

THE NEW IDEAS

The New Public Health sees in the garbage-pail merely a place where flies are fed and, possibly, bred. But the flies cannot carry infection *if infected discharges are not accessible to them*. "Defective plumbing," such a nightmare twenty years ago, has been conclusively shown to have nothing to do with disease-generation or disease-propagation whatever, unless perchance there be actual gross leakage of infected sewage. The unventilated front parlor could not produce tuberculosis in a hundred years; diphtheria does not develop from the family well; and typhoid fever in sand or clay soils is but seldom properly traceable to that source, either. The modern public health man cares nothing, so far as restriction of disease and death is concerned, for the dirty back yard or the damp cellar in themselves, but only as they may enter into the transmission of infected discharges. Then, at once, they become of vital importance. The sanitary inspection of the modern sanitarian, so far as relates to infection, begins and usually ends with the search for (a) the infected individual; (b) the routes of spread of infection from that individual; (c) the routes of spread of the ordinary excreta of ordinary uninfected individuals to the mouths of their ordinary associates in ordinary life. These latter are sought for, not because of danger from such uninfected discharges, but rather because infected discharges, introduced into and following the same well-beaten paths, will necessarily reach the same mouths. To locate all the infective persons and to guard all their discharges would be wholly sufficient, but since this cannot always be done perfectly, it is well to guard also the routes which unlocated infection may take.