

comes a high and noble mission in life. But it is the high privilege of inspectors not only to diminish disease and improve the general standard of health—for the two must go together, sanitary reformers have not solely (as is sometimes urged) keep alive the weakly ones, but have also made the weakly strong—by their definite official work, but also to create that enlightened public opinion which will sustain and co-operate with their efforts and eventually produce in the people such habits as will render every man in the community a health officer in his own house. There is a moral aspect to the question. The sanitary inspector who is thus acting as a home missionary to the poor and helpless, in so far as he increases their clearness and self-respect, and diminishes overcrowding and facilitates the decencies of family life, is rendering possible the conditions of moral and social improvement.

THE DIFFICULTIES OF SANITARY INSPECTORS.

Having briefly glanced at the duties and qualifications of the sanitary inspector, a few words about his difficulties. I shall confine myself to a brief consideration of four of the difficulties and drawbacks which beset the career of a sanitary inspector, viz.: 1. The inactivity or actual obstruction of local authorities and of the public. 2. A deficient staff of inspectors rendering thorough and complete work almost impossible. 3. Insecurity of tenure of office. 4. The absence of any provision for superannuation.

And first among these should be placed the inactivity or actual obstruction of local authorities and of the public. This holds good to a greater extent in rural than urban districts, and in small towns than in large. It may reconcile us, in some measure, to delay and even to temporary defeat, to remember that we are but servants of the local authority under whom we work. It is ours to point out defects and indicate their dangers; it is for the local authority to take the ultimate responsibility of acting or refraining. Much, indeed, may be accomplished by advice and gentle pressure, more perhaps, than

by extreme measures taken hurriedly; and especially so when it is understood that under the velvet glove of persuasion there lies concealed the iron hand of law. The vested interests of the owners of inferior house property are often a source of difficulty. It always seems to me that opposition on their part is somewhat shortsighted; for they forget the greater value which appertains to sanitary dwellings.

The only way to overcome these difficulties is by steady efforts to educate the public. Sanitary inspectors and medical officers of health *may* err; but if they think they are right in any course of action which they are not allowed to carry out, they must bide their time, until the public mind is fully imbued with the importance of the reforms they have at heart. Sanitary officials ought to be instrumental in leavening public opinion; they should be pioneers in all that relates to the public health; but if they attempt to prematurely force on reforms for which the public mind as represented in the local vestry, or Board of Works, or Corporation, is not prepared, the cause of sanitary progress may suffer, and the reforms we ardently desire may be indefinitely postponed. A successful appeal may often be made to the personal interests of householders. No man liveth unto himself. Pestilence may spread from the crowded alley to the fashionable street. A condition of filth and degradation among the poor is a constant menace to the rest of the population. However sanitary a man's house may be, neglect to remedy insanitary conditions in his vicinity may ultimately prove fatal to himself or his family. In these respects the protective and preventive influence of periodical systematic sanitary inspection is becoming much more thoroughly recognized by the public; and its superiority over the old-fashioned plan of waiting for a nuisance or an epidemic to occur, and then display a spasmodic activity against it, is becoming appreciated.

2. A DEFICIENT STAFF of inspectors is another source of difficulty, by throwing on the existing staff a greater amount of labour and responsibility than they are able efficiently to discharge. Such econ-