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Special Articles

THE CONQUEST OF GREAT DISEASES

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The most cheering feature of the medicine of 1910 is that there is so much less of it given, whether patent or prescribed. Seldom has our faith in the magic power of drugs waned as during this decade.

The great medical investigations of the decade have been for the discovery of causes; the great advances are in methods of prevention. The great new national and international organizations formed have been against tuberculosis, against infant mortality, against congestion and overpopulation; and for school hygiene, for health in factories and workshops, and for wholesome conditions in cities.

Better and more significant yet, these movements (though largely inspired and led by physicians) are of the people, by the people, for their own protection. The community is awakening to the fact that its fate is in its own hands, and that the best medicines are neither physic nor prayer, but food, fresh air, sunshine, pure water, and personal cleanliness.

Let in the light everywhere and make every man, as Diogenes requested Alexander, keep out of his brother's sunshine. Health has become a moral question. Disease is recognized as a symptom of social

injustice.

The death rate from tuberculosis in America has declined 10 per cent. in the decade. The infant mortality rate is falling at an equally rapid rate, which means the saving of thousands of babies annually from those Herods of the twentieth century—the little fevers of childhood, the dirty milk, and overcrowding. The death rate of all of our great cities is being steadily beaten down to a lower and lower level every year.

The fight against tuberculosis is steadily becoming more and more a fight for better housing, more playgrounds, better food and more of it, shorter hours of work, decent and civilized shops, workrooms, and factories, higher wages, better education in the laws of health.

We are concentrating our fire upon the place where the bacillus breeds—the infected house or tenement room. The place where we look for new cases of tuberculosis is in the same house with old ones. We must break this link in the chain if ever we are to wipe out consumption. From 30 to 50 per cent. of the children in the tenements living in the same household with a case of tuberculosis are found to be al-