

contagious," &c., by H. C. Clapp, M. A., M. D., Boston.)

Dr. Bowditch, late chairman of the state board of health of Massachusetts, a number of years ago made some investigations relating to the cause of consumption, by sending a list of questions to prominent physicians in active practice in several of the states and in London and Germany (Fourth annual report of the state board of health, Mass, 1872). But of 210 physicians who sent replies to these questions, 28 did not feel able from various reasons to answer the question on contagion. Of the remainder, 110 answered in the affirmative; 45 in the negative; and 27 were doubtful. Dr. Bowditch himself writes: "May not the fact of the hitherto great prevalence of the opinion of the non-contagiousness of this disease among English and American practitioners, and our strong belief in the hereditary character of it, have led us all to ignore what may, after all, prove a potent cause.

Many of the physicians to whom the questions were sent, besides answering "yes" or "no" wrote something like the following: "I am a firm believer that consumption is a contagious disease, much more so than is generally believed. I have in my mind several cases where there was almost positive evidence of contagion." "In very many cases, I have the opinion, from my own observation, that consumption is communicable by contagion or infection." "I am more inclined than I was at one time to attach importance to the influence of contagion." "I am thoroughly convinced that phthisis is frequently caused by contagion, and deserves to be classed with typhoid fever in this respect. I have seen unmistakable evidence where a healthy wife contracted the disease from sleeping with her husband suffering from that disease, and *vice versa*.

In 1878, Dr. Holden of New Jersey, made some similar investigations. Out

of 250 answers to a list of questions, 126 physicians answered "yes" in reply to the question on contagion, 73 of whom were emphatic, and gave cases in confirmation; 74 answered "no"; and 50 were doubtful or could not form an opinion.

Dr. Holden himself commenced practice with the idea that consumption was communicable only from parent to offspring, but at length wrote as follows: "I can enumerate at least a score of cases which have been watched with this very object in view and in which the result has been the same. Wives after husbands, husbands after wives, intimate companions and faithful nurses, who slept in the same bed, or wore the same clothing, have fallen victims. Of course, it is not to be intimated that all, or even a majority, can be affected by contagion any more than in those diseases now indisputably contagious. Malignant scarlet fever, diphtheria, and cerebro-spinal meningitis are braved by faithful nurses and friends, who escape in *more* than a majority of instances. To prove contagion now, is no easier than when [the non-contagiousness of] erysipelas had its defenders, and the records of the surgical wards of the hospitals of Paris, and Berlin, and London, had accumulated a fearful mortality ere the obdurate prejudices of the profession were awakened to a new belief."

Dr. H. C. Clapp of Boston, in his recent work ("Is consumption contagious" 1881), records the history of 25 cases, illustrative of the contagious nature of this disease, which he selected "from among those which can be found on record scattered through the annals of medical literature." In the history of the 25 cases mention is made of 66 persons who became consumptive seemingly through contagion; 54 of whom were distinctly stated to be free from hereditary taint.

The above should be enough to convince the most sceptical, obdurate and