

## Leading Articles.

### THE DRINKING-WATER SUPPLY AND FILTH.

Next to pure air, good health demands pure water for drinking purposes at least—i.e., water free from organic pollution. A great deal of sickness in small towns, villages, and farm houses, as well as in cities, arises from the use of impure water. Nothing relating to health, probably, needs looking after and inspecting more than the water supply. With the present vile system of storing excreta in pits in the ground, a large proportion of the wells in use throughout the entire country are contaminated, in a degree small or great, according to circumstances, with excrement dissolved by the storm water and washed into the wells, either in channels on or near the surface, or in those which are subterranean. It is well known that impure water may actually *flow* almost unchanged along underground channels rather than percolate and filter itself through the soil, for a very long distance. The rule that is often required to be acted upon in municipalities, that the well shall be a certain distance from the privy, is a very unsafe one to rest upon. A case is upon record in which it was proved beyond question, by careful experiments, that water had conveyed the typhoid poison three-quarters of a mile through the ground under a hill to a spring. The subterranean passage would convey dissolved salt, but not flour, in the water. The only safe way, therefore, is to have the excreta destroyed. When it is conveyed to a river, or even lake, it is only sent away to breed disease germs at the door of some distant fellow creatures. An English Royal Commission, reporting on the pollution of the Mersey in 1870, stated that "sewage discharged into running water is not materially changed for many hours by oxidation, and that there was not a river in England long enough to dispose of a moderate amount of sewage through oxidation. For this reason the Prussian Government has forbidden the pollution of rivers and seaports, by the discharge of sewage." Hence there is really no safety in wells or other

usual water supply, except in complete destruction of all filth. By boring down very deeply into the earth an abundant supply of pure water may usually be obtained. This practice is becoming more common in Great Britain and on this continent. In this way water free from all impurities washed from decaying natural organic substances on the earth's surface, as well as from collections of excrement, is obtained.

### INDIVIDUAL HYGIENE.

Upon individual health, after all, more than upon anything else, will depend the extent to which the cholera will develop and spread should it reach Canada this coming summer. The low forms of organic life which, it appears almost conclusively, constitute the germs of infectious or epidemic diseases, live solely upon putrefying organic matter, either within the body or outside of it. If the body be pure, free from worn out waste substances of every sort, it is believed by the best authorities that these germs of disease will not develop and multiply in the body even should they be taken into it in any way. It is therefore of the first importance that each and every individual attend well to the bodily condition. One cannot be in absolutely good health and have a pure body in the midst of unhygienic surroundings—with the habitual use of foul air and water. But even with breathing a somewhat impure atmosphere, as from neighboring foul sources, perfectly good living in all other respects, would most probably secure immunity from the development of the infection within the body. The one chief cause of waste impurities in the body is over-eating—eating more than the nutrient organs can digest, assimilate and dispose of—more than is needed for the due performance of the bodily functions; while excesses of all sorts weaken the nutrient functions and render the organism less able to throw off the waste of the body or other impurities. The strictest temperance in all things is therefore of the first consequence. With a wisely judicious moderation in eating, plain,