

THE SANITARY PRIVY A SUCCESS.

Readers of this JOURNAL have several times been urged to favor the establishment of so-called sanitary privies wherever sewerage was not available. A recent experience of the health officers of Wilmington, N. C., demonstrates the effectiveness of that principle in preventing a threatened spread of typhoid fever.

In that city there has been, for a number of years, an average number of 200 cases annually. The greatest frequency of cases was invariably during the time of year when flies are most abundant. A new health department in Wilmington took hold of affairs on June 1, 1911. At that time there was an epidemic of typhoid which was rapidly spreading. The officers supplied infected families with watertight steel cans of disinfecting fluid. A similar can was furnished, when needed, to receive the disinfected secretions. This can was kept in an outbuilding screened from flies, and emptied and cleaned by the city without cost to the citizens. It was the screened, sanitary privy in principle, and was a substitute for them where they could not be installed. As a result only about 60 cases occurred during the months of May, June, July, August and September, 1912, when during the same months of 1911 there were 250 cases. The chief health officer, or superintendent, Dr. Charles T. Nesbitt, thinks there must be a large number of typhoid carriers in Wilmington, and as there are some 3,000 surface privies in the city, the question of screening and sanitary management is very important.

PROBLEMS OF THE SOUTH.

This office has been favored by Dr. John L. Jelks, of Memphis, with a copy of an address with the above title, which he delivered at Jonesboro, Ark., October 8, and at Paragould, Ark., December 4, 1912.

The article is devoted principally to the sanitation of railroads, their cars, their rights of way, buildings, etc., and he demonstrates

that it pays such huge corporations to see that their premises, from one end of their line to the other, are sanitary and attractive. He shows that where the depot is a blotch on the landscape and a menace to health, the employees lack the health and spirit required for full efficiency. He speaks of how Miami and Palm Beach, once desolate resorts of alligators and snakes, have been rendered sanitary and beautiful by Flagler, thus profiting him over half a million dollars. He speaks of the fly in a way to add shudders of nausea to the resentment we already feel at his intrusion.

He is an ardent advocate of government aid in sanitation work, and though a good Southerner, is not afraid the doctrine of "states' rights" will be annihilated thereby. The address is a good, strong, ringing appeal to his fellow citizens everywhere to wake up and join the crusade against flies, mosquitoes and dirt. The JOURNAL does not know his politics—politics in Tennessee are, as the dorky said when they hauled him out of the wrong chicken house, "powerful mixed"—but as far as medicine, energy and sanitation go, Dr. Jelks is certainly a Progressive.

BOOK REVIEWS

MAN'S REDEMPTION OF MAN.

A Lay Sermon by William A. Osler. 50 cents net. Published by Paul B. Hoeber, New York, 1912.

This is an address which was delivered to the students of the University of Edinburgh, in connection with the Edinburgh meeting of the National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis. The text is from Isaiah, and is of a most cheerful character. In the sermon Dr. Osler proclaims that "the greatest glory is that the leaves of the tree of science have availed for the healing of the nations." He refers eloquently to the discovery of surgical anesthesia, but ascribes "the new Prometheus" to the Massachusetts General Hospital, ignoring its earlier application by a Southern doctor. As may be inferred from the above, the "redemption" is physical and not spiritual. The monograph, though eloquently phrased, teaches nothing not already known to all physicians, and indeed to the general public.