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MONTREAL, FEBRUARY, 1891.

VOCAL CULTURE AS A PREVENTATIVE OF CONSUMPTION.

We receive a great many reprints from their various authors, the titles of which appear in this journal every month under the head of Book Notices and Pamphlets received; a list which our readers would do well to notice, for should any of these subjects be of particular interest to them they can generally obtain a copy of the reprint by applying to its author. One of these which we have lately received, of more than passing interest, is by Dr. Eugene Crutchfield on the application of vocal culture to the treatment of throat and pulmonary affections. In view of the very wide prevalence of consumption and the small hope of cure, any measure of treatment which holds out any prospect of preventing the attack of the fell disease deserves our closest attention. The best way to cure consumption is not to get it at all. There are two ways to reach this desirable end. The first is to refrain absolutely from exposing ourselves to the contagion, or in other words never to inhale or swallow a single tubercle bacillus. We take it for granted that all of our readers are thoroughly convinced by this time that the disease can only be acquired in one of these two ways, and that it is never inherited as was for so many years supposed.

Never to expose ourselves is of course, under present circumstances, an impossibility for, unlike smallpox patients, death-spreading cases of consumption are allowed to roam about at will, setting up fresh centres of infections; so that it is impossible to enter a room, a public building, or a railway car in which, at some time or other, a consumptive has not deposited an expectoration containing many thousands of bacilli, which only have to be dried in order to be carried by the air to our lungs. If the disease is so contagious, how is it that everybody does not acquire it, and that instead of only a few millions of people being constantly affected with it the whole population of the earth is not in consumption? Simply because there are in our systems a certain number of lymph corpuscles or fighting cells which, like sentinels, are ever on the lookout for invading bacilli, and which if the latter are not too numerous, promptly seize upon the invaders and swallow them up. In order that they may be able to win the battle it is necessary that these fighting cells be in good condition, otherwise the invaders will be stronger than they, the result being the death of the soldiers and the multiplication of the bacilli. Hence the importance of keeping the whole system in good condition and the vitality of the highest standard, for when people are in a run down condition their fighting cells or phagocytes are weak and easily conquered by the invaders. Moreover two other conditions are favorable to the growth of all the lower orders of plant life to which the tubercle bacilli belong, namely, decomposing liquids and stagnant air. They do not grow well in rapidly changing air or on a clean dry surface, and this is where the importance of Dr. Crutchfield's conclusions come in. He has found after a long and careful investigation that out of hundreds of professional singers, only one or two at the most were ever supposed to have died from consumption, and even about these two there seems to have been considerable doubt.