

MICKIE, THE PRINTER'S DEVIL

By Charles Sughro
of Western Newspaper Union

Print Shop Talk

Meeting of Medical Society.

At a meeting of the Holt County Medical Society at the Big Lake, Thursday, June 16, to which the public was invited, Dr. Chandler read a paper, entitled "The Health Officer in His Relation to the Community," which we produce below. The paper was prepared more especially for the laymen, as the health officer stands in a different relation to the public than the physician. Dr. Chandler, in his paper, makes known that the purpose of the health officer is not a mercenary one. He would prevent illness. The physician would endeavor to restore you to health when you are sick. A trite saying, "an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure," surely has application in this connection.

Dr. Chandler's paper follows:
"For the reason that many people look upon the health officer as a superannuated and a nuisance, instead of a help to the community, I shall endeavor in this brief paper to make known the purposes for which the health officer is appointed, and some of his duties. It will, of course, be impracticable to cover the entire field of preventive medicine in the brief time allotted for this address.

"Cloyd says that health conservation has for its purpose, the prevention of sickness and the prolongation of human life. Disease is a public peril. The protection of the people against all forms of communicable disease is as much a governmental function as is protection from foreign invasions or against criminal elements. It is a problem too great to be left to individual effort or philanthropy; society instinctively demands that it be protected against its own ills.

"Disraeli, in one of his most important messages to his countrymen, said: 'Public health is the foundation upon which rests the happiness of the people, and the welfare of the state. Reform directed toward the advancement of the public health must ever take precedence of all others.'

"Dr. Hubert Work, in his presidential address before the A. M. A. at Boston, said: 'Community health, physical and mental, is the foundation stone of a nation. Etiology and prophylaxis should therefore engage medicine's first thought. We can no longer limit these terms to acute infectious diseases. They apply equally to the lengthening of the life span, to the upkeep of the man-power necessary to accomplish the world's work, and to the preservation of integrity of mind. There is a new freedom available to this country through medicine, a freedom from epidemic infections and acquired diseases, from preying of the charlatan and from the menace of feeble-mindedness.'

"Until rather recently the work of the health officer consisted of strictly enforcing quarantine, and cleaning up nuisances which were offensive to the sight and smell, principally clerical, and might be done by a layman as well as a physician. However, at the present time, we possess a vast amount of technical knowledge concerning contagious diseases, and in many instances this knowledge is sufficiently complete to make sanitary medicine an exact science. The sudden development of new phases of old diseases, and the change in virulence in the more common diseases, make it requisite that the health officer be well informed and up-to-date in medicine and epidemiology. To acquire this knowledge it becomes necessary that he keep in touch with the brighter lights of the profession by attending to public health is discussed; read the latest literature on the subject, and be constantly alert to all advancement being made in preventive medicine.

"About one year ago the health officers of the state were assembled at the State University, at Columbia, for the purpose of receiving instruction in the work before them. They were given instruction in the laboratories of the University, and listened to lectures on epidemiology, bacteriology and preventive medicine. The lectures were given by men of national repute. This was to better fit us for the work in hand. That we may serve the public better by having a knowledge of the means to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

"Having the knowledge necessary for carrying on the work intelligently does not accomplish all it should, as the co-operation of the laymen and physicians is necessary to bring success. The fact that physical sickness and bodily defects dull the mind and blight the soul of man is sufficient reason for the support of the individuals of a community, even though the evils be not always fatal.

"Had not the nations engaged in the late war possessed in perfect a knowledge of the prevention of disease, a great mass of humanity, in 1914-1918, with more than twenty millions of men in the field, would have practically disappeared as fighting forces and the plains of Europe would have become

scenes of devastation through epidemics.

"Even though one may not die from a contagious disease, although many do, he may be left a 'defective,' and so remain throughout life. It was learned from the examination of recruits for the late war that about one-fourth of the young men were defective—so as a result of diseases in childhood. With the knowledge we now possess concerning the prevention of diseases a large percent of defects, if not all, could have been prevented.

"A nation depends on the health and physical attainment of the people of which that nation is composed, and if applicable to a nation it is so to a community.

"Quoting from Professor Winslow, of Yale: 'Public health is the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting physical health and efficiency through organized community efforts for the sanitation of the environment, the control of community infections, the education of the individual in principles of personal hygiene, the organization of medical and nursing service for early diagnosis and preventive treatment of disease, and the development of the social machinery, which will insure to every individual in the community a standard of living adequate for maintenance of health.'

"To quote Dr. Shaw: 'To cure is splendid and praiseworthy, but to prevent disease is God-like and magnificent.'

"It is the belief of some persons that the germs of disease exist naturally in the soil, air and water. The fact is that with few exceptions the soil, air and water are free from the germs of human disease, unless they are polluted by human beings. The source of sickness in a locality, as a rule, is the people in it.

"The ignorance and prejudice of some and the indifference and selfishness of others, does much to defeat the purpose of the health officer in the control of infectious diseases.

"Co-operation in other lines of endeavor has proven successful and as the protection of life is a co-operative duty, the requirements and responsibilities of which devolve on every citizen, it, too, can be made a success.

"It is hard to arouse the general public to seriously consider preventive measures. In time of health the unpleasantness of sickness is not appealing.

"To quote from Dr. George Homan: 'A grain of sand, a flake of snow, a drop of rain, taken singly may seem of slight importance, but human experience tells of the tremendous destruction very often wrought by such insignificant particles when acting in mass formation. Caravans and armies have been overwhelmed by sand-storms in the desert, leaving no trace behind; in mountainous regions, heavy losses of life have been caused by snowfalls and avalanches; densely populated countries have been desolated by floods; but the sum total of all such losses of human life by these inanimate agencies, for a considerable period of time, was exceeded last year by the millions of deaths caused by the activities of the microscopic germ of influenza, and its microbial allies and auxiliaries. Faith, will, thought, wish, desire, mental influence, were powerless to stay the march of this infection around the world, spread as it was by infected persons to those susceptible. It was even shown by authenticated report that wild monkeys in forests of Africa died by thousands of influenza, the diseases having been received by them from their human neighbors—the white man having infected the native peoples. Leaders in the pious denunciation indicated have not been so venturesome as to assail the verity of human destruction by natural visible means of violence; but, with studied and wilful blindness, have rested on a footing of science falsely so-called, in effect flouting the demonstrations made of the minute forms of life that constitute the efficient agencies of communicable diseases among men. The truth has been established on unshakable foundations by the labor of skilled workers, trained in every line of such research, in civil and military fields, at the bedside, in laboratories, colleges, hospitals and dispensaries. Many of the fantasies and futilities paraded by uninformed or reckless people concerning disease would become harmless if it were remembered that the appearance of influenza, typhoid fever, tuberculosis and the like, is the outcome of just as orderly natural processes as is the production of a crop of cabbage, corn or cotton. Long-time study and experience has enabled man to suit to these staple crops condition of soil fitted to produce the largest yield—his expert knowledge invoking the aid of a multitude of minute organisms that are helpful to such vegetation. But it has only been within recent years that exact science has identified these relatively few forms of microscopic life that are harmful to man, discovered

the laws of their growth and being, and devised means and measures that in advanced countries have practically paralyzed, if not wholly overcome, small-pox, yellow fever, bubonic plague, typhus and typhoid fevers, diphtheria and other maladies. To disregard the teachings of recognized biological science and sane bacterial knowledge, when human health and life are at stake, argues a state of mind that invites general calamity and such an attitude must in seasoned sanitary judgment be held contraband of public health and an obvious menace to common weal—in fact, it should be held unforgivable when the means for sound instruction on such matters are everywhere freely available by those who may wish to learn them undeterred by pride of pious opinion or former beliefs now no longer rationally tenable. Pious faith can stop neither bullets nor bacteria; given proper conditions of seed, soil, season and surroundings, and forms of hostile microbe life will gain pandemic powers, and the effect of their mass attack on man will exceed in mortality that of every other known natural cause by reason of their power of self multiplication. As established by scientific research the avenues of invasion are commonly the air passages and the alimentary tract, and enlightened sanitary science directs defensive measures in accordance with known laws of microbial life and growth; for it would be as reasonable to say of a prairie fire, driven by the wind, that it was caused by mental influence, as to speak of the pandemic flame that, within a period of eighteen months, has scorched all the people of the world—whether of Christian faith, heathen faith or no faith at all.

"Typhoid fever, diphtheria and small-pox, which use to 'go through the family,' may now be controlled if one will but make use of the measures now well known to prevent them. Typhoid fever and small-pox were practically eliminated from the armies during the European war, vaccination being an effective weapon against these, while isolation and fumigation did much to control the other common infectious diseases.

"While some persons seem to think that by quarantine they are deprived of their liberty without justification, and that vaccination may be worse than the disease, it has been proven otherwise in the late war, the lives of millions of soldiers having been saved by these measures, and not a death being traced to either vaccine or anti-toxin.

"A mistaken idea which some parents have that children should have the diseases common in childhood, such as measles, whooping cough, mumps, etc., while the child is small, does much to defeat the purpose of the health officer. The fact of the matter is that any ailment in an individual during the formative stage has a tendency to prevent development, and many are left defective as a result of a disease in childhood. To enumerate the defects which may follow in the wake of the more common communicable diseases could not be done in a paper of reasonable length. In fact, it would require a large book to do so.

"It is very common for parents to treat the children with whooping cough and measles until the respiratory tract becomes so badly affected that breathing becomes difficult from involvement of the lungs, a common sequel of these diseases, when they become alarmed and call the physician. The damage many times, then is so great that restitution is impossible.

"They reason thus: A child seldom dies from measles or whooping cough. True, to a certain extent. Yet they forget that complications are common with them, and owing to a catarrhal condition of the respiratory tract with whooping cough and measles, pneumonia is very likely to supervene, and the child suffocate before medicine has time to act. Recently it has been learned that near-sightedness may result from severe coughing. This is due to the intermittent increase of intra-ocular pressure during coughing paroxysms.

"Again: People who take pride in fitting of their garments, call the tailor to take their measure; yet they allow time to flit away and take chances with hand-me-downs (patent medicines) until the patient in many instances is beyond scientific aid. Had the physician been called early in the case he may have discovered the trouble and, not only saved the one affected, but prevented the disease from spreading to others.

"He who knowingly exposes another person to a contagious disease (and the one so exposed should contract the disease and die) is morally, if not legally, responsible for the death of that individual."



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—See the A. B. C. notice on another page.
—Lee Springer, wife and their sprightly little daughter, from Clearwater, Florida, are here enjoying a visit with his parents, Jeff Springer and wife, of the Union district, and his brother, Chester, of Oregon, and other relatives. Lee is in the real estate business down there, and seems to be prosperous. It is his first visit home in six years.
—Mrs. Ed Morga, and her cute little ten months' old twin boys are here from St. Joseph, visiting her parents, Andy Burrier and wife, and other relatives.
—See the A. B. C. notice on another page.
—Dr. Kearney was here Monday on professional business.
—Mrs. Charles King is having trouble with her hearing, and is in St. Joseph, taking treatment under Dr. Froud.

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