

Chapter XI

THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER.

THE DOING OF IT

If previous chapters have succeeded in the very earnest attempt they made to show what the new public health principles are and how they have become established, the one momentous matter in public health still left unsolved is this—why, why, why are not these principles observed? If we know how to do it, why is it not done?

Chiefly, because the general public does *not* know. They still believe religiously the theories that were beginning to be discarded in scientific circles twenty years ago. To any one who has discussed these subjects before lay audiences it becomes most evident that people the most refined and educated still believe, concerning public health, almost the same things that the most ignorant hold. So long as these beliefs control public opinion, so long will public health lag far behind other advances. Four of the most common fallacies the writer's experience of public discussion has elicited are illustrated here, and the reader may easily test his own state of knowledge by asking himself what answers he would give to the questions here presented:

THE CHIEF OBJECTIONS.

1. If the disease germs are not evolved afresh from dirt or decomposition, but are descendants of their forefathers, where did the first disease germ come from?