

ly be fixed, but upon disease germs which no bad air or foul drains can create, but which may be pushed by foul air into virulent energy of reproduction. You may think I am treading on dangerous ground, that I am putting forth views that may interfere with salutary practice. No such thing. If you wish to learn the impotence of medical science and practice in dealing with contagious diseases, you have only to refer to a recent Harvian Oration by Dr. Gull. Such diseases defy the physician. They must burn themselves out. And, indeed, this, though I do not specially insist upon it, would favour the idea of their vital origin. For if the seeds of contagious disease be themselves living things, it will be difficult to destroy either them or their progeny without involving their living *habitat* in the same destruction.

I went some time ago into a manufactory in one of our large towns, where iron vessels are enamelled by coating them with a mineral powder, and subjecting them to a heat sufficient to fuse the powder. The organization of the establishment was excellent, and one thing only was needed to make it faultless. In a large room a number of women were engaged covering the vessels. The air was laden with the fine dust, and their faces appeared as white and bloodless as the powder with which they worked. By the use of cotton-wool respirators these women might be caused to breathe more free from suspended matters than that of the open street. Over a year ago I was written to by a Lancashire seedsman, who stated that during the seed season of each year, his men suffered horribly from irritation and fever, so that many of them left his service. He asked me could I help him, and I gave him my advice. At the conclusion of the season this year, he wrote to me that he had simply folded a little cotton wool in muslin, and tied it in front of the mouth, that he had passed through the season in comfort and without a single complaint from one of his men.

The substance has also been turned to other uses. An invalid tells me that at night he places a little of the wool before his mouth, slightly moistening it to make it adhere, that he has thereby prolonged his sleep, abated the irritation of his throat, and greatly mitigated a hacking cough from which he had long suffered. In fact, there is no doubt that this substance is capable of manifold useful applications. An objection was urged against the use of it; that it became wet and heated by the