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PREVENT TUBERCULOSIS

Address delivered before the annual convention of the Nebraska State Federation of Labor, South Omaha, Jan. 4, by Mrs. K. R. J. Edholm, executive secretary Nebraska Society for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis: Charles Dickens, in his famous novel, Nicholas Nickleby, says this: "There is a dread disease which so prepares its victims, as it were, for death; which so refines it from its grosser aspect and throws around familiar looks unearthly indications of the coming change—a dread disease in which the struggle between soul and body is so gradual, quiet and solemn, and the result so sure, that day by day and grain by grain the mortal part wastes and withers away so that the spirit grows light and sanguine with its lightning load, and, feeling immortality at hand, deems it but a new term of mortal life—a disease in which death and life are so strangely blended that death takes the glow and hue of life, and life the gaunt grisly form of death—a disease which medicine never cured, wealth warded off, or poverty could boast exemption from—which sometimes moves in giant strides and sometimes at a tardy pace, but, slow or quick, is ever sure and certain."

This is the disease, Tuberculosis, and in the time when Dickens wrote thus of it, in common acceptance it was a hereditary disease, in so involving and depreciating the health history of a family, was held to be a deep disgrace. That this feeling of shame and the consequent effort to hide the disgrace from the knowledge of men was a most active factor in propagating the disease is never to be denied. Today, happily, we have graduated from this erroneous position, and the individual who has to be told that he cannot directly inherit consumption, is more or less rare. On the other hand, we perceive a great underrating of the danger from infected surroundings, ill-ventilated apartments, poor food and overwork; all of which are contributory causes, supposing one to have inherited from tubercular parents, not the germ of the disease, but a lessened power of resistance, which of itself opens the door and invites infection.

Be it understood at the outset that the purpose of this paper is neither to create nor foster a foolish fear of this terrible slayer of life and happiness. All the world knows that fear or other craven instinct ingrain in nature tends to lower the resisting force, though some of the world so far forgets itself today as to claim that fear may actually give birth to a specific disease germ. It is within the experience of most of us that those who talk the loudest about their courage are the ones who most fear their personal inability to remain fearless; a case of whistling to keep one's courage up, as it were. The danger is here and the danger is real, and we are here, not to become hysterical and run from it, but to face it and fight it. It is a responsibility, individual, fraternal, civic, national. No man nor set of men may back down from it. It is as insistent as the constant drop of water and sooner or later will be reckoned with. Ellen La Motte, of Johns Hopkins, says: "If tuberculosis was a little more sensational in its development, then educational preventive work would show better results." But on the contrary as already quoted, it is "a disease in which death and life are strangely blended"; hence, if your child next year develop it, have you accurate information that the tuberculous school teacher of last year infected her? No, you have not. You only know, and too late, perhaps, that politics, big-headedness or prudery have blocked medical inspection in your schools. Do you also know that such inspection is maintained in all Europe, extends to South America, and even to what we are pleased sometimes to designate as semi-civilized Japan?

During the recent campaign of the Red Cross Christmas stamp, sold for tuberculosis prevention, one of the local papers in an editorial put the question very neatly. In this matter of the great white plague, it said, we are all more or less directly interested. As Blaine said of Andersonville, of us had relatives there, many of us had friends there, all of us had countrymen there, and where Andersonville or coal mines or Fourth of July disasters have slain their thousands, consumption has slain its tens of thousands. With a casualty list so great, it could not fail to affect most of us. If there is one point about the white plague which may give us more uneasiness than its past ravages, it is its future possibilities. We do not know how it will deal with our descendants. We plant trees for them, establish homesteads and libraries, but what do we to safeguard the health of those who if crippled in this wise will not rise up and call us blessed? It is up to us—in the parlance of the day—to deliver those to whom we are responsible from the clutches of the great white plague.

Nebraska stands at present in about the same position Illinois stood twenty years ago, in its relation to advancing civilization, and its allied plagues and pleasures. Nebraska has a superb climate, a high rate of health and the lowest percentage of illiteracy of any state in the Union. Should it mean a great deal of talking to make Nebraska understand that if she does not take hold she may twenty years hence stand in the unenviable position Illinois occupies today with respect to the invasion of tuberculosis? Illinois is making most strenuous efforts to check the spread of consumption, yet hardly keeps pace with its terrible oncoming. Must we say that Nebraska's comparative freedom from this disease shall lull us to inactivity along the lines of preventive work? The keynote of the International Tuberculosis Congress held in Washington in 1908 was Prevention—and again—Prevention. The great Pasteur said it is perfectly possible to eradicate every contagious disease. Now it is perfectly possible to eradicate tuberculosis in Nebraska is every one helps, and the Nebraska Association for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis has pledged itself to accomplish this in ten years. If every one today afflicted

with this disease were to die or recover without infecting any one else, immunity from the scourge could be achieved in much less than ten years, but every one will not so contribute to the welfare of his fellow men and posterity, of course. We have the ever traveling consumptive who dies in our railroad station after infecting his surroundings en route; and we have the unteachable consumptive who willfully neglects all the laws of man and nature; he is doomed, desperate and reckless not of the disaster his uncleanly habits spread wherever he goes. For him laws must be enacted, for in his way he is as great a criminal as the thief in the night who steals our treasure; as great a menace as the leper at large and infinitely more numerous. For the traveling consumptive who passes through our gates spreading his trouble as he passes, or who dies without funds on our doorsteps, laws are now enacted, exclusion rules are already passed. The philanthropic resources of states like Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Texas and California, have been taxed to their utmost to provide for consumptives sent west at their last gasp and on their last dollar by unscrupulous and ignorant physicians willing to shift the heavy responsibility to other shores. If the disease in our curable stage, it can be cured at home; if it cannot be cured, then home is the best place to die. Rhode Island, with its lamentable climate, has proved to us what can be done in cure as well as preventive work. Its outdoor schools for tuberculous children are achieving results beyond expectations, and this in a climate of fog and mist, raw winds and little sunshine. New York, which undoubtedly has a greater problem than any other city, reports a lessening of its death rate from this cause in the last year. New York is the richer for this not only in lives, but in cold hard dollars. New York has been convinced that the economic aspect of the problem is of prime importance; it knows that the deaths from tuberculosis of a wage earning male averages a loss of \$9,000 to his community, and that last year it lost sixty-five millions in dollars to this arch despoiler. Nebraska does not know what it lost last year, accurately, at least; its vital statistics are not dependable for one reason and another. It knows in a general way that the death rate from tuberculosis is increasing each year; it knows that its monetary losses therefrom run up into the hundreds of thousands, but how soon will it believe that all this is unnecessary, that the life you hold dear, the property you worked for may be saved or lost to you according as you take precaution. One out of nine people dies from consumption, and by the nature of his lingering disease, unless wealth is at hand, he dissipates his savings, if he has any—infects his surroundings, mayhap his dear ones and finally goes down to his grave a failure. A failure because he did not live his life as nature intended him to. We are one the edge of scientific inquiry only, we have but the dimmest insight into what our grandchildren will understand fully as a matter of course. A hundred years from now the world will laugh because in this day of ours lived some who looked for relief to a religion patented in a church or a medicine patented in a bottle.

We know now that one in three had smallpox in Queen Elizabeth's time, and we naturally say, something wrong in their methods. Isn't there something wrong in our methods when one city can lose sixty-five million of

dollars in one year from one preventable disease alone? You men of labor are organized as perhaps no other forces of society are organized. In demanding, demand the essentials. Do not waste your forces, your money and your genius fighting non-essentials. Move for the great things in life which shall prove an inheritance worth while to those who come after you. They say the path of the reformer is hard and his task a thankless one; it may be, though certainly the satisfaction of doing what seems to better the lot of his brothers who are in his keeping, is enough to make one forget the rough road and the thankless task. As unionists you are banded together to resist imposition and injustice; step out as unionists, and ally yourselves with those organizations working toward the common good. Pull with the consumers' league, demand inspection of food and boycott dirty shops. Push inspection of dairy cows lest tuberculosis milk infect your child. In legislating for the enlargement of the employers' liability law, convince the employer that a well ventilated shop has a cash value to him. It has, as the older communities have proved statistically. Fight the dust peril. The greatest loss of life from tuberculosis is among the dusty trades where sedentary habits prevail. Some of the railroads are overcoming the unhealthy effect of dusty travel by allowing farmers to sow alfalfa along the right of way, even to the tracks; but the only one detail of the great reclamation plan to be worked out! Demand factory inspection, and refuse to work in unlighted, ill-ventilated and unsanitary shops. Enforce the child labor law. Promote play grounds. Surely you need not be told that we are coming to organized, supervised play in municipal playgrounds as the very best means of conserving and protecting the health of our youth, and hence raising the standard of our national health. Demand medical inspection in schools and demand that it shall be properly—frequently performed. Establish sanitary drinking fountains and sanitary methods of heating and cleaning in public places. Demand and support local dispensaries for the treatment of incipient tuberculosis (the cost of maintenance is small), as well as state and municipal hospitals for indigent and incurable cases, for it is in these that the greatest menace lies. Demand that politics shall in no wise affect these demands; you make politics and red tape have no place in tuberculosis prevention. Remember that the same precautions which prevent this disease also prevent a score of others, and help as well to make for right living. And remember also that unless you help to prevent preventable diseases you will soon be listed as a backnumber, for all the world is now going hand in hand on this new mission.

Move for civic cleanliness, embracing a pure water supply, exemption from weed, mud and garbage nuisances, as well as the establishment of parks and playgrounds; your city can be made as clean and inviting as your home, and by so doing you elevate its health standard and boom it in the best way. Let your supervision extend to your printshops, and cigar factories, for it is in these two trades that the greatest mortality from tuberculosis comes. See that these quiet workers have sanitary surroundings, protection from cold, and at the same time unlimited fresh air to breathe and light to work by. Tuberculosis is an occupational disease and goes where it is hidden by those neglecting nature's simple laws. Labor has its great part to play in prevention, for labor pays a heavy toll in lives sacrificed. The fact that rest,

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air and the best of food are the only cures, makes labor's tuberculosis problem a vast one, and it is to no purpose that we fight the effect unless we also eradicate the cause.
Dr. Lawrence Flick, of the Phipps Institute, in Philadelphia, says: "Tuberculosis is peculiarly a disease of the wage workers and this is so for the very good reason that one of the causes of the disease is overwork." Addressing the International Congress a year ago, Mr. Mitchell said: "Tuberculosis finds its most fertile harvest in unsanitary sweat shops, factories and mines. We men of labor who carry more than our full share of the burdens and make our full share of the sacrifices, cry aloud for assistance and direction in our struggle against this terrible plague which unaided we cannot successfully combat. We are keenly alive to the importance of cure, but we are even more alert regarding measures to prevent the spread of this disease."

That labor is making its effort is proved by the fact that strikes, politics and boycotts are being sidetracked to make way for the fight which is to save thousands of lives. Notably the printers and cigarmakers are making strides, the printers having now a model sanitarium at Colorado Springs. In Albany, New York, by the payment of five cents a month by each of 6,000 members of the Central Federated Union, a tuberculosis pavilion is maintained for their sick members. Directly in line with this, a labor department was organized in the State Charities Aid Association providing for a special lecturer to visit unions over the state and promote tuberculosis prevention. The American Federation of Labor at Denver endorsed this and since, seven of the state federations have urged action. The international exhibit at their unions took definite action. This is an easy, cheap and most effective method of disseminating information which is the first step in the first. Every union in this state could establish a small exhibit at its headquarters, and thereby materially aid in preventive work. The Nebraska Association for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis is ready to co-operate to the limit of its powers in assembling these exhibits as well as in all

other methods and measures to redeem that pledge, "No Tuberculosis in Nebraska in 1920." Under an efficient organizer-in-chief the state has been divided according to congressional districts with a representative physician or surgeon at the head, who in turn has appointed for each county in his district a leading physician. In addition the state is divided according to social forces into departments with a superintendent at the head; these include Woman's Clubs, School, State Institutions and Labor, with others in contemplation. If each of these divisions will do its part by only keeping posted on the world progress of the great fight, much will be assured; and not only that, but when the time comes to bring pressure to bear on a needed measure, these will constitute a standing army of fighters ready to push. The movement in Nebraska is young, but the workers are willing and whole-hearted. The work is supported by memberships and the sale of the Christmas stamp and all services are voluntarily rendered.

One point more: Apathy, indifference on this subject is costly; it will get its price, possibly so slowly, so insidiously that you may not be aware you are paying; but you will pay in precious human lives, miserably and needlessly given up. I pray you do not let this be.
K. R. J. EDHOLM,
Executive Secretary Nebraska Association for Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis.

TYPOGRAPHICAL UNION BALL.
The twenty-seventh annual ball of the Lincoln Typographical Union No. 209, will be held at Fraternity hall on February 23. Committees from the union and Capital Auxiliary are now working together to make it the most successful social event in the history of the union. The net proceeds of the ball will be invested in stock of the Labor Temple Association, and this fact is calculated to make the attendance larger than usual.
Nothing will be left undone that will contribute to the pleasure of the annual event, and the reputation the printers have achieved for success along social lines will be more than duplicated.

GREAT REMNAT SALE

BEGINNING MONDAY, JANUARY 24

We will place on sale all Short Lines, Odds and Ends and Remnants of seasonable merchandise. Our Great January Clearing Sale, the most successful in the history of our business, naturally left on our hands a larger lot of broken lines and Remnants. In order to clean up and make room for our extensive spring purchases, which are beginning to arrive, we purpose to close out these short lines now at discount from

25 to 50 Per Cent

and in some cases even more. These are remnants of Dress Goods, Silks, White Goods, Shirts, Tackings, Gingham, Table Linens, Outing Flannel, Silkblines, Ribbons, Laces and Embroideries,

Short lines of Gloves, Corsets, Underwear, Hosiery, Belts Men's Furnishing Goods, Ladies' Misses, Children's, Men's and Boys' Shoes, also warmlined shoes and Slippers.

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