

Dominion Medical Monthly

And Ontario Medical Journal

Vol. XXXIV.

TORONTO, FEBRUARY, 1910.

No. 2.

Original Articles

SOURCES OF INFECTION IN TUBERCULOSIS AND THEIR PREVENTION.*

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In the modern widespread crusade against tuberculosis the public hear so much about the social side of it, so much about it being a disease due to poverty, intemperance and dirt, that they are very apt to consider only some of these predisposing factors of infection, and lose sight of the infection itself. If emphasis (important especially in large cities, as it is) is always laid upon this phase of the subject people will soon become as ashamed to own to a case of consumption in their family as they would be to confess to some disease of more questionable repute.

Although tuberculosis is far more frequent in the slums, some of which are veritable hotbeds of infection, and although there is a much higher death rate from this disease amongst the overworked, the underfed and the intemperate, yet it is as true to-day as it was when Charles Dickens said of it that consumption "is a disease which wealth never warded off or poverty could boast exemption from."

It has been demonstrated that it is due to the bacillus tuberculosis, which we know finds its way into the homes of the rich as well as those of the poor, of the cultured as well as those of the ignorant, and of the temperate as well as those of the drunkard, for of the 12,000 whom Canada loses annually from this disease thousands are from her best people in the industrial, agricultural, commercial and professional walks of life.

This paper then is merely for the purpose of briefly summariz-

*Read at Canadian Medical Association, Winnipeg, August, 1909.