

Dominion Medical Monthly.

All literary communications, exchanges, and books for review, should be addressed to the DOMINION MEDICAL MONTHLY, 50 College Street, Toronto.

Address all business communications to the Publishers, THE MEDICAL PUBLISHING CO., OF TORONTO, Box 418, Toronto, Canada.

TORONTO, JULY, 1894.

EXHUMATION OF THE CORPSES OF DIPHTHERIA PATIENTS.

At a meeting of the Toronto General Burying Grounds Trust last May, their regulation which reads, "Bodies of persons dying of contagious diseases shall not be placed in a vault, but must be interred; and shall not be disinterred, except on certificate of the City Medical Health Officer," was amended by striking out all the words after disinterred.

Until cremation is generally adopted in disposing of the bodies of persons who have died of contagious diseases, we think that once buried with the precautions recommended in the official regulations of the Provincial Board of Health, the body should on no account be disinterred. We commend the action taken by the authorities of the Toronto General Burying Grounds Trust in this matter, and we hope it will be extensively imitated. Physicians are well aware, that no matter what precautions may be taken by grave-diggers on removing a corpse or by undertakers and others in transporting it to its second grave, that the saturated soil of the first grave will be turned up for some future tenant, and

will expose others to the danger of contracting a deadly disease.

There is also a risk in asking grave diggers with families or without to remove such bodies from graves. Besides, it is unnecessary to place others in peril in order to gratify the whim of parents or relatives, who frequently pay little further attention to the last resting-place of their dead.

Under present regulations the railway companies as public carriers, are interested in the associate question of transporting the bodies of the dead. They do it, under restrictions, to accommodate the public; but cannot be enamoured of such work. A prominent railway official informed us recently, that sometimes the certificates issued by attending physicians did not really indicate the true nature of the disease from which the patients died, and, that, by this subterfuge, the bodies of persons, who may have died of typhoid fever, diphtheria and scarlet fever are carried by the railways, with no more precautions, than the corpses of persons who have died of non-contagious diseases.

In his opinion, one official, the Medical Health Officer, should be responsible for the issue of such a certificate to the railway authorities. The point is well taken. Will the Association of Medical Health Officers of Ontario discuss it at their meeting in Chatham next month?

TUBERCULOSIS.

This journal has on several occasions expressed the opinion that tuberculosis should be regarded as an infectious disease. It is true that the infection cannot always be traced. Indeed, in many cases, no suspicion exists as to the source of infection. This is to be accounted for, to some extent, by the slowness of the incubative stage. The germs lie in the system for a long period before any manifestations make their appearance,