

There still exists a woful lack of uniformity in dealing with contagious disease. The time has come when individuals and ignorant committees who, from superstition and preconceived prejudices, systematically conceal disease, must be made to conform to the law of notification, and that inspectors who are entrusted with the process of disinfection, shall be required to do more thorough work than the general practice which prevails among them of merely deodorizing the premises. Disinfection means the destruction of all animal and vegetable life on the premises, and even more, the germs and spores must also be destroyed. To do it carelessly merely throws people off their guard, and, under the impression of safety, they are lured into greater danger.

The Health Officer's duties towards public and private schools should be defined by statute, and the result of his inspections should be embodied into quarterly reports, and forwarded to the Department of Education.

It would greatly assist in the diffusion of hygienic information among the masses if one of the duties of the Medical Health Officer was to deliver, say, two or three lectures annually in his municipality. Besides the information he could impart, it would draw around him those who have a natural taste for sanitary work, and afford a more beneficial direction for the pent-up energies which seek an outlet in the formation of secret and other societies, and I am sure that if subjects pertaining to health were discussed with the same earnestness which characterizes the deliberations of these organizations, the sum of the results would reach a ten-fold measure of usefulness to the community at large.

There is no more popular subject to-day than public sanitation. Let those of us, therefore, who are entrusted with the guidance of its methods, act with that deliberation, firmness and discretion which should mark the action of men having a sacred duty to perform.

#### THE DUTY OF THE STATE IN INVESTIGATING THE CAUSE OF DISEASES.

AN ADDRESS BY PROF. VICTOR VAUGHAN, OF THE LABORATORY OF HYGIENE, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN, BEFORE THE ASSOCIATION OF EXECUTIVE HEALTH OFFICERS OF ONTARIO.

*Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,*—The great pestilential diseases which have at one time or another visited every part of the inhabited globe have had their origin in man's ignorance. Some

twenty-three hundred years ago, when the Athenians were suffering from the pestilence, they said that someone had poisoned their drinking water. The same cry went up three years ago when hundreds of the inhabitants of the village of Plymouth, Pa., were prostrated with typhoid fever. In both instances the accusation was correct, but the poisoning had not in either case been done maliciously, but ignorantly. No enemy had come stealing by night and cast the powerful poison into the water, but the people themselves had allowed their excretions to accumulate about them until the germs of disease thus furnished with suitable material elaborated poisons more powerful than those known to the chemist. In the Middle Ages, the black-plague spread time and time again over Europe. In 1348, between the 1st of March and the last of July, there died in Florence more than 100,000 people from this disease, Geneva lost 40,000 inhabitants, Naples 60,000, Venice 70,000, and within four years there died in Southern Europe not less than 4,000,000 people, of this disease. In 1665 in London, the plague destroyed not less than 100,000. After the plague came the sweating sickness, typhus fever and cholera, all of which are now recognized as having their origin and spread in the ignorance and carelessness of man. "But," says one, "all of this refers to the past." "We will admit that past generations of men were ignorant and frequently brought upon themselves disease and death, but we live in an enlightened day and generation, and certainly there are no great plagues among us, which might be removed by more information." Let us see about this, my friend. Let us inquire into the ravages of a single disease now existing. We will take as the type of filth diseases of the present, typhoid fever, a disease which owes its existence and spread to the ignorance and carelessness of man. To what extent does this disease exist? In the Province of Ontario, there die on an average each year not less than 500 people from this one disease. For every death there are at least 10 cases of sickness. Thus, there are each year in this Province at least 5,000 persons sick with typhoid fever. The average duration of the illness is about four weeks, making an aggregate of 20,000 weeks of sickness each year from this one disease. For each person sick, the time and attention of at least one attendant is necessary. There are therefore 10,000 people