

TYPHOID FEVER AND OUR INLAND WATERS.

AS a Medical writer recently said, tuberculosis in some form, especially pulmonary consumption, is the chief cause of mortality; but typhoid fever will be found an easy second and following close;—the former choosing its victims from all ages, and perhaps more from the weak and delicate, the latter more particularly from those of youth and middle age, and equally, if not more, from the strong and robust, emphatically, from the promising and producing class. While typhoid is increasing and as it were picking its victims from among the best lives in the country, the people are everywhere scattering broad-cast the germs of the disease by pouring them with the sewage into our everywhere circulating waters. Five years ago the editor of this JOURNAL brought this subject before the American Public Health Association, in a paper on the dissemination of infectious diseases by our inland waters. A committee was then appointed which later reported most emphatically against the present practice of stream pollution, and the near danger of it. Still the vile practice goes on, of course, and will for some time, till probably hundreds of thousands more of human lives are sacrificed by it. Since that time a good deal of literature on the subject has accumulated. The American Lancet for the current month (April) gives a lengthy paper bearing upon it, read before the Detroit Academy of Medicine by E. P. Christian, B. A., M. D. &c. In this the doctor said, "At this day the source of the infection of typhoid fever is supposed to be so well established, that is, by means of the germs taken into the system through the water in which they exist, that personal exposure to emanations from one sick with the disease no longer offers a satisfactory explanation of the source of infection; and when successive cases occur in one family, the fact is more satisfactorily accounted for by reason of the common exposure of all to the same source of infection in the drinking water; and the successive, instead of simultaneous succumbing of the indi-

viduals, explained by different degrees of vital resistance to the pathogenous germs, or by less amount of the poison received into the body. . . . That the source of the typhoid poison is now universally regarded as in the drinking water, we believe will generally be acknowledged."

Dujardin-Beaumetz, an acknowledged high authority, says (*in Therap. Gaz.*) "We know to-day that the most active agent in the propagation of typhoid fever is the use of water contaminated by the ejecta of typhoid patients, which furnishes a medium of culture favorable to these micro-organisms. In all epidemics which we observe to-day it is always in the water we find the contagious element; an element which we may cultivate to reveal fully its presence."

Again, Dr. Christain said, "If the poison lurks in the pollution of streams by the ejecta of typhoid patients, and in it the germs live and grow and multiply, and these streams are regarded by legislators as existing primarily and furnishing the easy and ready receptacle for the sewage of the cities which line their shores, secondarily as having their uses for navigation and manufactories perhaps, and *merely incidentally convenient* for water supply for culinary, lavatory, laundry, and drinking purposes, how long will it be with our annually increasing millions of population ere the greatest of them will become too polluted for this latter purpose, even as the populations which line the lower shores of some of our largest rivers are now finding to be the condition, especially those below the large cities.

At a recent meeting of the Albany, N. Y. Health Board, Dr. Balch, the Health Officer, and Secretary too of the State Board of Health, reported that during January 203 cases of typhoid fever had been reported to him, and that 18 deaths had been caused by it. As the fever was most prevalent in a part of the city using the river water, and as the disease was prevalent in up-river cities, it was thought by the medical men present, mostly, to have been depend-