

in animals. When the human frame is not altogether healthy or able to banish the intruder, these forms may even pass into the minute cells of the lungs. One species is an almost constant attendant on cancerous affections of the stomach. A few spores of a certain fungus when rubbed into the skin have been known to produce a serious skin disease, and Dr. Lowe has induced skin diseases by inoculation with the granules of yeast. Fungi have always been considered as a greater factor in the spread of disease. But even when they have found lodgment in the mucous membranes they cannot be said to originate disease, though they may aggravate it. They are almost omnipresent in nature, and their spores have been detected in flakes of snow, in the Trade-wind dust, and in the wilderness. They can also for the most part endure the extremes of temperature without losing their reproductive power. The spores are very commonly found in the dejections of cholera, and the complicated bodies which constantly accompanied the cholera in its last march through the west of England were supposed to be fungoid in origin. Be this as it may, these lower forms of vegetable life often cause derangement in the animal economy. The deleterious effect of the ergot, for instance, is well known, and the presence of ergot in fresh dried sausages, and in mouldy provisions, produced by ergot in bread have sometimes proved fatal. I might instance also the danger to health which results from the growth and spread of this form of life under the floorings of houses. I have known barrowsful of this rank vegetation taken from between the joists of a drawing-room, and I have seen flagstones which have been moved out of their place by such underground growths. I cannot say that these engendered any complaint beyond a feeling of annoyance, but what might have resulted in the long run I cannot say. Some of the fungi at a certain stage are, however, especially loathsome and create nausea, and even sickness, in the passer by. Venturing a little higher up the vegetable scale, let us just notice the influence of low plant life upon water. All water exposed to the air contains the germs of vegetable life. Microscopic algæ, etc., are common in nearly all kinds of water. These perish, and are found in a condition of ferment and putrefaction, the reception of which into the system produces an apparent tendency towards the quicker inception of disease. The rapid growth of *confervæ* upon water is very noticeable, and indicates when water can scarcely be drunk with impunity.

And now a word concerning trees, which screen the soil from the sun like so many parasols, diminish the temperature by evaporation of moisture from the leaf, and preserve a proper circulation of that necessary moisture. Without them the rain would descend headlong to the river beds, and rush in torrents to the sea. Without them there would be little percolation into the soil, certainly insufficient to supply our underground springs. The countries in which trees have been remorselessly felled have invariably suffered owing to the meteorological changes which ensued. About the year 1490,