

every part of the body. The character of the sickness, from a communicable disease, depends, as we know, upon the particular special ferment, but we need to guard, and to have our health authority guard us, against danger from every one of these contagious and infectious ferments.

#### HEALTH OFFICER NEEDED FOR EVERY LOCALITY.

It is important that all classes of people understand what needs to be done by the health officer, because he is a public servant dependent upon all classes of people, sometimes for his official position, and always for that co-operation which will render his efforts most effective.

If the people of a locality do not think of anything for a health officer to do, they will not be likely to employ one, except as a form in order to comply with the State law, and will then endeavor to get the cheapest man. A prominent newspaper in Detroit states the case as follows: "It is doubtful if any Board of Health, howsoever elaborate and costly, could at present improve the public health of so healthy a city. While therefore we may be compelled to have a health officer, as the law seems to require, to report our vital statistics to Lansing, the Common Council should take care that he cost as little as possible, and meddle as little as possible with the people's private affairs."

The writer of that paragraph assumes that Detroit is a healthy city. I know of no way of proving what he assumes, because the city has no reliable vital statistics; but the reports of burials in the city cemeteries indicate that the deaths from communicable diseases are about two hundred and forty every year. How long must this slaughter go on before it will attract the attention of the newspapers? When General Custer's little band, numbering about the same as this, was destroyed, the news thrilled the people of this State with an awful anguish; but here are two hundred and forty deaths from preventable causes in a city repeated every year, and that city so healthy that its only need of a health officer is to report on vital statistics to Lansing, and the Council is asked to hire a cheap man to do that. This illustrates the necessity for more accurate and more general information concerning the deaths and the causes of deaths which are now permitted to destroy people by the hundreds, without attracting sufficient attention to start efforts for their prevention. We need vital statistics, and we also need to act up to the knowledge we already have as to methods of preventing the communicable diseases.

*To be continued.*