

QUARANTINE

What is quarantine? It is a co-operative procedure for the prevention of the spread of contagious diseases. Co-operative because if it is properly done it requires the co-operation of the doctor and the people with the county health officer. When properly done much disease and expense is prevented.

If the physicians do their duty to the people they must report cases of contagious diseases to the county health officer. Several physicians in this state have recently been indicted for failure to perform this important duty.

When a physician does not attend a given case of contagious disease, the family must report the same or be indicted.

The quarantine law is a wise and good law, made by the people for their protection. Your county has taken an oath to enforce all of the laws relating to quarantine act.

Remember, that the quarantine law is made to protect the children and other people from the ravages of contagious disease.

Some seem to think that to be quarantined is to receive a slur, a rebuke, that it is some kind of disgrace, that it is undesirable publicity, that it infringes upon the rights and liberty of the citizens, that it is a form of imprisonment, a reflection upon the one quarantined. All of this is a wrong idea. If a citizen carries out his part of the quarantine law and observes its rules, the little yellow placards, placed on his door to quarantine the premises, is a badge of honor to him and a sign that he is a good law-abiding citizen, shows his neighbors thereby that he does not wish a member of his family to infect one of them with a contagious disease, often a fatal disease, any more than he would want a mad dog from his house to bite them.

In my experience as quarantine officer I have had citizens to tell me that the man at the next house was going to "beat me up," that Mr. Blank said that he would shoot me on sight if I attempted to quarantine him. It is needless to say that I quarantined them all the same. These men were good citizens and as good friends and neighbors as a man could wish for, in all respects except observing the law as to quarantine. They simply took the wrong view of the quarantine law. They forgot that it was a wise and humane law, for the benefit of all in preventing the spread of contagious disease, and that he who fails in his duty to report the presence of contagious diseases in his family and to obey the quarantine law is guilty of the death of any little child that dies of disease contracted from his family.

Quarantine is a progressive step in civilization. The ancients did not quarantine and they were decimated by contagious diseases.

As county health and quarantine officer, the law requires me to comply with all the rules and regulations for the prevention of disease, indict all who fail to report contagious diseases and to quarantine all who should be quarantined, which duty I will perform to the best of my ability. I hereby give notice to all and earnestly desire and request the co-operation of all good citizens in this good work. It is for your benefit, not mine, though I promise you that if you will give me your co-operation I will in future prevent the spread of a great many contagious diseases, thereby saving lives, suffering and expense.

Your truly,

C. W. Hunt, M. D.

County Health and Quarantine Officer.