

tuberculosis work Dr. Hermann Biggs, general medical officer of New York, has said:

"Step by step with the growth of our knowledge of the causes of the disease, the scope of the work has broadened, first one, then another agency was enlisted in the campaign, and we are striking nearer and nearer to the essential cause of the prevalence of the disease, namely the social environment."

The bearing of these facts upon the work of the practising physician is apparent, and he too has been as greatly aided as directed in his benevolent work in the cause of humanity. Its extent, its possibilities, and the nobility of it have been made ever more apparent to him, and to-day he enters ever more largely into the life of the community of which he is so important a member and constantly is asked to perform some public function as a duty which is complied with as a privilege.

In the matter of the compulsory notification of contagious diseases, it is interesting to note the gradual extension of legislation beyond what formerly included only smallpox, scarlatina, diphtheria and measles, to all acute contagions; since to-day the whole range of diseases in any way communicable are one after the other coming within the purview of what we call preventive, but what is more exactly termed state medicine.

From such facts as that Bismarck's Compulsory Insurance Act was passed in Germany in 1882 and that in 1912 even a wider Act of the same sort was passed in Great Britain including within its provisions 15,000,000 people, it has become evident that the needs of modern society in the matter of the health of its individual citizens are to be the only limitations set to what the legalized functions and social duties of the practitioner of medicine shall be.

Your Committee, however, desires rather to present the second phase of the subject, viz., that dealing with the *ethical* responsibilities of every disciple of the Father of Medicine, who has taken in spirit, if not in so many words, the Hippocratic oath. While it is true that the physician ought to maintain a proper secrecy with regard to the ailments of the individual patient, so far as no injury to the public may result therefrom, yet in view of our ever widening knowledge of disease it seems plain that from the position the physician is constantly placed in because of his very knowledge he can no longer, and would not indeed, avoid the issue of what his duty as a good citizen and patriot demands of him.