

diphtheria or tetanus can be prevented, and that cancer cannot? To answer this question let us examine the course of any disease, such as diphtheria, before the anti-toxic treatment was discovered. The symptoms used to be noticed over and over again; the unfortunate results have been witnessed not infrequently; the predisposing causes were to a certain extent also known. But the exciting and most important cause, used to be a total mystery. But now we know that diphtheria is the result of the toxic action of certain complex chemical substances. These substances are the products of certain specific, minute, living organisms present in the diphtheritic membrane. These organisms are so minute that they require a magnifying power of about one thousand in order to distinguish them—slender, rod-shaped forms about 1-5000 inch long. And, since we have the whole chain complete, the way is clearer for the discovery of a preventive cure for diphtheria. In fact, the preventive of diphtheria is now known and made use of, so that even if the diphtheria bacilli do enter the body, the action of their toxins is counteracted, and their growth inhibited. Therefore, it can be understood, in the case of cancer, that since we are as yet ignorant of the true exciting cause, a priori it is impossible, if we are at all to argue rationally, to search for an immunising agent before finding out the cause. At present there are investigations on foot towards the discovery of the exact cause and nature of this dreaded disease.

But, in the meanwhile, why not observe the practical side of the motto, "What we have we'll hold?" There are a large number of infections the spread of which we have it in our power to anticipate, if only the right steps in the matter were taken. Of course, the power of the physician individually towards the prevention of infection of a whole community or of a town is quite limited. The only instruments practically that could, *with the guidance* of the physician, prevent the spread of disease, are three in number.

There is, first, the *individual* himself. The Hebrew Talmud says, Very often the sick person is the better physician than the doctor. The application is quite appropriate in this case. Each and every person should have a clear understanding of the means by which he may keep himself and his neighbours from contracting disease; and, if he is only willing to adhere to such principles, more good will be accomplished than if he follows blindly and imperfectly whatever the physician tells him to do, and of which he will, of course, have no comprehensive idea. The latter part of the paper—dealing with a special system of Preventive Medicine—will more clearly define the power of the individual in this respect.