

ON THE CAUSES AND PREVENTION OF TUBERCULAR CONSUMPTION IN MANKIND AND THE DOMESTIC ANIMALS.

GENERAL AND INTRODUCTORY.

Tubercular consumption is such a terribly prevalent and fatal disease in almost every country in the world, in both man and animals, that hardly any question can be of greater importance than that which relates to its prevention. It is a question which concerns every individual, of every age, high, low, rich and poor, almost alike, for no one is exempt from the disease and its influences. Moreover, the disease seems to be every where on the increase; which fact makes the question a still more serious one.

That the disease as found in man and in the lower animals is identically one and the same and that it is infectious and intercommunicable between man and the lower animals—from man to animals and from animals to man—is now universally conceded by all authorities. Moreover, the disease is now universally regarded by the medical profession as a preventable disease, just as much so as typhoid fever, and the subject of its prevention becomes one of very great practical importance.

A great many people, even amongst the more intelligent classes, look upon consumption as something to which human beings are so naturally subject that they are powerless to prevent it; yet, when once symptoms of its presence become manifested in the body of any one, there is not the slightest hesitation in at once resorting to means for its cure.

Any one of ordinary intelligence who will examine into the now well known causes of consumption cannot fail to readily see that it is not only a preventable disease, but that it may be more easily and surely prevented than the more actively infectious diseases which prevail epidemically; because its prevention is more largely in the hands of the individual. It is most strange, considering the great fatality of this malady and the large proportion of sickness and of deaths it is continually causing in almost every civilized country, that more general attention has not heretofore been given by sanitarians to its prevention. Those interested in public health proceedings have perhaps naturally enough bestowed their thoughts and time chiefly on those diseases which prevail epidemically and in a short period of time destroy many lives, or which, prevailing only endemically or to a much less extent, destroy life much more rapidly.

GENERAL PREVALENCE OF THE DISEASE IN MANKIND.

The record of deaths in the province of Ontario shows that many more deaths are caused by consumption than by any other disease. It causes on an average more than one-tenth of all the deaths registered in the province. We have no record as to its mortality in the other provinces. From the data obtainable, however, in Canada, in the United States and Great Britain, on the continent of Europe, and elsewhere it causes from one-fifth to one-tenth of all the deaths which take place throughout the civilized world.

At least twelve thousand, doubtless, and possibly fifteen thousand, human beings of all ages die every year in Canada from tubercular diseases, chiefly pulmonary tuberculosis, or consumption. Besides, as it has been estimated that for every one who dies of the disease, three others are the subjects of it, there are probably not less than forty thousand people in this Dominion *constantly* suffering from tuberculosis. Furthermore, from the long period of debility, sickness and inability to work which invariably precede death from this disease, the actual money outlay which it causes in the country, aside from the deaths, is vastly greater than the cost of any other disease: the proportionate loss to communities from it, in comparison with other diseases, being much greater in relation to the sickness than to the deaths.