

EDITOR'S SPECIAL DEPARTMENT.

IMPORTANCE OF ISOLATION.

Probably no other health measure is more useful in preventing sickness and premature deaths than that of carefully isolating all cases of infectious disease, from the first symptoms until all danger of conveying the disease to others has passed away. This measure should receive vastly more attention, both in families, from the household head, and in municipal health boards, than it does. When one thinks seriously for a moment of the danger to the health and life of others, of exposing anyone over whom one has control and who is affected with any one of the sometimes fatal infectious diseases, so that from such exposure another may contract the disease, and then—when it has passed from one's own control—another and another and another, and scores, and, it may be, hundreds and thousands of one's fellow creatures, innocent children and grown up men and women, all contracted and developed from the one case, and many lives be endangered—many deaths following, one cannot but feel that a great and terrible responsibility, indeed a criminal charge, would forever rest upon anyone, whether parent or health officer, who, either through carelessness, indifference or even ignorance, permitted such exposure. No sanitary facts are better established than these two: 1st that every case of infectious disease, simple or malignant, has its starting point directly in the infection from another and previous case of the same disease; and 2nd, that every case of infectious disease is almost constantly giving off germs which may enter into the body of any other individual with which they may come in contact, enter either with the air breathed or with the food or drink consumed, and give rise in such individual to a like disease. Hence every person who is responsible for the control of anyone affected with an infectious disease, which sometimes proves fatal, if he do not use every means known to sanitary science to strictly isolate such case, is guilty of a crime, morally if not legally, against society. Every community therefore should see to it that complete provision is made for strictly isolating every case, but especially the first one, of infectious disease known in the community. Health officers are first responsible. But the people—parents and heads of families—must provide the means—the money for such pro-

vision, or they also become responsible. Chiefly what is needed is an isolation hospital, removed a safe distance from any inhabited place, and some sort of safe and comfortable conveyance or ambulance. The hospital need be but an inexpensive structure, and two or more communities could usually join in providing one. In order to secure the best results, it should be so constructed that usually when desired by friends, the mother, sister or other near friend could accompany and remain with any patient admitted. Unless this privilege be provided for parents will often do their utmost, as by concealment, etc., to prevent their children being taken to the hospital, and the objects of it will not be attained. With this privilege, when the infected cannot be properly isolated at home (when home they have) there will not usually, with proper explanations and reasoning, be any difficulty in getting consent and even co-operation from the most prejudiced and least intelligent people. It should then, in all cases, be one of the first provisions made by the health department of every municipality, that for completely isolating the infected sick.

A DANGEROUS, GROWING HABIT.

Coming to a subject more within the field of domestic hygiene and beyond the ken and control of the Health Officer, we would sound a warning note relative to the abuse of morphine and other powerful poisons of a like character. We have good reason to believe that the practice of taking stimulants and hypnotics of this nature, for the temporary pleasurable excitement and feeling of general satisfaction to which they give rise, is being indulged in by a large number of persons, especially women, indifferent to, or ignorant of, the dreadful consequences which are sure to follow the continued use of such drugs, is more common than is generally known—is indeed becoming so prevalent in this country as to demand earnest effort on the part of all well wishers of society toward checking the growing evil. As the British Medical Journal recently has it: "The more refined vices are not the least dangerous to society, and among these we must count the abuse of morphine, which is becoming a widespread evil. . . not only in this country but in France and Germany." It is said the Journal states, that the abuse of morphine has in many cases replaced the abuse of