specific infection. Nor can reliance be placed on the dilution which takes place in a large stream. Recent experiments on the causative essential of typhoid fever point to matter in a particulate form as the element