

Whether or not you become infected with tuberculosis depends on numberless circumstances, on whether the life you lead is given to excessive indulgences or overburdened by work, whether luxury and idleness or poverty and privations fall to your lot. It depends on the calling you have chosen, on the food you eat, on the house you live in, the neighbors you frequent, the diseases you contract. It depends more or less on the hygienic conditions of your existence, on the cleanliness and width of your street, on the number of squares and gardens which adorn your street, on the number of squares and gardens which adorn your town. It is dependent on the price of bread, on the rate of exchange, on whether there is war or peace.

After reading these lines, we are perhaps tempted to ask whether it is worth while engaging in the fight, whether it is in our power to change the conditions of our daily round of life, or whether it would not be wiser to resign ourselves to our fate? . . . I have before me large posters bearing in heavy lettering the words: "Fight tuberculosis, tuberculosis can and must be overcome." But what can I, poor mortal, do to combat this universal scourge? The few precautionary measures I might take would be no more than a drop in the ocean. It is indeed obvious that in this case individual action is not enough; combined social, governmental—I might even say international action is necessary.

We should no doubt not lose sight of the fact that, as members of the vast social body, we are inevitably interdependent one on another, and that the effect of associated individual action is incalculable. Let us keep before us the principles inculcated by modern hygiene: live in the open air, sleep with the windows open, adhere to the rules of cleanliness, develop the physique by sport and exercise. In sickness, two considerations must be taken into account, the microbe on one hand, and the soil on which it operates on the other. It is to a certain extent in our power so to prepare the soil that only healthy grain can take root, by increasingly and with unwavering attention uprooting and destroying the weeds that are ever ready to spring up. Never forget that if, during certain periods of our lives the protection against infection is of supreme importance, at others, on the contrary, it is even more indispensable that the organism should be prepared for resistance to infection. A superstitious dread of this disease is apt to have consequences as disastrous as those due to ignorant carelessness. Let us therefore everywhere endeavor to create healthy minds in sound bodies. Individual effort must, however, be supported by legislation. Governments must realize that, from the economic standpoint, prevention is better than cure, and that national expenditure can never be too great when applied to improvement of housing condi-