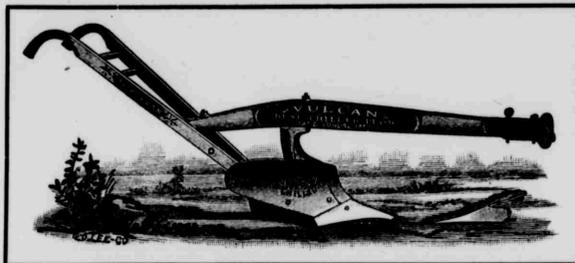


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# THE TIME

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### "WHO IS TO BLAME."

Appreciating the fact that contagious diseases are in our midst and the importance that same should be reported to the County Board of Health, a member of said board discussed "The Differential Diagnosis of the Infectious and Contagious Diseases" at the last meeting of the County Medical Society, stating that scarlet fever, smallpox and diphtheria are the most dangerous of the infectious diseases which made it important that an early diagnosis be made to save life and protect the public health.

However, there are several comparatively harmless diseases that closely counterfeit them, which fact, also, renders it important that an accurate diagnosis be made in order not to alarm the family and to avoid the expense and inconvenience of enforcing quarantine, closing schools and churches and preventing public meetings.

In the last issue of IT the query is made, "Who Is to Blame," for the local violation of the State law which provides that every practicing physician who attends a patient having a contagious dis-

ease must report the case to the Board of Health of the town or county, and anyone failing to make such report shall be fined, for each offense, fifty dollars.

The above query is supplemented by the report of the statement of "one of the leading doctors of the town that Anderson county is, today, full of scarlet fever and diphtheria; yet, not a case has been reported, and few, if any, of the houses quarantined."

It seems that the above statement was made to convey the impression that the Board of Health is to blame, and, therefore, it's up to the Board to place responsibility.

The blame may be charged up to three counts—ignorance, negligence of the attending physician or his desire to protect some prominent patient from the horror of the pest-house. The first count is the most censurable; however, it is the privilege and duty of the attending physician, when unable to diagnose, to call on the Board of Health, and he is clearly to blame if he allows the public to visit the patient or the patient to mingle with the public, or suffers the patient to die before a diagnosis

is made and proper treatment instituted. And, but little less to blame is the physician who labels some innocent disease as a contagious malady, frightening the family and causing the public to incur the expense of quarantine, closing schools, etc., besides paralyzing business.

When the Anderson County Medical Society was re-organized last year, this matter was fully discussed, and, upon request, Dr. McCormack, Secretary of the State Board of Health, defined the relative duties of the attending physicians in contagious diseases and the County Board of Health. He declared that it was the duty of the attending physician to report the case to the County Board, whose duty it is to establish and enforce quarantine, and the Board's function ceases here, unless the attending physician is unable to make a diagnosis or refuses to report the case. Out of deference to the profession, it has been the custom of the County Board of Health to lean to leniency, rather than stringency, in the performance of its duties, but, in the light of the above report and in the interest of the public health and business, notice is hereby

contagious diseases to report the same, subject to the penalties of the State law for failure to report.

In conclusion, the statement is made that there has never been a case of contagious disease reported by any attending physician, or by the laity, but that prompt attention was rendered by the Board.

#### BOARD OF HEALTH.

The Democrat is pleased to note that W. P. Marsh is associate editor of a very lively paper called "IT" at Lawrenceburg, Ky. Mr. Marsh will be remembered as a public speaker who did such very efficient campaign work in St. Joseph and Branch counties in 1896.—Sturgis (Mich.) Democrat.

Thanks, awfully, Bro. Flinders! There is no period of our campaign services which is more pleasingly remembered than that spent in the two counties named, and we especially remember the editor of the Democrat, Jay G. Wait, Prof. D. R. Hazen, Judge Geo. L. Yapple and all the rest of those who did such valiant service in St. Joseph county in 1896. Long may the Democrat and its genial editor live and prosper. W. P. M.