

individuals, we can prevent it from assuming an epidemic character.

Thanks to the bacteriological discoveries of late years, we now possess this power of early diagnosis in connection with not a few of the most important—that is to say, the most widespread and fatal of infectious disorders. We can demonstrate the minute organisms which are the cause of such diseases as tuberculosis (phthisis), typhoid, diphtheria and cholera.

With respect to typhoid, the infection has long been known to be indirect, but now we can determine the presence of the specific bacillus of this disease in the intestinal contents of those suffering from the disease; we can trace its presence in the excreta and in water which has become contaminated by the leakage into it of the sewage of an affected locality, and from this water can trace its passage into milk and other fluids that have been placed in vessels washed in water.

So, too, with respect to cholera. Here also the infectious agent passes often with the excrementitious matter into the water supply of a large area, it may be, and thereby the disease becomes widespread. In this water, as in the intestinal contents, the presence of the minute organisms associated with the disease may be demonstrated. If, then, with any of the above-mentioned diseases the nature of a solitary case be recognized, we can prevent the extension of the disease to others by isolation of the patient, and by rigorous disinfection of excreta, clothing, and of the sick chamber and its attendants. The case will remain isolated.

It is evident, therefore, that the early diagnosis of infectious diseases is of the highest importance to the community.

The more perfect the system whereby each case of infectious disease is promptly notified, and any doubtful isolated cases subjected to careful bacteriological investigation, the greater the security of the community at large, the less the death-roll.

In Montreal, as in every large centre of population, it is necessary in the first place that there be compulsory notification of infectious disease to the central authority—namely, the Medical Health Officer,—and, in the second place, that there