combating *Venereal Disease*. We are realising almost every day that the task of extermination of these terrible race-destroyers bristles with difficulties calling for the most determined application and perseverance.

Alongside the work of treatment, some of us have recognised from the very beginning that the work of the education of the public, and the stimulation of individual responsibility in citizenship, are, in this matter, pre-eminently, of essential importance if the campaign is to attain the success we hope for. The work of the N.C.C.V.D. and its branches has been one of the greatest things I have seen in my life-time—only rivalled by the educational campaign on Tuberculosis, started over twenty years ago by Sir Malcolm Morris, to whose foresight and splendid optimism again we largely owe the campaign against venereal disease.

As most of you know, I have not been silent in expressing my deep regret that the workers in this educational campaign should have been divided by the establishment of the rival Society, named the "Society for the Prevention of Venereal Diseases," but which, in my opinion, works "from the wrong end of the stick," so to speak. We ought to have been united in this campaign. For civilians, I am convinced that the "prophylactic packet" policy is medically unreliable, and that to urge its adoption by the general public is absolutely impracticable. Moreover, some of us cannot imagine any other result than such policy and propaganda would maintain the evils of amateur and professional prostitution, and the continuance of disease. I am convinced that the only policy likely to be successful ultimately in the elimination of venereal disease and of prostitution, as serious features, at any rate, in human life, is Education—not merely as to the terrors of disease, but the education—biological, ethical, and idealistic—of the rising generation, in the proper conception and knowledge of the function of sex. It is on those lines that our future educational work should be carried on, with the utmost energy and diplomacy.

In conclusion, we may rejoice to-day in the achievements of the past. In the towns, at any rate, we have very largely abolished gross insantiation, we have secured the safe disposal of our sewage, the purity of our water-supplies, and the practical extermination of some of the more serious infectious diseases; and I believe that the same may truly be said of many of our villages and smaller urban districts. In recent years I have been surprised at what has been accomplished outside the larger towns in the provision

of a water-tap supply of pure water, in the disposal of sewage by the water-carriage system, and so on.

We may also rejoice for what has been accomplished during the last few years in the hygiene of the individual, of the children in particular, and although the present financial hold-up of some of this work is disappointing, especially to those of us who are getting on in life, yet we, as public health workers, must spare no effort or opportunity to press onward to complete conquests over disease, to the advancement in every direction of the health and happiness of the people, and to the satisfactory development of the rising generation. In all this work, a Society like ours is a constant source and medium of stimulation, of which we should never fail to avail ourselves to the utmost.

FORTY YEARS IN A RURAL DISTRICT.

BY

DR. T. LAMBERT LACK, M.O.H. for Forehoe
Rural District.

In looking over my yearly sanitary reports I thought it might be of some little interest to you if I described the condition of my small district some forty years ago, and that now existing. Most of you probably know the district, which consists of 23 parishes with an estimated population of 11,500, and is some 12 miles long and 7 broad. The Rivers Yan and Winsum water a considerable portion of the district. Many of the villages lie on the right and left of those rivers. There are two considerable towns—Wymondham and Hingham. The drainage of those towns in 1882 consisted of barrel drains constructed some 40 years earlier, and were for the purpose of carrying away surface water, and quite unfitted for sewerage. Those barrel drains received the greater portion of the sewage. Those in Wymondham eventually discharging themselves into the River Tiffey, and those in Hingham into open ditches north and south of the town.

The *water supply* was from wells, many of them very shallow and ill-constructed and always subject to contamination from surface water. The water from the Tiffey, in spite of receiving large quantities of sewage matter, was used for drinking purposes.

Housing.—A large proportion of the cottages needed repair, and had but poor sleeping accommodation—boys and girls sleeping in the same bedrooms. The windows in many could not be opened. This was immaterial to the occupiers, who as a rule objected to fresh air.

Privy accommodation very bad and insufficient, consisting principally of open privies with huge vaults.

There was no provision for isolating patients, nor any proper means for disinfecting.

The death-rate from all causes and from one year and under was respectively 17 and 150.

Such then was the condition of the Forehoe rural district. Now I will briefly describe its present state.

Housing much improved, a large number of new houses have been built and others put in good repair, all now admitting sunlight and air. The privy accommodation is fairly good. The old vaults are nearly all abolished. Scavengers have been appointed for the two towns. After many years' importunity we have a very nice isolation hospital (9 beds), also a portable disinfectant—Thresh's. The Maternity and Child Welfare Act has been adopted with beneficial results, but alas! the drainage is still most unsatisfactory and the water supply insufficient and of very varied quality.

The local authority is very hard to move when money has to be spent, and the Ministry occasionally sends an official to look round, but nothing results. However, in spite of our imperfections, the death-rate was for 1921, at all ages, 9.9, and for one year and under, 41 per 1,000.

THE CONTROL OF VENEREAL DISEASES.

BY

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The problem of preventing venereal disease is, and has always been, a subject of controversy among the medical public. In the earliest days of official medicine—in the time of Sir John Simon—a section of the public began to agitate for the control and free treatment of these maladies.

Simon, an eminent sanitarian and also a surgeon, set his face firmly against any official action. He pleaded strongly "against subsidising the fornicator out of rates and taxes," and this "enlightened" view prevailed at Whitehall up till 1916, when, under the leadership of Sir Arthur Newsholme, a great forward step was made in the establishment of free clinics and more or less expert treatment. But no arrangements were made for the prevention of these disabling plagues, and it is certain that not one medical officer of health in a hundred knew that these ailments could be prevented. Even in modern text books of preventive medicine no mention is

made of the wonderful work of Metchnikoff and Roux, and as the only extended reference to this work is in Sir Archdall Reid's book published last year, and in an English translation of Paul Maisonneuve's work, which, so far as I know, was not reviewed in any Public Health Journal and has never reached a second edition, I venture to reproduce the account of the epoch-making experiment.

On February 1st, 1906, Metchnikoff and Roux inoculated a young man—Paul Maisonneuve—with the virus of syphilis obtained from two patients in the most deadly and infectious stage of the disease. One hour later they rubbed in calomel ointment, and although M. Maisonneuve was kept under observation for several months no syphilis ever supervened.

To test the virulence of the inoculation four monkeys were inoculated at the same time as M. Maisonneuve and with the same virus. One of the monkeys was treated with calomel ointment one hour later in exactly the same way as M. Maisonneuve. Another was treated with it 20 hours after inoculation. The remaining two monkeys were not treated at all. The result was as follows:—The two untreated monkeys developed syphilis after seventeen days, the usual incubation period in monkeys. The monkey treated after 20 hours with calomel ointment developed a mild syphilis in thirty-nine days; on the other hand the monkey treated after one hour remained permanently free of syphilis. The effectiveness of the virus was thus established and the potency of calomel ointment as a preventive of venereal disease was definitely proved.

Valuable confirmation of this work is afforded by an article recently published by Colonel L. W. Harrison in the "Dictionary of Practical Medicine" (Waverley Book Co., Ltd., Vol. III., p. 312). He writes as follows: "The virus of syphilis is undoubtedly very delicate and the prompt application of any antiseptic should suffice to prevent infection."

He adds that the most effective method would be to steep the part in 1 in 2,000 perchloride of mercury.

This testimony is all the more impressive as Colonel Harrison has always been opposed to the popular application of these methods of prevention.

These researches are the ground on which the Society for the Prevention of Venereal Disease bases its campaign. To this Society have rallied all the men of light and leading in science, art, and medicine. It has issued most valuable directions couched in simple language on the methods