

statistics, and, because the figures of the last decennium happen to be favorable, conclude therefrom that all our sanitary principles are right.

Perhaps some one will say, "How ridiculous to hold up the Chinese as an example! The Chinese masses are acknowledged to be exceptionally filthy in their customs and habits." This, perhaps, is true, but I am sure that this audience will not make the error of confounding principles with details. The Chinese principle of returning all organic refuse to the soil is, there can be no doubt, absolutely sound. The Chinese details may be filthy and susceptible of improvement. In this country the details of our domestic sanitation are refined, elegant, and ingenious. It is the principle subverted by these details which is absolutely rotten. The main problem of sanitation is to cleanse the dwelling *day by day*, without fostering starvation. This can only be done by returning all organic refuse to the soil, and the perfecting of the details by which this duty is to be done is the most important work of the modern sanitarian.

This question is a national one and concerns us all. Every country squire ought, in these matters, to set a good example to his tenants. If he does not set the example of increasing the fertility of the soil by daily addition to it of all the organic refuse of his country mansion, he cannot command our sympathy when he goes without his full rent.

This question has an immediate personal interest for all who derive their income from the soil. I feel sure that the clergy would do well to enforce by example, as well as by precept, the old injunction, to "replenish the earth and subdue it." If they do not they must expect to go without their tithes. Improvement in this direction is only to be attained by rousing the public conscience. So soon as the majority of individuals is impressed with the fact that it is wicked to foul our streams and starve the soil, and that our individual responsibility does not end, even though the fouling and starving be done by a "Board," so much the better will it be for the public health and national wealth.

ON THE RELATIONS OF AGRICULTURE TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH.

ON several occasions this Journal has drawn attention to the close relations of agriculture to sanitation and the public health. Sanitation is very largely, almost entirely, the proper, safe disposal of all used up, waste, organic, decomposing or putrescible matters. The products of the soil feed upon these matters and demand them in order to grow and mature. Soil, with its myriads of minute fungoid organisms, yielding abundant vegetable productions, is the best of all disinfectants. The soil cannot yield abundance of produce without a full return to it of the elements which it has given up to its products. This is a law of nature. The laws of nature are inexorable: they are not to be set aside by prayers—nor labour. Those who disobey the laws of nature, or who enter into a contest with her, are sure to be worsted in the end.

If we fight with nature, we court calamity. As the inevitable destiny of putrescible matter is to become the food of vegetables—a destiny which we can delay at the most only for a brief period—our proper course in dealing with it is clearly not to attempt to prevent or to delay the inevitable. Such a course is to disobey the laws of nature, to fight with her and court ultimate defeat. Our wiser plan is clearly to help nature in her work.

In view of this, is it not full time that some more decided action were taken by legislators in this yet new country to prevent the universal practice of opposing nature in this circle of waste and supply—of tearing down and building up—some action by which waste matters may be returned more directly to the soil as food for crops instead of being deposited in our inland waters whence they become the destroyers