

so late as 1873 the prognostication had been made that the sanitary activity then commencing would result, in the comparatively short period of seventeen years, in a reduction of the death-rate in the twenty large English towns to the extent of 22 per cent., and of that of Salford to the extent of 30 per cent., or of Maidstone by 40 per cent., such a forecast would have been regarded as visionary. But it must not be supposed that the limit of improvement is reached.

IF ASKED what have been the principal agencies by which the past triumphs of preventive medicine have been achieved, there would be little hesitation in answering that the majority of the scourges which have afflicted mankind and been overcome have yielded to CLEANLINESS. The plague and the mediæval and early epidemics were banished by cleanliness. Typhus was influenced by cleanliness as if by magic. Cholera, so fatal in its first visitations before its favouring conditions were understood, wrought terrible havoc where filth conditions prevailed. And so it goes on.

ALTHOUGH plague and the other epidemics of the Middle Ages are vanquished, and small-pox, ague, typhus, and cholera, and perhaps hydrophobia, have been rendered amenable to preventive measures, there yet remain, in Dr. Hill's words, the less alarming because familiar but no less fatal diseases, measles, scarlet fever, whooping-cough, summer diarrhoea, fever, and diphtheria—a formidable array of preventable, but as yet unprevented, diseases—to occupy the attention and the energies of investigators and sanitary officers for some time to come.

CONSUMPTION, aptly termed the great white plague, Dr. Hill, like nearly all other sanitarians in like circumstances, does not mention. Why is it that this, and the other forms of tuberculosis, the most fatal of all diseases, is not more generally attacked in the war against disease. It is a preventable disease and could be exterminated as well as "the plague" or small-pox. It is as strange and incomprehensible as it is inconsistent for health boards to neglect to use preventive measures in regard to this disease while bestowing energy on the prevention of far less destructive ones.

AND WHY do some eminent men, like Dr. Ballard, for example, try to throw the responsibility of summer diarrhoea principally on good

"old Sol"—on "summer heat"—without which nothing can live? They call this the primary cause and "impure surrounding conditions" with "errors in diet," "secondary or predisposing circumstances." If by any form or process of logic or ratiocination this can be made to appear to be the correct relationship of cause and effect in this particular, practically it is misleading to the mostly-illogical masses and tends to retard sanitary progress and the approach of the clean period which sanitarians are hoping and striving for. The sun, thank God, will continue to shine in spite of all our preventive measures.

SIR WALTER FOSTER, M.D., M.P., gave an admirable "address in medicine" at the annual meeting last month of the British Medical Association. "Theology and history may turn their gaze regretfully backward towards a vanished golden age; Medicine gazes hopefully onward to the days which are to come; in them she places her highest expectations. And so the wise physician is ever an optimist." He pictures the time when "its proud distinction shall be to have found great masses of mankind deeply ignorant of much that concerned their health and happiness, and to have left them better protected against illness and misery," and when the State shall awaken to the value of such services, and recognise in the trusty dispenser of a nation's charity, or the wise saviour of a city's health, servants of the State more worthy of its honours than the successful soldier or the astute diplomatist."

AT the annual gathering of members of the Society of Medical Officers of Health held at Birmingham July 19th, visits were paid to the sewage farm, and the sanitary depots of the city. In the afternoon a meeting was held at which Dr. Alfred Hill, medical officer of health for the city, explained the method of treatment of sewage and refuse. He said the sewage farm cost £54,000 a-year to work, and entailed a loss, after the sale of produce, cattle, etc., of £10,000 or £12,000. To dispose of the sewage of half-a-million of people at a loss of £10,000 a-year, he regarded as very satisfactory. They have a sewage farm there of twelve hundred acres, which is situated at a lower level than the output of the sewage, and the great expense of pumping is avoided. The treatment of sewage by electricity is proving successful in England.