

tal, appeared to prove beyond the possibility of question that consumption was not an inherited disease; yet this fact, so full of hope for humanity, seemed to make no sensible impression upon the public mind. Down to the present hour vast numbers of people are living and dying in the settled conviction that consumption is born in the blood of those who suffer from it; and hence it is quite possible that the tyrannical idea is killing almost as many lives as the plague itself. But what is the truth? The truth is that consumption cannot exist without the tubercle bacillus, that this parasite is nearly always taken into the body after birth, and that there are scarcely a dozen cases on record in which it has been discovered in the new-born babe. Therefore, we may say to anyone who is living under the shadow of death from fear of heredity:

"Do not any longer believe that because your father or your mother died of consumption you must die of consumption also. The worst inheritance you can have from either of your parents is a vulnerable soil on which the parasite of consumption may prey. Look to it, therefore, that you strengthen and not weaken your defences."

Consumption is an infectious disease. We are all liable to it, and the discoveries of modern science seem to prove that everybody over thirty-five years of age appears to have been attacked by it. A short time ago a well-known London, England, physician said something like this to me—I ask his pardon if I am not repeating his words with scientific accuracy:

"I am satisfied that fully half my cases of bronchitis, and even severe cold, with prolonged cough, indicate fresh outbreaks of earlier lung trouble."

Now, this statement, with the further one that post-mortem examinations have discovered tubercular lesions, healed or unhealed, in the bodies of nearly all persons who have died after thirty-five, appears at first sight to denote an alarming fact, but, at second thought, it must be seen to indicate an extremely hopeful one. It shows, apparently, beyond the possibility of question, that consumption is a disease that is not only curable, but has actually been cured in the vast majority of cases.

And that suggests a very interesting in-

quiry. We thought it appalling that one-seventh of the deaths of the civilized world were due to consumption, but there is another aspect of that astounding fact. If only one-seventh of those who contract this contagious malady die as the result of it, what of the remaining six-sevenths (or some considerable part of them) who contract the disease and yet die from other causes? Let me try, in my utterly non-scientific way, to explain.

I understand, then, that when consumption is taking hold of the human body a kind of warfare is being waged within. The battle is between the invading micro-organisms, the germs, called the tubercle bacilli, which I have described, and the white cells of the blood. These white cells appear to act the part of the policemen of the body, and their business is to drive off any foreign foe that would subdue and destroy it. Now, the result of the warfare thus set up depends partly, it seems, on the strength of the policemen, but mainly on the quality of the soil on which they have to fight. If the soil is good the policemen prevail and the foe takes flight. But if the soil is bad; if, for example, a man's lungs have been weakened by overwork or even overplay, by worry, by drink, by excess of any kind; if his defensive forces have been run down, and his resistance to disease has been undermined by illness, by insufficient nourishment, by loss of sleep, by lack of pure air; above all, perhaps, if his spirits have been depressed by failure or by bereavement, then a small dose of the enemy (taken into the mouth by the simplest means) may be sufficient to overcome the policemen of the body and enable consumption to establish itself.

Even this is abstract language, more proper to the pen of the scientific writer, and I ask to be allowed to describe the little I know of the assault of the dread disease by a more concrete illustration. I can think, then, of no illustration so appropriate as that of a beleaguered city, and no siege so exactly parallel as the siege of Khartoum.

There, in the Governor's Palace on the Blue Nile, sat the great soul whose immediate business it was to withstand the invasion of the vast hordes of the Mahdi's followers who lay encamped around him on nearly every side. At first the people of the city were strong and hopeful, and