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ON THE RECOGNITION OF INCIPIENT TUBERCULOSIS IN
MAN.*

BY

H. A. LAFLEUR, B.A., M.D.,

Assistant Professor of Medicine and Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine,
McGill University; Physician to the Montreal General Hospital.

Ever since the abandonment, not so many years ago, of a hopeless prognosis in the majority of tuberculous affections, and the acceptance of the fact, now abundantly demonstrated, that tuberculosis is a disease, which in its incipient stage at least tends under favouring conditions to subside spontaneously or to become arrested in its evolution, the efforts of the profession have been constantly directed towards the improvement and extension of methods of diagnosis, whereby tuberculation of the human subject might more speedily be detected.

We owe much to the morbid-anatomist and the bacteriologist for this salutary change of opinion. The former, in the dead-house, pointed out the frequency of healed tuberculous processes in the bodies of individuals who had died of other diseases, the latter discovered the specific agent that proved the infective nature of tuberculosis, and in subsequent investigations carried on with the greatest perseverance brought forward a mass of knowledge concerning the chemistry and biology of the bacillus tuberculosis, which has been of the greatest value in the diagnosis, prophylaxis and rational treatment of tuberculous infection in man and the lower animals.

The discovery of the bacillus tuberculosis and of tuberculin are certainly epoch-making in the history of our knowledge of tuberculosis.

With a more hopeful view of tuberculosis is necessarily associated its early recognition, for it can never be too often repeated that the earlier the disease is recognised the greater is the prospect of cure or, at any

* Being a contribution to a discussion on the "Prevention and Cure of Tuberculosis," at the Montreal Medico-Chirurgical Society, 17th April, 1899.