

GOITRE : ITS ETIOLOGY AND INCIDENCE IN THE DISTRICT OF MONTREAL.*

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The obscurity surrounding the etiology of bronchocoele in every part of the world renders any attempt of mine to place the subject more plainly before you from a study of the disease in the city and district of Montreal an extremely difficult one, in fact, an almost impossible one.

The absence of statistics relating to the Province of Quebec, or even to the Dominion, is well known to you, and had it not been for this fact I would not have ventured to speak upon the subject at all, for I have not a table of cases sufficiently large for it to be of any weight. However, during the last five or six years I have been interested in this disease and in its prevalence in the country parts about Montreal, and from my experience alone do I base any statements I may make. I have no theory to advance, but have simply to place certain facts before you for any consideration you may deem them worthy.

In sojourning here and there throughout the country districts of Montreal Island, and still more so in other more remote parts of this Province, one will, if observant, discover that goitre is a very common disease indeed. It ranges from the slight fulness of the neck, which adds if anything to the appearance of a throat otherwise to be considered too thin, to the huge pendulous growths which cause much disfigurement and often threaten life, and are consequently brought to our city hospitals for treatment. For the past five or six years I have had an opportunity of observing the extent to which this malady exists, and more particularly in the Laurentian Mountains.

Here, the population is of course largely of French origin as in the rest of the province. But if we penetrate further back, we come upon half-breed mixtures of Scotch, French, Irish, and English, with the Indian, and here and there may encounter the Eskimo type. This latter is occasionally to be met with in the valley of the St. Maurice River, and came originally from Hudson's Bay and Labrador. Although I am unable to present to you a table of statistics, yet I may be allowed to present facts that I have from time to time verified. In this part of the Laurentian mountains goitre or "grosse gorge" is usual in all those born and brought up there. And although the condition is perhaps more frequent among females, yet a slight fulness or prominence

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