

*Riddell: A Cause of Disability.*

ould call accidents: "A workman . . . spills some corrosive acid on his hands; the injury caused thereby sets up erysipelas—a definite disease: some trifling injury by a needle sets up tetanus." No one in the present state of medical science doubts that erysipelas and tetanus are germ diseases like tuberculosis, pneumonia, and malaria.

In answer to the argument or suggestion that the condition of the plaintiff's bodily system was a contributing cause, I asked, "Suppose the plaintiff were 'a bleeder'—of the hemorrhagic diathesis, as the technical expression runs—so that a trifling lesion would produce (in the sense of being followed by) excessive hemorrhage, long continued, almost impossible to check, could it be argued that the diathesis was a contributing cause to the continued disability?" Surely such conditions of the body are conditions only (in the logical sense of the word) and not causes.

The appeal should, in my opinion, be dismissed with costs."

All the four judges of the highest court in the Province agreed that, while medically the infection was a cause of the disability, it should not be considered such in interpreting such a contract.

The case is interesting (if for no other reason) as showing that even courts of law, conservative as they are and must be, cannot avoid taking cognizance of the advance of medical science.

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