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HEALTH.

It is painful to be obliged to report that, after many years immunity from fatal illness within the walls of the Institution, two of our pupils, one a lad of 14, the other a young woman of 22 years, were removed by death during the past session. In my supplementary report, dated 22nd October, 1886, I referred at some length to the visitation of diphtheria, which had then become fatal in one instance only. At that time we were all encouraged to believe that the trouble was over, and that the rigorous measures adopted, and apparently complete isolation secured, had arrested the spread of the disease. I also ventured the opinion, and now with even more confidence reiterate it, that the disease was imported, and had no local origin. All our consultations here, and with competent judges from elsewhere, tend to strengthen such a conclusion. This assurance has not led to any relaxation of our efforts to protect ourselves against possible causes of mischief. On the contrary, we have adopted and are still carrying out, as opportunity offers, such improvements in this direction as suggest themselves. But, when by correspondence with pupils' friends in various parts of the Province, I found an almost universal testimony to the presence of diphtheria in their respective neighbourhoods, it did not appear to me at all surprising that, in such a community as ours, re-assembling from all points, the enemy should have insinuated itself. The mysterious manner in which the disease appeared and reappeared, the different degrees of severity with which the victims were attacked, and the utter impossibility of connecting its assaults with any personal intercourse between those assailed, would afford quite a theme for speculative theories and reasoning among those who profess to a scientific knowledge of such matters. That in some shape or other the poison had been introduced into and had distributed itself throughout the building was, however, made clear to all of us. That any thorough system of purification could be carried out effectively so long as our pupil population remained at its ordinary figures, was at the same time clearly impracticable. On the other hand, to distribute arbitrarily through houses or families in all directions those who might carry the seeds of contagion with them, was not to be thought of. We therefore waited, adopting every possible means of disinfection until it appeared safe to advise the removal of all whose friends were disposed to take them home or could suitably do so. In December, about half the number in attendance consequently left us, and the work of painting, alabastining and varnishing, as well as general disinfection by other methods, at once commenced. The pupils returned on the 10th of February, and I am happy to report that the good health of the Institution during the remainder of the session was—so far as any epidemic was concerned—quite unbroken. Meantime, several modern improvements in drain ventilation and other sanitary measures claimed attention as a protective against all conceivable contingencies. Of the particular cases of diphtheria I leave Dr. Corson to speak in his report. I have in my last year's reference to this period of anxiety endeavoured to do justice to officers and others, on whom fell most heavily the burden of responsibility. It is pleasant to reflect that, at such a time, my relations with our medical attendant and his temporary associate-physician Dr. Philip, of this city, were of the most harmonious character, and to both my thanks are due for their ever ready and prompt attention. In Dr. Bryce, of the Provincial Board of Health, we had, too, a most valuable and energetic adviser. Nor must I omit to allude to the kindness displayed by the parents of pupils, whose feelings were naturally most strongly appealed to by the danger which appeared to beset their children. I believe their confidence was largely due, as well as the calmness and self-possession of the pupils themselves, to the fact that no attempt was made to withhold from either the knowledge of the actual state of affairs from day to day, whether the news conveyed was hopeful or disappointing. The boy who first showed symptoms of diphtheria and so soon succumbed to the disease, was parentless and all but friendless. The parents of the young woman claimed by death at a later period