

The Canada Lancet

VOL. XLVI.

TORONTO, JANUARY, 1913

No. 5

EDITORIAL

CO-OPERATION.

When the general public join with the medical profession in a movement for the good of humanity, something definite and of value is likely to be achieved. This is well seen in the worldwide efforts for the prevention of disease, and especially in the case of tuberculosis.

Clergymen do not think it is improper to speak of health subjects from the pulpit. They take up such a topic as the prevention of tuberculosis, and speak freely upon it to their congregations on a Sunday. The time was when such would have been looked upon as an improper use of the sacred edifices.

A vast amount of human sickness and suffering is due to the introduction of some infection into the body. It is now admitted that a vast amount of this could be prevented. In the case of typhoid fever the amount of sickness and the number of deaths could be reduced to a very low percentage. The laws governing the spread of this infection have now been determined to consist of the pollution of water with human excreta. This water is used for drinking purposes or in domestic use and so infects foods and other drinks, such as milk.

The spread of smallpox, that formerly wrought such havoc, can be controlled. Vaccination reduces the risk of contracting the disease almost to the vanishing point, and when it is contracted removes from it its dangers. Further, when a case of smallpox does appear in a locality all that needs be done is to isolate the victim of the disease and place in charge some one who has been protected by vaccination. Were it not for vaccination the disease would keep on attacking the attendants, and the prevention and arrest of an epidemic would be very difficult indeed.

Few diseases have come more into the limelight than tuberculosis. The reasons are not far to seek. In the first place it is very ubiquitous, and is found in almost every known country, and among all races of men. It has also a wide incidence among the lower orders of animals.