

ignorance of those who surround the sick bed! If, for instance, diseases consist, as claimed by Tyndall, of definite particles, sometimes floating in gas, or in the air, or in the liquid we drink; and that like organic seeds in the soil the particles multiply themselves indefinitely in suitable media—the great probability being that their disease-producing qualities are living things—not gaseous or liquid,—but solid, the treatment of disease will resolve itself, sooner or later, into a kind of germicide within and without the body—within, in the fluids and secretions of the body—without, in the noxious elements that surround it.

The conviction is steadily gaining ground that a Board of Health should be established for the Dominion; Provincial boards for each Province; and local boards for every municipality. But where shall we commence? With the Legislature? No! Legislators are but the mouthpieces of the people; and if party politics consume their time, they but act up to the standard by which the measure and quality of their work are to be valued. Give them, however, another, and a higher standard by which to estimate and measure the line of duty, and make them to understand that the health and happiness of a people, as Earl Beaconsfield observes, are the foundation on which depend much of the happiness and power in the State, and we will find them exercising all the ingenuity of the age, and all the knowledge of our most advanced Scientists and Sanitarians in securing the lives, and in protecting the health of the people. But can we reproach them for doing nothing, while we do so little towards disseminating correct information, and inculcating proper habits among ourselves? Let us do our share outside of what is the truly professional—for none so qualified as we to do—and salutary laws will be framed, and the people will observe them. It is said that our favoured Sister City the Queen of the West, and the Capital of Ontario, has made "several very vigorous and very unavailing attempts to form a Sanitary Association, with a view of aiding the authorities in improving the health of the city." This city has been more fortunate, and has done more—but it required to do more.

#### LEGISLATION ON HEALTH MATTERS

has been, so far, unformed, unfinished, and immature. When I entered officially, a couple of years ago, upon the labour of endeavouring to improve the sanitary condition of the city in which we are now met, I found no law that could be put into force to carry out the most necessary sanitary measures; and, in my earlier enthusiasm, struggled, with but partial success, to obtain some amelioration in sanitary legislation. More matured experience, however, apprised me that legislation is useless where the people

are totally uninformed on the most elementary health matters. Where, for instance, the wisdom of endeavouring to enforce sewer ventilation, where the chief magistrate seriously proposed "trapping the sewers?" Where the advantage of endeavouring to accomplish what the whole scientific world approves of—general vaccination,—and, in times of epidemic, re-vaccination, when professors in medical schools will, in public squares and market places, harangue the uninformed against the practice? No. While our laws, as I have already said, are unformed, unfinished and immature, we, gentlemen, you, and I, and every one of us, have to do more than we have hitherto done to get those, whom sanitary laws affect, to have some sort of intelligent appreciation of the principles they involve. Every man can see, says Miss Lankerton, that if he persists in walking over a precipice he will, in all probability, be killed, and there is no need to enforce a law to prevent his doing so; but he does not see as clearly that if he and his family live and sleep in an atmosphere filled with sewer gas; or if they drink the unfiltered water of some dirty pool or river, destruction is as certain and inevitable, though by a slower process. Is it not clearly, then, the duty of those, whose eyes are open to the latter dangers, to make them evident, if possible, to those whose ignorance is as a "mist before their vision?" And, gentlemen, upon whom does that duty devolve, if not upon those who are qualified to instruct, where instruction is so much needed? I shall not go to other countries, or to other cities outside of our Dominion to ask a question. There are in Canada nearly 6000 physicians. Were that body of educated men to do its duty, each member of it in the space or circuit through which he walks, would the profound ignorance we meet with in sanitary matters be so general? I think not; and if accountability rests upon any one, upon us must fall a portion of that huge responsibility which doubtless rests somewhere for that large death rate which obtains in some of our larger cities. The physician who is content to prescribe only to those who are sick, but imperfectly discharges his duty to the state. There is a duty he owes to human society as such; to the state to which he belongs; to the sphere in which he moves (and the physician moves in every sphere); to the individuals towards whom he is variously related; and that duty is but ill-performed where ignorance the most crass, and prejudices the most benighted, are permitted to pervade a community.

#### INSANITY.

Papers will be read before you to-morrow on this most important subject, showing, I have no doubt, to what a labyrinth of difficulties the physician is sometimes introduced, when dealing, or attempting to deal, with those questions