

CANADA

MEDICAL & SURGICAL JOURNAL

SEPTEMBER, 1883.

Original Communications.

IS PNEUMONIA INFECTIOUS?

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There are but few physicians of even only a moderately large practice who, through peculiar circumstances, can have failed to ask themselves the above question on some occasions. It is the experience of each of us to have a much greater number of pneumonic cases at certain seasons of the year, so that, collectively, the disease is very prevalent at that particular time. It then forms a high percentage of prevailing diseases as compared with other seasons, and certainly has the appearance of being, to some extent, dependent on the sudden changes of temperature. But cases of pneumonia do frequently occur with which climatic changes in temperature cannot possibly have anything whatever to do. So, also, a not at all unusual circumstance is the occurrence under the same roof of two, three, or four cases of pneumonia, all of which cannot be considered the results of cold. Then the above question forces itself upon us. Friends of the patients will put the question—"What is it, doctor?" "Is it something taking?" Such was my experience four years ago, and, I feel certain, must be the experience of other physicians also.* To reply unqualifiedly "No," with our present know-

* Dr. Bell, Medical Superintendent of the Montreal General Hospital, has kindly furnished me with a synopsis of the report of four cases that he met with, which he has permitted me to make use of, and which are embodied in this paper, together with four cases of my own, which we believe to be altogether independent of climatic changes of temperature.