

**MAN'S WORST ENEMY.**

**SIR WILLIAM OSLER ON THE RAVAGES OF CONSUMPTION.**

**THE THREE CLASSES.**

"Let me give you a shock," said Sir William Osler, Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford, to the conference of the National Association for the prevention of consumption and other forms of tuberculosis at Leeds yesterday. "Tuberculosis," he continued, "may be put into three groups. In the first group all of us here present come. That is to say, had I here an instrument that can never be invented—a radio-microscope—that I could look into the chest or abdomen of everyone here, the probability is that in 90 per cent. of you there would be found somewhere a small area of tuberculosis. So widespread is the bacillus that practically all human beings by the time they reach adult life harbour somewhere the germ of the disease.

"Why do we not die? Because we are human beings, and not guinea pigs or rabbits. We have obtained a certain immunity against tuberculosis. The germ is in us, though negative, and we all of us have the possibility of slipping into one or other of the other two groups.

"The second group comprises those in whom the disease is active enough to produce symptoms, but in whom there is the possibility of arrest or cure, with restoration to working health. The third group is doomed, and in them the disease progresses week by week, month by month, year by year, and in them one year up to five sees the end. That is the fate of between fifty and sixty thousand of our fellow-creatures this year. When the workers have a living wage, when the house becomes a home, when the nation spends in food what it now spends in drink, then instead of hundreds of thousands there will be millions in the first group, with practically continued immunity against the ravages of tuberculosis, and we shall not have to wait for the millennium. The fields are ripe already to harvest. As for the second group, to cure a case of open pulmonary tuberculosis is not easy. Arrest is common; cure is rare.

**THE THREE ESSENTIALS.**

"There are three essentials in the cure—education, control, and rigid régimes. As there is only room for one-third of the present cases in sanatoria, much must be done in the homes.

"In no way can you so mark the lintels of your doors that the Angel of the White Scourge will pass with certainty. Despair would fill the heart if it were not for the splendid efforts of officers of public health, who in fifty years have cut in half the mortality from tuberculosis. But, after all, this is a wonderful campaign in which we are engaged. We have tracked the enemy, and know his every stronghold, and we know his three allies—poverty, bad housing, and drink. But though the ravages have been reduced it remains the most powerful amongst man's innumerable enemies. Before us is a long, slow, hundred years war, or even longer, in which, however, co-ordination, co-operation, and enterprise will win out just as surely as it has done against typhus and typhoid."

Dr. H. de Carle Woodcock, consulting tuberculosis officer for Leeds, said it was true that in some of our trades every man carried a shroud in his knapsack. How did those who believed in milk as the great producer of tuberculosis, reconcile their belief with the fact that those classes which drank the least milk have the most tuberculosis.