

familiar one, that prevention is better—*more profitable*—than cure. Every one will carry into practice, too, to a great or less extent, the principal this true saying involves, in every thing probably except in matters relating to health, even the health of the people; for the domestic animals are often less neglected in this regard than the domestic human family. The farmer will have a furrow made with the plow from low places in the field he has just sown with grain to prevent “standing” water checking or destroying the development and growth of the prospective crop. Houses and fences and implements are protected by paint to prevent decay, and various precautions are taken to prevent losses by storms and by fires. But infinitesimal indeed are the means used to prevent sickness in the family. Why? Can any one tell? “Every body” will admit, for every body knows, that a large proportion of the sickness which prevails may be readily enough prevented—one-third of it, at least, it is estimated by those most competent to judge, and this by the judicious application of practical public health measures, proper, aside from what may be prevented in individual cases by the practice of individual hygienic measures. This is no over estimation.

The payment to every practising physician of at least two thousand dollars per year, on an average, is but a small part of the actual costs of sickness. The nursing and other expenses, with the loss of time in case of those old enough to work, cost usually vastly more than the doctoring; and this aside from the grief, mourning, bereavement, the irreparable loss, associated with preventable death.

If in every municipality a competent physician were paid, by the municipality, a moderate sum, say at first of from \$200 or \$400 to \$800 or \$1,000, according to the size of the village, town or city, or even township, to give a portion of his time to the work of *preventing* sickness, it would doubtless prove on an average to be by far the best invested money spent by any corporation. Some who read this may ask what a health officer could do in the way indicated? He could look after the general drainage and the water supply—whether from wells or other source, of the place; advise in regard to the condition of cellars—too often an immediate source of illness in a family, and the disposal of waste or excremented matters; and so greatly lessen the risk of typhoid fever, diphtheria and other epidemics. He could attend to the condition of the schools, through which disease is often spread; see that any case of infectious disease were properly isolated or so managed that the disease would