

them. Even St. Jerome used to praise the filthy habits of the hermits. He especially commended an Egyptian hermit who combed his hair on Easter Sunday only, and never washed his clothes at all. Monks, up to the time of the Reformation, thought, or professed to think, that by antithesis pollution of the body indicated cleanliness of the soul.

Only within the last century has the resurrection and re-establishment of sanitation upon a firm and more enduring basis been attempted. And this applies not only to personal and domestic hygiene, but to municipal and national sanitation, on which I shall touch later on.

It has been said that the ruling characteristic of this age is the tendency and effort towards perfecting the physical, intellectual and moral welfare of mankind. In these days of struggle and strenuous existence we hear much of the various means for the advancement and protection of the agricultural, the manufacturing, the mercantile and other interests; and of the race for social distinction, and the efforts people make to trace back their family tree as far as possible towards the one in which their original ancestors used to live and to disport themselves. But what question of mere business or social gain can compare, either in advantage or importance, with the general and individual interest which every one has in the preservation of life and health? No matter what the labour, manual or intellectual, in which one is engaged, nor how productive, each and every mode of obtaining individual supplies and of contributing to the social welfare of the community is, and must ever be, subordinate—both intellectually and generally—to the possession of health.

It is not to be expected that legislators can go much in advance of the views entertained by the mass of the people in the value of preventive and protective measures. "Sanitary instruction is even more important than sanitary legislation," said the late Earl of Derby—himself eminent both as a sanitary instructor and as sanitary legislator.

We must, therefore, be patient and untiring in our efforts to educate and encourage the more intelligent and thoughtful to adopt about their homes and in their daily life hygienic precautions. Their example in these matters will gradually extend by imitation and habit to those less favoured by fortune. Every one can do a little, every one can to a greater or less degree take a lively and practical part in the great crusade against dirt and disease. As has been well said: "If all the individuals in the city appreciated the fact that they are to some extent responsible for the condition of the public health, and, in order to keep their consciences clear, kept their back-yards, cellars, alleys, houses and rooms clean, the reports of the Commissioner of Health would show the result of the multiplied effort."