

bacilli are found in the waste matter from the bodies of patients, and may, and must, if the greatest care be not taken to make the thing impossible, find their way into the atmosphere, and into open water courses, into wells by surface or sewer drainage if such drainage finds access to them. And while the taking of these disease germs into the lungs in respiration is unquestionably the most effective way of spreading the disease yet experience has proved beyond a doubt that taking them into the system in our drinking water or our food is only second in danger. I might quote many historical instances in proof of this if time permitted. You will find such in the Sixth Report of the Royal Commissioners (1868) on preventing the pollution of rivers. The importance of immediate attention to the destruction of the dejecta of patients suffering from any of these zymotic diseases will be evident; but how are we to protect ourselves when by chance such infection pollutes our streams and wells? There is but one safe rule, and it is this: Use no water for domestic purposes which at any time contains sewage; because although normal sewage may not contain actually poisonous substances, and may, when sufficiently diluted, be drunk with impunity, as proved by Dr. Emmerlich and others: yet we can never know when diseased sewage containing morbid germs may enter such a water course, and the only safe way is to have nothing to do with it. As I have said this is really the only safe rule, but what shall we do when we cannot help ourselves. To take our own case; there is apparently no other source from which we can obtain a supply than the Ottawa river, and this receives the sewage of places like Aylmer, Quyon and others; together with the drainage of fertilized fields all along its course, and the fertilisers used are, as we know, not unlikely to contain disease germs. Fortunately nature furnishes, in dissolved oxygen and through other conditions, the means of self purification for such contaminated waters. Only give time enough and the most dangerous sewage contamination will be converted into harmless matter by natural agencies. Still, it is reasonable to suppose that water containing much organic matter in solution is more likely to furnish a suitable and congenial *nidus*, or nourishing ground for bacteria than water that is more nearly free from organic matter. This is the disadvantage at which we are placed; and I have no hesitation in saying that not only on æsthetic, but