

Selected Articles.

TUBERCULOSIS.

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[ABSTRACT.]

The editor of the *Practitioner* is good enough to desire from me some expression of opinion concerning this important subject, one which has received so interesting a treatment at his own hands and those of his contributors. That I have anything to add to these previous opinions and records I cannot suppose; but some reiteration of the views of the older members of the profession may be of weight in pressing the subject upon public attention.

It is still with pain that I recall the sadness with which, in my early days, we were wont to recognize the presence of consumption in young and promising men and women, too often bright and interesting, or at any rate capable and industrious members of society. Well I remember the fatal—for such it then seemed—the fatal note of the “consonating rãle”: how it impinged upon the unwilling ear like a knell. For they nearly all died in those days. There were legends, indeed, in every man’s practice, in every family circle, of lives plucked from the fire; but these rare successes gave us no confidence in individual cases. Statistics are no comfort to the individual: they have scarcely an application to his case. What comfort is it to the man, standing before you for a verdict, to tell him that 10 per cent. of his class will recover? As I have said, prognosis was very dismal in those days. For years the victim of phthisis might linger; for years his foe might sleep, indeed; but, sooner or later, the hand of death was laid, softly or harshly, upon him.

Then arose Henry Bennet, a keen and original thinker, and a good fighter. Smitten himself with phthisis, he determined to live; and Bennet was the practical maker of the “open-air cure.” Bennet threw away all traditional codling, and committed himself boldly to the open air. Day and night he lived virtually out of doors; but, not altogether freed from the bogey of “catching cold,” he sought, and indeed wisely sought, a climate in which such an experiment—for then it was little more—could be conveniently, pleasantly, and, as he thought,