

THE CANADA LANCET

Vol. XXXVI.

APRIL, 1903.

No. 8

THE CAUSATION AND PREVENTION OF PHTHISIS.*

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THE prevention of phthisis is one of the most important questions of day; and is attracting much attention. The following facts are now fully recognized; that in its early stages phthisis is curable in a much larger proportion of cases than was at one time supposed, that it is a preventable disease, and that a determined effort should be made to deal with it both in the way of prevention and cure. The crusade against phthisis will do much to diminish the disease, and will be of incalculable benefit to the whole community.

The prevention of phthisis is a large and complicated problem. It should be clearly understood that any great measure of success will only be attained through very decided, and, what may to some seem, arbitrary measures. For anything like the complete prevention of phthisis the assistance of the Government will be required in co-operation with patients affected with the disease, medical men, nurses, with those in charge of cattle, dairies and milk, and with sanitary authorities. To carry out all the measures which are necessary for the prevention of phthisis will involve a large expenditure of money: but the result will be worth the cost.

Preventive measures during the past 50 years have accomplished a great deal of good, though these measures have been far from perfect. The reduction of the mortality has been due to general sanitary improvement and not to special measures against tuberculosis. The death rate, from all forms of tuberculous diseases, in Britain, per million, is as follows: 1851 to 1860, 3,483; 1861 to 1870, 3,420; 1871 to 1880, 2,863; 1881 to 1885, 2,540; 1886 to 1890, 2,322; 1891 to 1895, 2,122. In England and Wales, at least 40,000 deaths are each year due to phthisis. Tuberculous diseases cause more deaths than all the other acute infectious diseases put together. Phthisis causes one-fourth of all the deaths between the ages of 15 and 50. The prevention of phthisis, to a great extent, means the prevention of all forms of tuberculous diseases, since the sputum of the phthisical patient is the main factor in the spread of

* A summary of five lectures in the *Lancet*.