

nor despise the watchful care of our representatives in such minor points.) ; when, I say, we consider the importance attached to these, or it may be, the time annually spent on the onslaught of the outs upon the ins, the defence of the respective parties in every Legislature throughout the Dominion,—it is truly marvellous that hygiene should receive so little consideration. And, moreover, when we look at what has been, and is now, doing in the old country, it is strange, it is passing strange, that in this new country we should shut our eyes to the necessities of the times, and ignore, nay, reject, the experience of the Old World.

In accordance with a recommendation of the Association, a committee drew up a scheme for the registration of health.

1st. Shewing the information which it was proposed to obtain. 2nd. The method by which it was to be obtained. 3rd. How it might be utilized. 4th. The benefits which would be derived from it. 5th. And that the cost would not exceed \$5000. I wrote to a Senator requesting his support to this scheme if it should be brought before the Legislature. His reply was most favorable as far as he was personally concerned, but stated that, though the subject was "of great importance" "some of its members think there is too much legislation."

Why, Mr. President and Gentlemen, the State of Michigan puts to shame the apathy of our Dominion. In that State, with a population of 1,200,000 in 1870 they are carrying out a system of returns which will enable them to solve many of the questions connected with the vital problems of the country. Not merely is the profession engaged in it, but hygiene has become a State movement, and I hold in my hand a report, the seventh issued by the "State Board of Health."* And yet in our Dominion, with a population of 4,000,000, there, has been no general action taken.

It is true that Quarantine has been recognized. Even in the Province of New Brunswick, ninety years ago, laws respecting infectious diseases were enacted, boards of health were provided to enforce quarantine. Houses could be entered, and people removed to hospitals, vessels placed in quarantine and funds provided when necessary. All this was done in the case of infectious diseases, which, being

palpable and visible in their results, made men anxious to stamp them out. They acted up to their knowledge. And yet there are the unseen agencies at work which are destroying yearly, nay monthly, more of our people than any open plague wasting at noon-day, and it is because men are unconscious of the pestilence that walketh in darkness that no efforts are made to combat with the insidious enemy.

In New Brunswick we have a residence for our Governors, built at a cost of about \$100,000, and with annual expenses of from \$5000 to \$8000. Last year one Governor died unexpectedly, and other members of his family suffered from sickness. This year our present Governor barely escaped with his life. The cause was very evident: the building was foul with sewage-gas, and, though there were drains originally, they were choked and never had been protected by traps against the return of gas.

As a profession we have clearly and frequently brought this subject of vital statistics before the country, and no blame can attach to us if efforts are not being made to do away with the annual loss of 10,000 lives. Yet as citizens we have to blush for our Dominion, which either from ignorance or wilfulness neglects to grapple with this momentous question.

A system of vital statistics is necessary to enable us to ascertain the death-rate of a people.* It enables us to ascertain the localities where it is in excess, it enables us to ascertain the causes which lead to that excess, and it enables us to apply such remedies as will do away with noxious elements. Such a system involves no violation of private rights but such as the individual should cheerfully surrender. It trenches upon none of any section of society but which should yield to the public good. It does not interfere with the moral, the spiritual or ecclesiastical regulations of any body of men. It asks for data respecting marriages, births, deaths and the causes of death, and left undone throws the responsibility of the unnecessary sacrifice of 10,000 lives upon those who oppose and those who refuse the necessary legislation.

I repeat that as a profession our garments are clear, but as members of a general self-governing

*The State Board of Health "shall from time to time recommend standard works on the subject of hygiene for the use of schools of the State," by Act of 1873. Mich.—State Board of health. P. 5 and 6

* "Until accurate registration of vital statistics is thoroughly carried out, it obviously will be impossible to have an efficient system of State preventive medicine."—Centennial Address, p. 67.