

PHTHISIOPHOBIA.

This title is made use of to describe a growing malady among the lay public. Since Tuberculosis is being recognized as a communicable disease, the public mind is becoming incensed and going to extremes with their fears, the result being that every unfortunate who is declared a consumptive will be ostracized. Nothing could be more unjust, as Tuberculosis is a mildly communicable disease. This fact cannot be too strongly emphasized. In order to contract the disease one must be exposed to infection not for an hour, or a day, or a week, but for months.

Dr. S. A. Knopf in his address before the N.Y. Academy of Medicine (Official and Private Phthisiophobia) on January 2nd, 1902, denounce in the strongest terms the attitude of different public bodies in that State upon the question of locating a State Sanatorium. Let us quote a part of his address:

"All physicians approve of earnest and intelligent measures to prevent the spread of Tuberculosis, but to exaggerate the danger by declaring consumption, which is a chronic, preventable, curable and only communicable affliction, to be a dangerously contagious malady, we only create another disease in the minds of the people which may justly be called *phthisiophobia*. We should not encourage this new malady, privately or officially. Neither official nor private phthisiophobia will help us in the Anti-tuberculosis crusade. Education of the masses through societies for the prevention of Tuberculosis, instruction in schools and colleges, and a co-operation of the family practitioner with the health authorities, without inflicting burdens and hardships on either physician or the patient, or his family, will be, to my mind, a more judicious procedure and prove more effective than any draconian measure."

Koch at the last Congress (London) said: "A consumptive who coughs out tubercle bacilli is not necessarily a source of infection on that account, so long as he takes care that his sputum is properly removed and rendered innocuous." 20