

## THE DUTY OF THE STATE IN REGARD TO TUBERCULOSIS.

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**I** PROPOSE to-night to address to the members of this branch of the British Medical Association a few remarks on what I consider the duty of the State in regard to tubercular diseases. The subject is one which has been much discussed in medical societies and the medical press, and has received hardly less attention from the lay press and other lay organizations.

One would suppose, and rightly too, that on so hackneyed a subject there was little more to be said. The views held almost unanimously by medical men, have appealed so clearly and so reasonably to the thinking public, that it seems a work of supererogation to reopen the subject and spend time on the discussion of so thread-bare a theme, but the necessity will appear when we realize the astounding fact, that in spite of the unwonted unanimity of a profession, whose capacity for differing among themselves is proverbial; and the still more unusual agreement of the great public with the medical profession, our ruling authorities, municipal, civic, provincial and federal, have allowed the condition of affairs to remain to-day in practically the same state as existed 25 years ago, before the contagious nature and bacillary origin of tubercular disease was accepted or even recognized.

A few public-spirited and philanthropic persons, in Ontario and Quebec, have gone so far as to provide institutional treatment for a limited number of curable cases of pulmonary tuberculosis, a provision totally inadequate even to the demand which it is designed to meet. A few public meetings and conventions have been held—gatherings, mostly of individuals prominent in the various walks of life, and presided over by great dignitaries. Some very eloquent and sympathetic speeches have been delivered, some laudable resolutions have been unanimously adopted, a few promises have been exacted from politicians, and a few laws have been enacted by our rulers; but here the matter has been allowed to drop. We stand as a community to-day practically as we did 20 years ago and those suffering from tuberculosis are, if anything, worse off than formerly, because advanced cases are no longer freely admitted to our general hospitals, while at home they are shunned and avoided by panic-stricken and partially informed friends or relatives.

The eminent persons who spoke so eloquently and sympathetically and who moved and seconded such admirable resolutions, have probably considered their whole duty in relation to tuberculosis performed, and