

CANADIAN OUT-DOOR LIFE.

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO THE GOSPEL OF OUT-DOOR LIFE
IN THE TREATMENT OF TUBERCULOSIS, AND THE VALUE
OF FRESH AIR AND HYGIENIC LIVING FOR EVERYONE

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Exposure to Infection—An Analysis of 100 Cases

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FORTUNATELY, indeed, there are magazines and books enough at our disposal so that the day is not far off when the majority of people will have no excuse to offer for ignorance of the causes of infection of Pulmonary Tuberculosis. We little realize how important is the knowledge to our own personal welfare. Should not a portion of everybody's time be given in learning how to fight an enemy that carries away from our numbers about one out of every seven?

Perhaps it is harder for us to learn the rules than to see how the rules are actually made. One single instance of the death of a friend or acquaintance due to the neglect of a consumptive would be an object lesson that would provide an impetus far more potent than a series of rules. For this purpose then let us consider a number of cases of tuberculosis and see what we can learn. In order to get a fair impression, we must take the cases just as they come. For this purpose I have taken the last one hundred patients that have entered the Muskoka Free Hospital for Consumptives. These patients have been instructed in the nature of the disease and can give intelligent answers to the questions.

The questions to be asked are:—"Can you attribute any reason to your having contracted this disease? The answer to this question will, no doubt, be one which explains the lowering of their resistance, the preparation of the soil for the seed, for example, overwork, worry, want of food, colds, unsuitable dwellings, climate and alcohol. "Is there any source of infection that you have reason to believe you were sufficiently long enough exposed to, to produce the disease? At first patients readily say "No" but on a little reflection suddenly remember that perhaps the man who worked at the next bench and was careless about expectorating has since been obliged to stop work because of progressive ill health now said to be consumption. Some cannot think of any specific cause and perhaps there was no reason that could have been observed at

the time. One has to discount some of the observations because of insufficient time of exposure or the instance being too remote in the past. In presenting to you these results a point has been made to accept only positive cases as possible instances of infection and turn all doubtful ones into the negative class. It is for this reason that we have a large number of people whom we cannot say have had a definite exposure.

Since the number is large let us divide them into classes. Of the hundred cases there are no less than twelve who have contracted the disease by nursing those already ill. In no case was any marked care taken in the disposal of the sputum. In ten of the twelve cases the patient and nurse were of the same family. One case is a district nurse who had many patients in the slums to care for. Another is a missionary with similar work. One girl said, "I nursed my sister until her death and lived at the same time with another who had the disease." "I nursed my mother for one year suffering loss of sleep because I worked during the day and waited on her at night," was the reply of another.

The second class includes sixteen of the cases and refers to those who have dwelt in the same house with those ill for a sufficient length of time to make exposure possible. One patient says, "I developed the disease while father was dying because he took no care at all of the expectoration." One woman kept a boarding-house where a careless consumptive roomed. Another was for two years with her ill mother. One patient says she lived in the house where four of the family had died of the disease. Very similar indeed are the testimonies of the remaining twelve persons.

The third class—a small one and very similar to the last—is made up of two cases. The one roomed with a friend who has since died, and the other occupied the same room with his father who was very careless.

The fourth class, though small, is one of considerable surprise and revelation. These are the four people who had reason and good