

among the people." How the hopes of the people were lifted up, accompanied by the deep stirrings of the public conscience may be seen in the literary romances of the time of such writers as Canon Kingsley in his "Yeast" and "Alton Locke," the one dealing with the conditions of the agricultural laborers, and the other with employees of sweat shops, and of Charles Dickens, who in "Little Dorrit" and "Nicholas Nickleby" makes scathing attacks on the prison system and the Yorkshire proprietary schools. Such are but a few of the influences which gave momentum to the social reforms following financial reforms, the results of the work of Russell, Cobden and Bright. Political changes retarded somewhat the development of the public health measures instituted by the "Health of Towns Act" of 1849, and of the first Board of Health, whose existence practically ended with the report of 1854, prepared by Chadwick, now Sir Edward. Its work was thereafter placed under the Local Government Board, combined with the Poor Law administration. Of this great sanitary reformer, whose work now came to an end the political economist, John Stuart Mill, in writing to him said: "I need only mention the Sanitary Department, the importance of which, now so widely recognized, you were amongst the very first to press upon a careless public." Under this first Board of Health was appointed Dr. John Simon as the first medical officer of health, and the City of London Reports, 1849-1854, supply us with the first series of public health reports in which the now every-day subjects of "House Drainage," "Public Water Supplies and their Pollution," "Social Position of the Poor and their Overcrowding," "Offensive Trades," "Smoke Nuisances," etc., are systematically dealt with. With the instincts of a general, Dr. Simon began, in 1853, to prepare for the cholera, which again appeared in 1855, and he has given us in the report of that year not only a history of its progress, but the first comprehensive summary of the sanitary conditions upon which the prevalence of cholera depends. I cannot forbear quoting a paragraph which illustrates how the facts developed in the fields of pure science had invaded the field of practical medicine. He says: "Thus, then, our position stands. Scientific prediction of phenomena can arise only in the knowledge of Laws. That the phenomena of this disease, however capricious they may seem, are obedient to absolute uniformity as yet beyond our ken are enchained by that same rigid sequence of cause and effect which is imposed on all remaining Nature, it would be impossible to doubt." But with regard to larger views on public health we have only to follow the subjects discussed by Dr. Simon in his five successive London Health Reports. In that of 1854 he especially deals with a subject of intense interest to many members of this Association, viz., The Establishment of a Department of Public Health, presided over by a Minister of the Crown.