

diseases, except small-pox, which can be modified or prevented by vaccination, there is a great and generally neglected field for active work by our health authorities, throughout the State, and in every year. About one-eighth of all the deaths reported in this State are reported as caused by the communicable diseases. Among these diseases few cause a less number of deaths than does small-pox, but, aside from vaccination, the methods adopted for its restriction are generally applicable to all the others, except, perhaps, typhoid fever, of which mention has already been made.

THE ECONOMY OF HAVING A HEALTH OFFICER.

The State Board of Health has the names and post-office addresses of over 3,500 physicians in Michigan. I think it is safe to estimate that the average annual income of these doctors is at least \$1,000 each; and, if so, the people of this State pay \$3,500,000 a year to those whom they employ to prescribe for the sick. If in respect to sickness, we admit that an 'ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,' one-sixteenth of \$3,500,000 judiciously expended in the prevention of sickness would be worth as much to the people as the whole sum spent for the cure of sickness; or, if the whole 3,500 doctors were employed and the whole \$3,500,000 expended in the prevention of sickness, the benefit to the people would be sixteen times as great as now and would have a money value of \$56,000,000. And yet not all the sickness is preventable. The debt of nature must be paid at last. When science has failed to prevent sickness the skillful physician can often aid in nature's efforts to recover strength, and when death is certain he can often make easier the last days of suffering. But can any rational person suppose for an instant that if one-sixteenth of the 3,500 physicians now employed in prescribing for the cure of disease were constantly employed and paid for their services, and their success in searching out and applying all possible knowledge for the prevention of sickness and deaths, it would require near all the remaining 3,282 physicians to prescribe for the sickness which would not thus be prevented? Can any one suppose that many of the present heavy burdens of the people would not be removed?

Omitting mention of the most important direct benefits of the prevention of sickness and noting only the indirect benefits not so frequently dwelt upon, let us think of the vast sums of money paid to