

mere ignorance is by far a more dangerous enemy than any other." And again, "I have seen wretched friction in a workhouse between the physician, with all the feelings and ideas of a gentleman, and the underbred master placed in authority in the institution."

As Dr. Mackenzie, in an excellent paper in the *Sanitary Journal*, Glasgow, (Sept. '91) on "Public Health Propaganda," puts it: "Forms of government are not an end in themselves; they exist to teach men how to pass beyond them; and society only begins to work, though it begins well, when it passes good laws. These, to have good social effects, need the motive, the direction, the informing spirit of the individual executive. Now the aim of a practical philosophy is the rational direction of life in society, and such, I take it, is the aim of health legislation. But Public Health Acts are still much in advance of the common feelings; which, therefore, far from welcoming the trouble essential to good health, often take the enforcement of even major matters as an intrusion and an interference. And not unnaturally; for an Act of Parliament does not generate the character to realize it; that depends on other forces, which indeed would ultimately make the Act itself superfluous.

The lesson of legal enforcement in certain matters is a good beginning; it wakens the average mind to a certain interest in health. But the bare legal enforcement is not the limit of a medical officer's activities. There is a larger work before him; he must do what he can, consistently with his public duties, to displace ignorance everywhere by knowledge, to stimulate the individual will and encourage the individual effort, so transforming the average apathy into an operative alarm for the common well being. He must grow, so to speak, a "hygienic conscience." This ideal is the necessary guide of the medical officer, who, as an official, daily finds so much that, as a teacher, he might have been able to forestall.

The material to work upon—what and where is it? The whole range of rural life, in farm, in village, in town and city.

It is the work of the medical officer to disturb the public apathy in health matters: to place the "ideal" higher, to generate a social sensitiveness that shall regard filth as an indecency, defective ventilation as a breach of fashion, and more sleeping space as, at least, a legitimate ambition. The defects of living he may bring to a "clear consciousness;" he may initiate a "fashion of healthiness," and thus he may as it were, "sensitize the major decencies." His matter is abundant; his occasions are innumerable; his aims should be definite and realizable. What the Public Health Acts give him power to enforce he can justify and forestall by his teaching, and he has light, air, water, food, drainage, and the endless branchings of personal hygiene to choose from.

In education rather than in coercion, we must rely for progress in preventive medicine. On another occasion we propose to endeavor to point out some ways in which the medical officer can best educate his clientele.

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DR. T. CLIFFORD ALLBUTT, M.A., LL.D., F.R.S., &c., ON PREVENTIVE  
v. CURATIVE MEDICINE: THE MEDICINE OF THE "NOT VERY  
FAR" OFF FUTURE: A MOST ADMIRABLE ADDRESS.

ONE of the most enlightened, advanced and suggestive addresses in medicine which we have ever heard or read was given last month by Dr. Clifford Allbutt before the Nottingham Medico-Chirurgical Society (*Lancet*, Nov. 14). Sixteen years ago (Oct. 12, 1875), the editor of this *JOURNAL*, in an address before the York Medical Society, advanced views of a like character (*Health Jr.*, Vol. 1, p. 425).