An introduction to the practice of preventive medicine

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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE
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WITH APPENDIX ARTICLES BY VARIOUS CONTRIBUTORS

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PREFACE

There has been during recent years a very impressive change in the attitude of the community as a whole to the problems of preventive medicine. Countries, provinces, cities, and towns have, in many instances, given concrete illustrations of their abiding faith in the old adage that prevention is better than cure, by appropriating large sums of money for the purpose of public health.

The banner Province of the Dominion of Canada, Ontario, now spends about 2 per cent of its total revenue in this way. The capital city of that Province, Toronto, does likewise. The motto of the New York State Department of Health is: "Public Health is purchasable; within natural limitations any community can determine its own death rate." This motto is being literally applied in these, as in many other places. It is probable that in a short time no province, state or municipality will be found wanting in this important matter.

The time has arrived, however, when in a much larger measure, physicians in general practice must become integral factors in the public health program. Community cleanliness, control of communicable diseases, arrangements for the supervision of milk and water supplies, with adequate provision for a public health nursing service is paid for by taxation. But there is need of the cooperation of the family physician in addition to ensure the smooth running of the public health machine. Full-time public health workers, administrators, physicians, sanitary engineers, public health nurses and others, provide the personnel for the execution of that part of the work for which the organized political unit pays. This additional service should supply the necessary care and supervision of the general health of individuals in the community. For this task no one is so well qualified as the physician in general practice. He can not only take a place, perhaps on a part-time basis, in the organized and official public health work, but what is more important he can and will, become the supervisor of public health of the individual family.
To outline some of the work of the physician who is to function on the preventive as well as the curative side of medicine is the purpose of this book. It may be found useful by medical practitioners, students of medicine or public health nurses.

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