

OUR PRESENT ATTITUDE TOWARDS TUBERCULOSIS

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THE intent of this paper is to point out certain conditions as they exist in Ontario—and Ontario is certainly no exception to the country at large—with reference to the physician's relation to them as it is, and as it should be. It will be necessary first to consider some sociological aspects, and to review briefly certain accepted theories and scientifically demonstrated facts regarding the prevalence of tuberculosis.

In Canada the death rate from all forms of tuberculosis is one hundred and eighty per hundred thousand of population, according to the census of 1901. This death rate is almost identical with that of England and Wales, and is somewhat lower than that of the United States for the same period, but its percentage, 11.96, of the general mortality is rather higher than in either of these countries.

In Ontario the report for 1908 shows a death rate from tuberculosis of one hundred and twelve, a pleasing contrast with that of one hundred and fifty in 1901, while the deaths from tuberculosis were 7.7 per cent. of the general death rate, as compared with 11 per cent. seven years previously. From 1881 to 1901 the deaths from tuberculosis were from 10 to 11 per cent. of the general mortality. Therefore in Ontario, in so far as figures are available, it seems we have more than confirmed Professor Osler's graphic statement that we to-day run rather less than half the risk of dying of consumption; that our grandfathers did, and only about three-fourths the risk our parents did, a statement based upon the fact that eighty years ago consumption caused one-fifth of all deaths, while to-day it causes but one-tenth. We have, however, still to reckon with two thousand five hundred deaths yearly from tuberculosis, a number probably a good deal below the actual mark because of faulty diagnosis and improperly reported death certificates. This discrepancy may be so great that the medical health officer of our largest city is inclined to raise the three hundred and thirty-three reported deaths to five hundred and seventy-six

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