according to the nature of the soil and the amount of organic matter present. Thus it will be seen that these bacteria really keep up the circulation of matter, breaking down into their simplest constituents the excretions of living beings, and the remains of dead animals and plants, and thus supplying those elements that are necessary for the nutrition of plants. Duclaux, in stating the results of Pasteur's work, to whom so much is due for our knowledge in this field, says: "Whenever and wherever there is decomposition of organic matter, the work is exclusively done by infinitely small organisms. They are the important, almost the only, agents of universal hygiene. They protect the living against the dead; they do more. If there are still living beings, if, since the world has been inhabited, life continues, it is to them we owe it." Without them the surface of the earth would be covered with dead organic matter, the remains of plant and animal bodies, which, retaining the elements necessary for its building up of new plant life and animal bodies, would soon cut off the food supply of new plants and animals. Life would be impossible because the work of death would be incomplete, or, as Pasteur puts it, "because the return to the atmosphere and to the mineral kingdom of all that which has ceased to live would be totally suspended."

TORONTO BOARD OF HEALTH.

The local Board of Health seems frequently disposed to compare the statistics of this year with those of 1892, and deduct therefrom praise and credit to themselves for their efficient and economical administration. Nothing could be more unfair or more misleading than this comparison—unfair, since the Board well knows that the conditions and circumstances are completely changed; misleading, in that the system of reporting infectious diseases is entirely different. In 1892 every case of infectious, or apparently infectious disease, was reported, whether one occurred in a family, or several. This year, if several cases occur in a family, only one is reported, and the entire family may be all counted as one case. Moreover, the Board of 1892 insisted on the strict reporting of all suspected cases, while to-day the greatest carelessness exists, as is shown in the cases occurring recently in the vicinity of Lansdowne School. Alderman Graham deserves great credit for the efficiency of the department over which he presided in 1892. During that year a most complete system of sanitary house-to-house inspection was adopted; rigid inspection of food, especially milk, was carried on. All this, of course, cost money. We are sorry to say the department, under Alderman Bailey's chairmanship, has seen fit to abolish all this in the interest of economy. As a result we have neglected privy pits and insanitary dwellings which would prove a fruitful soil for the generation and dissemination of infectious disease, should it unfortunately occur in the vicinity. The milk supply at present is at the mercy of the vendor, and cases have been reported to us during the last week where milk in a diseased condition has actually been supplied to customers, to say nothing of the wholesale dilution, and that probably with water from not too healthy wells. We urge the next Board to establish efficiency, without too much regard to economy.

THE TEACHING OF ANATOMY.

It has been pleasing to the anatomy enthusiast during the last few years to observe the interest that is being taken here, there, and everywhere, in the subject of anatomy, and the best methods of acquiring and imparting a knowledge of it.

We are in a transition stage with regard to the subject at present, and any new ideas or suggestions as to methods are eagerly sought after by teachers of anatomy. From time to time papers have appeared in the *New York Medical Journal*, by William Keiller, F.R.C.S. Edin., Professor of Anatomy in the University of Texas, and, owing to the interest taken in the subject of late, we have thought a résumé of some of the points in his first paper might prove of interest to some of our readers. He appears to think that too much time cannot be spent in the dissecting room and at practical work. He advises, in a four years' course, that at least two hours daily during the first and second years should be devoted to dissecting.