

of human happiness. Answering the question of what were germs, Dr. Wilson described them as probably the first forms of life to come into existence when the earth cooled down from being a blazing orb. All germs were not evil things; some, indeed, were useful to man. He did not know whether Maidstone citizens took a practical interest in their sewage farm, because germs, called bacteria, were there converting filthy masses of sewage into an effluent so pure that it could be drunk with safety. Again, neither cheese nor the best vinegar could be made without the action of germs, while the work of digestion of food in our own bodies could not be accomplished without their aid. In the course of further interesting information, Dr. Wilson urged the importance of purchasers consuming tinned foods as soon as possible after opening; of brushing the teeth every night in order to get rid of the matter which had congregated from the mastication of food during the day, and which formed a fertile soil for the growth of germs; and specially the necessity of isolating cats and dogs which appeared to be suffering from colds or other ailments, as they often communicated the complaints to the children. In regard to typhoid, he mentioned the singular fact

that some patients would retain the germs in their bodies for ten or twelve years. There were about three typhoid carriers in every thousand cases. If we were surrounded by germs, some might ask why we were not always ill. The answer was that all germs were not disease producers, while the body possessed many defences against infection, including the millions of white globules in the blood, which acted as sanitary policemen and were always on the watch for disease germs. When a person became infected it was because the germs were too many for the globules to bolt. Speaking of the bubonic plague and the crusade against rats, he said the disease was caused by a person being bitten by a flea which affected rats abroad and not in England. He suggested that attention should be concentrated upon the rats which were conveyed in ships. As to consumption, he mentioned that one patient would cough up twenty million germs in 24 hours. In conclusion, he dealt with the subject of toxins and anti-toxins, which he described as the crowning triumph of germ science, and contended that the future of medicine would largely consist of providing for every disease an anti-toxin, and making the germs fight themselves.

