

THE WHITE SCOURGE.

Ten years ago we did not know the cause of the dread disease — consumption. It destroys upwards of 100,000 people annually in the United States, and, now that we know its cause, and how easily preventable it is, the wonder is that there is so little public interest. We made a great hue and cry about the mortality resulting from our war with Spain—a mortality of less than 3,000—and yet we manifest a pitiful indifference about the appalling number of deaths caused by the "white scourge."

We are indebted to Prof. Koch of Berlin for the discovery of the cause, and there can be little doubt that his line of research will lead to the discovery of the cure—if it has not already done so. The tubercle bacillus, a microscopical rod-like plant is the cause. Its potency for mischief is great. It will remain alive for weeks in a dried state but it is quickly killed by heat, sunlight and disinfectants. Once lodged in the body the tubercle bacillus grows slowly, dividing and subdividing, and absorbing the moisture of the body and stimulating the cells to the growth of what is known as tubercles. These tubercles break down and are thrown off. If on the lungs, which is the most common situation, by coughing and spitting and this sputum contains thousands of these deadly bacilli. We have learned a very comforting fact, namely, that consumption is not hereditary. We should thoroughly understand this for it refutes a theory of long standing and one still extensively entertained. The only way this disease can be acquired is by getting into our bodies the tubercular bacilli from tubercular men or animals. The only animals prone to convey this disease to man are cattle. The danger from uncooked beef or milk from tubercular cattle is real and great, but the greatest danger is from the sputum of human beings. While the sputum is moist it can do no harm unless transmitted direct as by coughing or kissing. But if the sputum becomes dried on the street, walls, clothing, etc., and, in the form of dust, breathed by a healthy person, that person's life is endangered. I must not be understood as implying that the tubercular bacillus successfully attacks all persons it touches. Many persons are immune; but as we have no means of knowing beforehand who is and who is not immune, protective measures should be applied for all.

The above facts point to easily-applied and certain preventives. But these need the hearty co-operation of the people, and I am sure we will receive this if we take the people into our confidence. Strip our language of technicalities and carry our instruction to the fireside, so to speak. The consumptive should be taught the necessity of not kissing, and also that he should not spit

in any place where the sputum can possibly become dried. The great health resorts are the places of greatest danger today because of the ceaseless spitting of the afflicted ones. It should be an offense in law for anyone to spit on the street. There is no necessity for isolation. The habit of spitting is peculiarly American, and I am sorry that our people—rather our men—indulge in this habit for it is not only unnecessary but is disgusting and dangerous. Our women are far ahead of our men in this. The women have too much self-respect to go about expectorating in all directions. Our men are admittedly the cleanest physically and morally of all men in the world; and this repulsive habit leaves them vulnerable to the unjust charge of being unclean. I am confident that if our men will give this subject a moment's thought they will change. The next preventive measure is the inspection of cattle. A medical man should inspect every bovine before it is used as food.

Apropos of this it is noticeable how few of the Jews are consumptive. This is due to the inspection of meat required by their religion. This subject is not so doleful as my remarks may lead one to think. I believe the cure is almost, if not just at hand, as intimated above. Before 1890, when Professor Koch propounded his germ theory, there was no cure, a few only being able to throw off the disease. Professor Koch succeeded in curing 35 per cent of all cases and the German government today maintains large experimental laboratories which are under the control of Professor Koch. I have been several times through these laboratories and hospitals and I am confident the cure is close at hand. In fact it is recently stated that one of his assistants has succeeded in obtaining an antitoxine that cures 95 per cent.

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POLITICAL.

The Philadelphia Press (rep.) urges that "a demand for honest election laws be the issue in the nomination and election of members of the next Pennsylvania legislature."

Summing up the political situation, it appears to the Des Moines Leader (dem.) "that Nebraska, except the small mountain states of Nevada, Idaho, Utah, Montana and Colorado, is the only state west of the Missouri river Mr. Bryan can reasonably hope to carry if nominated again. And there are no compensating gains. Maryland is safely republican if the money question is the issue, and the sowing of faction which has been made so plentiful in Kentucky this year probably means that next year it also will be republican. It may be that no democrat can be elected—for such are the probabilities—but certainly Mr. Bryan cannot be elected. It would make no difference what was the phras-

ing of the platform, for he is a platform in himself, and popularly his renomination would be given but one interpretation."

Bryan, according to the Richmond Times (dem.) can find no comfort in the elections, outside of the one in Nebraska, and the result there it regards as a populist rather than a democratic victory. It will not make predictions, "but," it says, "it does seem to us that this is enough to retire William J. Bryan from the race in 1900."

"Why should the Filipinos not be allowed to try the experiment of self-government under the auspices and protection of the government of the United States if they will stop fighting and consent so to do?" asks the Burlington (Vt.) Free Press (rep.). "Which will be worth most to us—their friendship and gratitude, or their undying hatred and hostility?"

It would appear to the Chicago News (ind.) that "the Jones vote in Ohio means to a certain extent the breaking up of the old hard-and-fast party lines. It is an indication to party leaders that the people are assuming the right to think for themselves, and that it will hereafter be a dangerous experiment in Ohio or elsewhere for party managers to shape issues and fashion platforms without taking this fact into account."

"The American people are supporting the administration and will support it through the war in the Philippines independent of any differences of opinion in regard to the final disposition of those islands," comments the Pittsburg Dispatch (rep.). "If the state elections have any significance in connection with that subject, it is in showing that while the people support the administration in defence of the flag they are not going beyond the present to give popular endorsement to any policies not yet fully defined."

"The year 1900 without a presidential campaign, without pivotal states and the long strain of contending factions, will be a curiosity," remarks the Boston Transcript (rep.) "Such a situation has its advantages as well as its defects. Any party suffers from the lack of a vigorous opposition. It is doubtful if the civil service reform bars would have been let down by the present administration had a vigorous democratic party like that which existed ten years ago been standing ready to take advantage of it. On the other hand, a party in power which needs to have no serious fear of defeat can go ahead and do the things that ought to be done, regardless of temporary advantage. Why should the republican party now fear to enact, for example, the most comprehensive measure of banking and currency reform that its best statesmanship finds to be the actual need of the country?"