AN ADDRESS ON SANITATION IN SOME OF ITS ASPECTS, MORAL AS WELL AS GENERAL.

Delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Birmingham and Midland Counties Branch.

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GENTLEMEN,—It falls to my lot, in assuming to-day the presidential chair of this important Branch of the British Medical Association, to have to address you on some topic of interest to the members of our profession; but, before proceeding to give you the few thoughts and suggestions which have occurred to me as being appropriate to the present occasion, I must tender to you my sincere thanks for the honour you have conferred upon me in placing me in so high a position. When I think of the many able and distinguished men who belong to this Branch—men who, by their learning, experience, and originality of practice, as well as research, are capable of filling the office of president with a degree of credit to the Association and of satisfaction to its members which I cannot pretend to aspire to—I am not a little disturbed at my own rashness in accepting so responsible a post; and in this feeling I am the more confirmed by the fact that I have the disadvantage to follow one who holds so high and distinguished a position in his profession, and who has filled this chair with such ability, tact, and judgment, as our late president, Dr. Foster. I cannot pretend to do for you what he and other distinguished presidents in the past have done; but I would assure you that it will always be my earnest endeavour to discharge the duties of my office with due regard to its dignity and efficiency; and I trust that, in this endeavour, I shall receive, not only your generous sympathy, but also that measure of support and of forbearance for my shortcomings which is due to the man who makes no pretensions to superior wisdom or knowledge, but merely aims at doing his duty to the best of the ability with which God has endowed him.

It is, I believe, the more usual course, in presidential addresses, to review past work, or such as is in process of being done, in one or more of the branches of our profession, or by the profession taken as a whole, during a given period. I purpose making my remarks more general; and, after a short review of some of our more recent achievements, I shall proceed to the great and important question of sanitation, which I shall consider from a moral as well as an ordinary point of view.

The strides made by our profession, and, indeed, by all branches of science, during the last few years, have been so varied and extensive, so far-reaching, and all-embracing, that we may note, with grateful sense and wondering awe, the slow but sure and certain work of evolution, which throughout all ages has been going on, and which, even now, as time rolls on, is steadily advancing, and which bears upon its every line, and has stamped upon its every feature, the one and never fading mark of a "First Great Cause." Some of you, gentlemen, have contributed to this great progress; some of you are even now engaged in adding no inconsiderable portion to that solid increment of joint action which helps to rear those separate structures, which, when bound together by the many connecting links which hold them in one firm embrace, may be summed up as the "totality" of medical science. Thanks to the great advance of knowledge, especially of physiology and pathology, and to the more careful and painstaking study of the diseases to which each organ of the body is liable, and to the more accurate record of cases, our present acquaintance with disease is placed on a sounder basis than it was, and is followed, as a matter of course, by a more scientific and satisfactory treatment. It may be claimed for medicine and surgery alike, whether viewed in their scientific or practical aspects, that they have made a greater advance during the last twenty-five years than during any similar previous period; and have done in that time, to make good their title to be ranked amongst the leading sciences, more than they ever did before.

[He (the president) next proceeded to speak of the doctrine of contagia, and to predict for it most important results in the future; and of the discovery of anæsthetics and of antiseptics, and their application to the prevention of contagious diseases, and to the furtherance of the cleanliness and healthiness of dwellings, sick-chambers, and hospitals. He dwelt at some length on the great advance made in

operative surgery, and in the treatment of wounds by the use of antiseptics, and claimed for the system known as "Listerism," "that it was the faith, the well nigh unbounded faith, which men put in it, which led them to do with the abdomen and its contents, not to mention the bones and joints, what, but a little time back, would have been regarded as altogether unjustifiable, not to say criminal. The discovery of antiseptics led the way to those marvellous operations on the parts already referred to, which are the wonder of the present age, and which alone are sufficient to characterise it as one of unexampled progress in the science and art of surgery."]

In speaking of the antiseptic treatment, I have already casually alluded to the advance made of late years in the surgery of the abdomen, and of the bones and joints. Two members in particular of this Branch occupy a very prominent position—and deservedly so—in respect to the extent and success of their practice in the treatment of intraperitoneal tumours, and of various diseased abdominal organs. It has been the wont of these gentlemen, annually to bring before this Branch, at one of its ordinary monthly meetings—and through it to the whole profession—a full detailed account of their work. Both those who have had the privilege of hearing these statements read, and those who have become acquainted with them through the medical journals, cannot fail to have been deeply impressed with the daring and skill of the operators, and with the astonishing success they have met with. To some people the accounts of these operations partake so of the marvellous, that they are to some extent unwilling, perhaps it would be more correct to say unable, to comprehend them, and consequently they may be thought to be somewhat incredulous. This may, in great part, be accounted for by the difficulty many of us experience in shaking ourselves free from the fetters with which we have been bound by our early training. The time is not very remote when it was universally taught that to open a joint, or even to wound the peritoneum, was, in either case, fraught with the greatest danger to life. And now, what do we either calmly and deliberately do, or else stand by and see done, not only with the joints and bones, and the extensive serous membrane just named, but also with many of the important organs which are covered and protected by this very membrane? We behold operations of the greatest magnitude performed with an amount of success which both gratifies and astonishes us. I freely confess that I was at one time to be ranked amongst the incredulous ones, but I have long since ceased to doubt what I have been privileged to see. I now welcome these modern achievements as brilliant examples of the advance of surgical skill; but at the same time I do entertain a very strong desire to know more of the after-history of such cases than we have as yet been furnished with; and I trust I shall not be misunderstood in giving expression to this desire. When I listened with pleasurable wonder to the reading by Mr. Lawson Tait of his last paper, which contained an account of 222 cases operated upon by him during the previous year, with only 16 deaths, and also the paper read by Dr. Savage containing a history of 85 cases operated upon by him the previous year, with only 4 deaths, the thought arose in my mind that the profession at large would be in a far better position to form an estimate of the value of these wonderful operations, and better able to recommend their patients whether to submit to operative treatment or not, if the history of such cases could be carried on for a year at least, or for a longer period if possible. I would venture therefore, on this occasion, and from this chair, to submit to the two gentlemen I have named, and to all others who may have specially taken up the subject of abdominal surgery, whether, in the interests of science, and with a view to a more general feeling of confidence in these novel operations, they could not follow up their cases, and, as year by year they enlighten and edify us with the graphic account of their new and latest work, post us up, so to speak, in the continued history of those cases that have gone before, and have been reported in previous years. This would afford us the truest and best means of gauging the utility of the different operations; and utility in these, as in other operations, should have something to do with our estimate of their intrinsic merit. To arrive at a true, definite, and well digested opinion, we want to have demonstrated the ultimate advantage. The labour required to carry this out would not be great, while the benefits accruing from it would be immense. Be this as it may, we cannot be insensible to the great gain that has been added to the beneficent work of surgery by the extraordinary achievements of Sir Spencer Wells, Keith, Tait, Savage, and many others; and the profession, and mankind at large, owe them a deep debt of gratitude.

[Passing on to the great and important subject of sanitation, the president said he had no need to demonstrate the bearing which this had on the preservation of health, for on that point there could be no difference of opinion. He would merely enunciate some of the leading

truths which constituted its foundation, and endeavour to bring home to the members in a practical manner the grave responsibility which devolved upon them as conservators of the public health, of doing the utmost they could in the various localities in which they were placed to claim for these truths a public recognition, and to see that they were put into practical operation. "Sanitation—to be worthy of the name—must not seek its sphere of action amongst the abnormities of life only, but must demand that human life itself should be lived, as far as possible, under such conditions as would give room for its development in a healthy and vigorous state"; and this led him to speak of the various points on which we should bring our sanitary principles to bear.

[After giving an extract from a speech made by the late Lord Beaconsfield, in 1877, in which that nobleman declared "that, in his opinion, the health of the people was the first duty of a statesman," he proceeded to speak of the "home" as the "sanitary unit." It stood, he said, on the very threshold of the subject of sanitation; cottage-property had its responsibilities as well as its privileges; to seek for a return of 20, 15, or even 10 per cent. on investments in cottage-property surely meant a bad unsanitary dwelling, and was an iniquity which ought to have been swept away long ago. He referred to the Royal Commission now taking evidence on this most important subject, and anticipated great and beneficial results from it; and remarked that we should not rest satisfied with anything short of a sanitary home, however humble it may be. Pending legislation, he maintained that the medical profession must not stand still and wait in expectancy; that the position they occupied in regard to all classes gave them a most commanding and exceptional influence, and the highest and noblest part of their mission was to point the way to "glorious life," and not merely to block the road to "dusty death." Under an efficient Parliamentary measure, local authorities should be held responsible for the sanitary condition of all dwellings; they should have power to pull down all old and irremediably bad houses, and, in the case of cottages, to build new ones, provided that the want of such was certified to exist; they should have definite powers to check overcrowding; medical officers of health should have larger areas allotted to them, and should be debarred from private practice; the inspectors of nuisances should be better qualified for their work, and medical men generally should work in harmony with the authorities.

[In speaking of the water-supply, he maintained that local authorities should be compelled to supply it, and the people should be required to use it. On the subject of food, he lamented that the supply of milk was deficient, both in quantity and quality; that, strange to say, in many villages it was next to impossible for the poor to obtain milk at any price; the pigs had the preference given them, and fattened on that which should, in fact, go to the sustenance of human life, especially that of the infant and child. He strongly advocated serious and practical attention being given to the subject of adulteration, and that the laws relating to it should be strictly and fearlessly enforced; for now, in too many places, they were by tacit consent allowed to be in complete abeyance. Similar laws should be extended to drugs, wines, and beers.

[In the matter of clothing, he condemned, as maiming inventions of fashion, high heeled and pointed toed boots, tightly laced corsets, and garters. To promote body-cleanliness, he advised the erection of public baths, especially in all centres of population; and the teaching of swimming to females as well as males. With reference to the working of the Education Acts, he condemned the absence of any provision for a classification of the children according to their physical and mental capacity, and the consequent undue brain-forcing. The subject was beset with many difficulties, and he had no clear idea of how these were to be met; but he suggested the appointment of medical inspectors of schools in towns of a certain size, and the compulsory teaching of gymnastics. He then proceeded as follows:]

I have endeavoured thus far to delineate some of the main features of general sanitation; but the subject, as I wish to present it to you, would be altogether incomplete if I did not proceed to apply it to the moral habits of the community as well as to what I may call the accidents of their earthly life. Brought face to face as we all are with the dire evils which arise out of vicious and immoral habits; called upon to spend many an anxious hour in a comparatively hopeless struggle with diseases, which are the direct outcome of intemperance or want of chastity; consulted, as we continually are, about ailments which form the bitter legacy of a perverted life, I have no need to do more than point out that, if we would all unite in an earnest effort to build up the public health, we must first of all strike at the root of those evil habits which are the prolific cause of so much sickness and disease, and do the utmost we can to inculcate and encourage a healthier moral

tone than that which now prevails in the community at large. And here I would not be misunderstood. I have no wish to invite my medical brethren to travel out of their legitimate provinces, and to usurp the duties of the parent, the teacher, or the minister of religion. What I mean is this, that we medical men occupy an altogether exceptional position in regard to this grave question of public morality, and that this very position gives us exceptional powers and opportunities of influencing the habits and lives of others; and that, consequently, if we resolve to unite in using these powers and opportunities rightly, and with a wise and thoughtful discretion, we cannot fail to raise the moral tone, and thus to improve the public health; and this ought to be our high aim, our lofty ideal, if we would regard ourselves as conservators of the health of the people, as well as practitioners in the art of healing. "Prevention is better than cure," and no sordid motives, no considerations of personal interest or worldly advantage, still less of callous indifference, should be allowed to restrain us from an united and determined effort to inculcate such principles, and to disseminate such useful physiological information, as will tend to aid our fellow-creatures (and especially the young) in their struggles with temptation, and to ensure for the rising generation as great an immunity from sickness and disease as we possibly can.

The two prominent vices of the present day, to which I now propose to make more direct allusion, are those of drunkenness and immorality, in regard to both of which our position is one of great responsibility. In these, as in all other matters affecting the public health, we should have clear convictions, grounded on undeniable principles of abstract truth; and, in order that we may at all times stand firm to our principles, and not pander to the follies of a luxurious and indulgent age, we should cultivate and encourage amongst ourselves not only purity of thought, word, and deed, but also that fearless moral courage which is required to enable us, when called upon, to speak the truth with no uncertain sound. "Magna est veritas, et praevalabit." It is possible that, in so doing, we may run the risk of giving offence to some whom we seek to benefit; but, if our utterances and our bearings are marked by that courtesy, and gentleness, and consideration for the feelings of others, which befit cultivated English gentlemen, we have, in the long run, little to fear, and, on the contrary, everything to gain. We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that drunkenness and impurity are sapping the very life of the nation, and that they go to swell the torrent of poverty, misery, and crime, in whose seething waters multitudes of our fellow-beings, through their instrumentality, are day by day being engulfed; and if we, as a profession, can do anything (as I believe and maintain we can) to stem this torrent, and so to save the national health from destruction, we shall earn the admiration as well as the gratitude of a temperate, sober, chaste, and enlightened people. Let us ask ourselves what our past conduct has been in regard to alcohol. How long is it since we were crazy on the treatment of acute diseases by the administration of doses which were positively poisonous? How long is it since so called fashionable doctors recommended their patients, female as well as male, to take light wines freely, even for breakfast; and encouraged, or at least permitted, the employment of "pick-me-ups," to enable fashionable people to keep up a system of late hours and worldly excitement, which was destructive alike to mind and to body? How often have careless and ignorant medical men ordered alcohol in the most reckless manner, omitting to prescribe the dose or the frequency of its repetition; thus, in many cases, leaving the nurse, or the friend, or the patient, to determine the times of taking and the amount taken? No wonder, under such circumstances, that the results have too often been injurious and even disastrous. Thank God, reason, common sense, and greater scientific knowledge are beginning to exert their true influence; and the courage which is begot of this triumvirate enables us to take our proper stand, and places us in a far better position than we formerly occupied to grapple with the diseases, weaknesses, and the morbid cravings of our patients; and to avoid, in the act of administering relief, the danger of either starting or encouraging habits which too often lead on to self-indulgence or excess, and end in moral and physical degradation. Now, with regard to alcohol, at the risk of being somewhat dogmatic, we must, I think, be positive and explicit.

First, I assume that we are all of one mind that alcohol, in itself, is a good thing, given to us by a beneficent Creator, for purposes of enjoyment and health; consequently, great and almost universal as its abuse has been, we can never give in our adhesion to the doctrine of certain sections of the temperance-party that it has not its proper and legitimate use, both in the treatment of disease and as a beverage. In regard to the latter, I make bold to say that the following principles should form the staple of our teaching.

The use of alcohol in a normal condition of health is a luxury,

cheering, indeed, to the heart of man, but not, in any way, essential to his well-being. This should be protected and guarded by the strictest habits of moderation, or true temperance, which is not total abstinence, but self-control (*ἐγκράτεια*), and which is thus defined by Aristotle, who, speaking of the temperate man, says the *ἐγκρατής*, "the man of self-control, is the same as the man who is apt to abide by his resolution." And, again, "the man of self-control, knowing his desires to be wrong, refuses to follow them." As a rule, children should be brought up without alcohol in any form. Adults, with good digestive powers, and average health, and whose daily waste is not in excess of the daily supply and repair, are just as well, and perhaps even better, without it; but, when taken, it should be with meals, and that in a dilute form, and not more than twice a day. It should never be taken between meals, except to serve some special and temporary purpose.

As regards the habitual drunkard, or one who stops somewhat short of this, but is more or less a persistent abuser of drink, with him we cannot be too positive or unrelenting. No half measures will meet his case; total abstinence is his only remedy, a remedy which must be continued, if not for the rest of his life, at least for such a period of time as is necessary for the complete restoration of his moral strength, and power of will.

For the so-called dipsomaniacs, I should wish to see legal powers given to relations and friends to confine such in licensed "retreats;" safe-guarding their liberties in every conceivable manner, so as to avoid wrong and abuse. This should constitute the principle of our teaching in regard to the temperance question; and the results of such teaching, honestly, fairly and judiciously enforced, will, I believe, be far greater and better, and more enduring, than those which so many good and excellent people are impetuously, if not petulantly and intemperately, trying to bring about by wholesale, but one-sided, repressive legislation.

The ultimate good of any remedial measures which are or may be employed for the cure of drunkenness, depends entirely upon the soundness of the principles upon which they are based; and if we be careful to grasp right principles before we proceed to lay down rules of conduct, we cannot fail to inculcate doctrines which will tend to the moral and physical well-being of the human race.

Leaving now the great foe to health with which we have to contend in drunkenness, I pass on to speak of immorality. And here I agree with a certain popular preacher, who said that to speak of drunkenness as the national vice was to display a lamentable ignorance of the extent to which immorality prevails; for it is immorality which is sapping the life of the nation in a way and to an extent which drunkenness, with all its horrors, is incapable of doing. Immorality is not only widely prevalent amongst all classes, but is rapidly spreading. Statistics show that the number of fallen women is on the increase, whilst the age at which girls enter on their career of prostitution is steadily falling, till it would seem to have reached the lowest possible limit; and well authenticated cases reach us of actual children being eligible for Magdalen Asylums.

Now, gentlemen, a very serious responsibility rests upon us in regard to this matter; and surely the interests of our common humanity—not to mention higher and more stringent obligations—appeal to us in tones of earnest entreaty to do what we can in our professional capacity, not only to prevent the physical deterioration of man, but also to save the blood of the nation from being impoverished and contaminated by indulgences which are fraught with such infinite peril both to the minds and bodies of those who are directly concerned as chief actors, and also to their children, and children's children, even to the third and fourth generations. And in asking you to realise this responsibility, and to discharge it with that nobility of spirit and willing self-sacrifice which is at all times wont to animate the members of our profession in everything that concerns the amelioration of human suffering, I feel that I am asking you to do what strictly belongs to our own province. For we medical men occupy a position which enables us to speak with a knowledge and authority which is not ordinarily shared by other men; nay, more, we can give practical counsel to others in their physical struggles and temptations, which will be of inestimable benefit and help to them in resisting baneful and pernicious habits, which are bound to impair, in a greater or less degree, the natural health of the body. And not only so, but the opportunities which are afforded us of speaking on these delicate questions are far more numerous than those which fall to the lot of most men, not excepting even ministers of religion; for, in what has been well termed the "confessional of the consulting-room," we are perpetually being brought face to face with the victims of this vice, in all its stages, who, in order to get our medical aid, are compelled to acknowledge their wrong doings; and I maintain that all such persons

ought to receive at our hands, in addition to ordinary medical treatment, some definite principles of morality and self-knowledge, which will, on the one hand, make it impossible for them ever again to be guilty of sins of ignorance, and, on the other hand, will serve as a strong inducement to avoid those of folly. But, gentlemen, if we would deal effectually with this great evil, it is of the utmost importance that we should be agreed amongst ourselves as to the principles of this portion of our sanitary code. And what these should be, I have no hesitation in summing up as follows.

1. We can give no countenance whatever to those who deliberately encourage the early indulgence of the passions, on the false, wicked, and untenable grounds that self-restraint is incompatible with health; and that sexual intercourse is a necessity which must be had recourse to, at all hazards, for the full development of the body.

2. We must strongly urge that, in order to secure vigour and healthy development in early youth, the reproductive organs must be kept in a state of absolute quiescence; and that, under no conceivable circumstances, can we regard illicit intercourse, at a later period of life, as anything less than an unmitigated evil.

3. And while, for the young and unmarried, we thus lay down the rule of continence—absolute and entire—we must go a step further, and endeavour to meet the ignorance which exists amongst married people by pointing out, as opportunity shall occur, that the married state does not absolve men from the rule of moderation, and that every infringement of this law is a danger to health, which they will do well to avoid.

Now, in our efforts to inculcate and establish these sanitary moral principles, the young demand our first consideration; for, not only are they very prone to fall into habits which weaken and undermine their constitution—habits from which they might be protected by wise guardianship and care; but the preservation in them of a pure mind and clear conscience will tend to create an instinctive horror of those vicious habits in after-life, which destroy the nobility of manhood, and contaminate the human race with a filthy and corrupting disease. And here, gentlemen, if you will bear with me, I would venture to say that I question whether we medical men are as alive to our responsibilities, and as eager to avail ourselves of our opportunities, as we ought to be. The young, for the most part, sin in ignorance; and, instead of this ignorance being enlightened, they are too often left to wallow, as it were, unaided, unchecked, in their ignorant fleshly doings, until consequences of so serious a kind have arisen, that the calling in of medical advice has become imperative. How much better would it be if we could step in at an earlier period, and save the unconscious victims from falling into the pit they had, for the most part, made for themselves. Now, to do this, we have need to cultivate in ourselves, and to encourage in parents and teachers, an enlarged sympathy and a spirit of active vigilance. The practised eye of the medical man can quickly detect in his young patient the first beginning of fleshly evil, and he can thus put the parent or teacher on his guard, and advise him how to act. More especially is this needed in our schools, and perhaps more so in the private than in the public schools; for it is thought that the evil runs riot to a far greater extent in the former than in the latter.

I would recommend the establishment of a mutual good understanding between the medical man and the parent or master, as the case may be; and when this has been done, and the two are acting in concert with one another, and, in addition to this, a kindly sympathetic attitude is observed (for, without this, little real advantage will be gained) there ought to be no difficulty in winning confidence, and gaining the first great step towards moral reformation, namely, an acknowledgment of the offence. An old Father has wisely said that "a temptation disclosed is half conquered," and this is more especially true of boys who have been brought up with decent moral training. And when this disclosure has taken place, and the boy's conscience has been quickened, the medical attendant will be able, by wise advice and judicious treatment, added to a little diligent care for a time, so to strengthen his patient's moral principles and build up the enfeebled nervous power, as to earn the lasting gratitude of the future strong and healthy man. Upon the inculcation of the principles I have already laid down—namely, those which engender early habits of continence—I should be disposed to rely to a very large extent, and, indeed, more so than to any other remedy for the preservation of the rising generation from those temptations which are sure to beset their ripper years, and which, unless resisted, will have a deteriorating effect on their moral and physical beings, and will expose them to the danger of inoculation with a disease which the resources of medical science may be able somewhat to mitigate, but never utterly to eradicate. The habit of continence, early established, will make the practice of it in after years a comparatively easy thing; whereas the early and

unrestrained indulgence of the passions will bring about such nervous irritation and constitutional unrest—not to mention great instability of purpose and diminished powers of self-control—as will lead the unhappy sufferer to seek relief in unlawful and perilous expedients, which will, like dram-drinking, not only feed the disease they were intended to remove, but also in themselves become the parent of other ills far more difficult to bear than the salutary rule of self-restraint.

Thus far, gentlemen, acting on the principle that "prevention is better than cure," I have dealt with the duty and importance of employing moral agents as a means of suppressing vice, and of protecting the health of the people from those evils which are the, more or less, direct outcome of bad habits. But inasmuch as these agents, however earnestly and zealously employed, are not sufficient in themselves to accomplish all that lies within our power, I must now proceed to speak, and that briefly, of those legislative measures which are more immediately required for the control of those with whom moral arguments carry little or no weight, and as a means of checking that dire disease, syphilis, which is, more than any other disease, undermining the human constitution in this and other countries.

The legislature has been moved, at different times and in various ways, to enact laws mainly for the repression of the two vices of which we have been speaking, and the results have not always realised the expectations of those through whose instrumentality they were procured. This is not to be wondered at. The Acts were but means to an end. They may have been imperfect in conception, or faulty in operation; or, again, they may have been wrongly carried out. Moreover, the saying is true that you cannot make men good, sober, honest, or virtuous by Act of Parliament; at the same time, the legislature is bound to do what it can with a view both to the suppression of vice and the encouragement of virtue; and Acts of Parliament, based on principles of truth and justice—even though they fail to accomplish all that we could wish or expect—will help, in a large degree, to bring about these much to be desired ends.

Of the measures which have been before Parliament—one of which indeed was, for a time, made law—I would allude to the Contagious Diseases Acts, and the Criminal Law Amendment Act. If, as is contended by many estimable persons, the Contagious Diseases Acts were not based on principles of morality, an opinion in which I have not been able to share, not a word can be said against their repeal. That they were capable of abuse, and of exposing virtuous women to the danger and shame of arrest, was enough to account for the strong feeling of antagonism which they awakened; but, notwithstanding this, I am of opinion that some such legislation is urgently needed, and I would express my earnest hope that the said Acts may be re-adopted ere long in an amended form, which will entirely obviate the moral difficulty to which I have alluded, and at the same time not impair their efficiency in diminishing the evils against which they were directed. These Acts were undoubtedly reformatory, and worked favourably alike in the interests of health and morality; and those who go at all fully into the matter, and approach its consideration without prejudice, can prove that both these excellent results were obtained. In proof of this we have the statement—hitherto, I believe, uncontradicted—that of the patients received into the Royal Albert Hospital at Devonport, forty-five per cent. were induced to refrain from returning to a vicious life.

"In those towns where the Acts were in force, the reports of the clergy, sisters of mercy, medical men, magistrates, naval and military officers, were in favour of the benefits conferred by them; and the following table, taken from the report of Convocation on the subject, although it does not give the percentage of women reclaimed, serves to show otherwise the working of these Acts in Portsmouth.

	1866.	1876.
1. Prostitutes	789	497
2. Per cent. diseased	70	4.84
3. Brothels	253	133
4. Private houses	150	115

"The reformatory side of the question has not been fully and fairly recognised by those even who have pleaded the sanitary side. Without compulsion in some form or other, there can be no repression of this disease, and, without moral reforms, compulsion would not be tolerated."

It is unquestionably the duty of the State to take action against any disease which ravages the community, let it proceed from what cause it may; and, so long as its legislation is based on principles which are in harmony with those of true civil freedom and the highest morality, it cannot fail, in the long run, to win the consent of public opinion, let the popular outcry at the time be what it may.

The Criminal Law Amendment Bill, which passed through the

House of Lords, but failed, through want of time, to get through the Commons last year, is a very hopeful measure; and its passage into law is devoutly to be wished. By inflicting penalties on those who procure, or endeavour to procure, women for an immoral life, or who by false pretences, representations, or other fraudulent means, are the cause of corrupting women under twenty years of age, it provides a remedy for one great crying evil, which, if rigidly applied, cannot fail to serve as a deterrent to those who take part in this iniquitous trade. By repealing the present law, which requires that the person or persons solicited in the streets shall themselves prefer the charge, and transferring this responsibility into the hands of the police, it will do much to clear our streets in the metropolitan district of this intolerable nuisance and abominable temptation, which is the cause of the ruin of many who would otherwise have been kept in the paths of virtue. By making brothel-keeping much more difficult than it now is, and by providing punishment for those who defile young girls between the ages of 12 and 16 (I would it were extended to 17), even with their consent; and also by providing certified homes for girls under 16 years of age who have been convicted of this offence, and who have no proper guardianship; it will have a salutary effect in discouraging vice and diminishing the spread of disease.

I cannot enter more fully now into the particulars of this Bill, but I look forward to its becoming law with much satisfaction, not merely because of the good it is likely to do, but as a hopeful sign that public opinion is resolved to make prostitution less aggressive than it now is. I cannot dismiss the subject of legislative interference for the twofold purpose of suppressing vice and eradicating disease, without throwing out the suggestion that it might be well for our Parliamentary Bills Committee to take this matter in hand, and to consider it part of their duty to advocate and press forward any well devised measures which may be set on foot with this object in view.

Gentlemen, I must now proceed to bring these already too long remarks to a close. My aim has been to set before you some part of the great subject of sanitation, both in its general and in its moral application; and, in so doing, I have sought to elucidate the duties and responsibilities, in respect to the subject, which belong to us in our professional capacity. Our physical and moral natures are so interwoven, and so dependent on each other for that healthy tone and vigour, without which the complex machinery of our being cannot preserve its just balance and equilibrium, that no wise or thoughtful physician or surgeon who regards the individual man as something more than an animal, or who considers the relation in which he necessarily stands to the community at large, and the effect which his condition of health or disease must, of necessity, have upon the body corporate, can do right in systematically ignoring or neglecting the moral faculties in his efforts to promote the physical well-being of his patients. The words of Macbeth: "Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?" are a reproach which we can never allow to be hurled at us; for, considering how mind and matter act and react on one another, we are bound, in the treatment of disease, to regard man's nature as a whole; and, in endeavouring to build up and, as it were, readjust his impaired and shattered forces, whether moral or physical, or both, to do so in such a manner as will enable him, so far as lies in our power, to fulfil the purpose of his creation, and to be a blessing to society at large.

Gentlemen, my distinguished predecessor, in his able address last year, deplored our want of political power, and I fully share his feeling of regret that our voice is not more heard, and our influence felt in the great councils of the nation.

But I have endeavoured to show you that we are in possession of a more important power than this; and that, if we resolve to put forth our moral strength, and to use it rightly, we can exercise an influence for good upon public opinion, and upon society generally—an influence which no political disability can ever diminish.

Let us be true, gentlemen, to the best instincts of our nature, and loyal to all that can add lustre to the dignity and fame of our noble profession.

Let us be diligent workers at the "healing art," loving it, and devoting ourselves to it—not merely for our own personal benefit, or for the good it confers on others, but also for its own sake as a branch of science.

Let us be willing and anxious to cast on one side the errors of the past, as the advancing light of physiology, pathology, and therapeutics makes known to us the more perfect ways of health.

And, above all, let us in our own personal characters be men of the strictest integrity, in whom the confidence of the public can never be misplaced; men to whom power may be safely entrusted, because power is, to them, a sacred trust; and then I venture to predict that

our profession will not only continue to hold its own in society, but will steadily and surely rise in public estimation, until the anomalies which too much characterise the present time are removed, and all that we can justly claim, in the way of privilege or position, has been willingly accorded to us by a grateful and enlightened people.

AN ADDRESS

ON

THE SCIENCE OF MEDICINE;

A STUDY OF THE HIPPOCRATIC AND PRESENT EPOCHS.

Delivered at the Annual Meeting of the South-Western Branch.

By LEWIS SHAPTER, M.D. CANTAB., B.A.,

President of the Branch, Physician to the Devon and Exeter Hospital and West of England Institution for the Deaf and Dumb.

IN accepting office as your president, my first duty is to thank you for the honour you have done me in calling upon me to preside over a Branch of an Association which has been instituted for such high objects as the development of medical science, the advancement of medical education, and the promotion of medical thought and relationship. Irrespectively of our dependence on, and promotion of, the interests of the parent body, our annual Branch meetings are to be regarded, in a great measure, as social gatherings; and as such they appear to me to hold a very high position, and a very dignified position, in the maintenance of the medical profession as a corporate body existing for the general and public good. It is not often that medical men, as a body, have the opportunity of meeting together freed from the overwhelming bias of professional life, and only bound together by the one common feeling of being arduous workers together in the same field of labour; and perhaps by the thought beyond the professional life, that all are linked together by the bond of education and culture, without which difference of opinion is often misunderstood as personal, and the tone of professional feeling is sacrificed to personal interests.

The object then of an address, such as I am called upon to deliver to you to-day, is to direct social thought, and to open up the material question, whether we as individuals, or minute portions of a compound whole (the vast medical profession), are in the real and true way of progress which shall make works live after us rather than words.

When we regard medical work as involved in a true science, we must look to ourselves as units amidst a great company of actors, taking our place amidst a vast concourse, whose object is to strive to advance a general art—the prevention, alleviation, and cure of disease; and the branches of practice into which the art may be disseminated, must only be regarded as means to produce this general end. This is the true and full meaning of the “practice of medicine” as a “science;” but, in glancing at such a picture, it appears to me that the only way of elucidating its full character is to have some ideal before us, some typical mind whose enunciated precepts will show, in so many words, that we are dealing with possibilities, because, in centuries ago, the universality of medical practice was united in one man, unfettered by divisions, as beyond the scope of his mind, and pointing to unity of object for the general rather than the special good, as the true path of progress.

It is to the mind then of Hippocrates, the father of medicine, who lived and flourished 460 years before Christ, that I wish to direct your attention; because for centuries after his life, and even up to the present day, his words and works, which have been described by Dr. Black as “adorned with great majesty,” have gone unheeded, however much they have been venerated; and because I believe that now there is need of the revival of much that he taught, both in the education of the young and the matured practice of the old.

It was probably in one of the most memorable epochs of the intellectual development of the human race that Hippocrates, with his own remarkable powers of intellect, formed his practical system of medicine, which could only have resulted from a cultivated and far seeing genius. The foundation of his system was laid by Æsculapius, who converted the art of physic from a rude and “indigestible” mass into an inductive method of reasoning from observation. The general prognosis of disease and treatment appear to have been the main objects kept in view, and so much importance was attached to a comparison

of disease with health, that he first delivers “physiological” and then adds “pathological” semeiotics. Of the fallaciousness and emptiness of experience by itself, however, he was well aware, and has embodied this great truth in a memorable aphorism, “Experience is fallacious and judgment difficult.”

The results of experience were, in fact, tested by the strict scrutiny of reason, and his system may briefly be said to be one of rational experience, as far removed from the blind empiricism of after ages, as it was removed from the blind superstition of former ages.

His theory of medicine was based on the doctrines then held as to the elements of things; and the belief in a spiritual essence diffused through the whole works of creation, as the agent that presided over the acts of generation, and strove to preserve all things in their natural state, and to restore them when preternaturally deranged. This is the principle which he called “Nature,” and which is held to be a *vis medicatrix*. “Nature,” says he, “is the physician of diseases.”

Another characteristic of the Hippocratic teaching, is the dependency of the whole system upon disease manifested in a single part. The whole body is one, is his teaching, and every part of it conspires and sympathises with all the other parts. The effects of disease, likewise, and their treatment, must not be estimated by a visible location of a disorder in one special part; “for,” says he, “it appears to me that in the body there is no beginning, but that all parts are alike beginning and end; for in a described circle no beginning is to be found—in consequence of this, diseases affect the whole body; one part of the body imparts disease to the other parts; viz., the stomach to the head, and the head to the stomach; and if the very smallest part of the body suffer, it will impart its suffering to the whole frame.”

To study then the practice of Hippocrates, we must be physicians of the whole body and not of a part; and we must pay attention to the effect of a local cause upon the general frame, and not take too desponding a view from the local pathological lesion itself. Do not, however, let us remain at the outset under any false or laudatory notion that we in the present day are living in an age of some extraordinary degree of enlightenment in the groundwork or elements of medicine, which in the Hippocratic times was, in comparison, a sea of darkness. Hippocrates was a physiologist, an anatomist, a practical surgeon, as well as a physician. His description of the heart was that of a strong muscle, covered by a smooth tunic containing a little fluid, and consisting of auricles and ventricles guarded by valves, and with veins arising from it, forming the fountain-head from which all parts of the body are irrigated.

His works on surgery are based upon an extensive practice and familiarity with accidents, probably occurring at the public athletic games of his country, and are characterised by clear logical reasoning for what is given as proper treatment. And as to what are termed “specialisms” of the present day, if there were only occasional reference made to the works of Hippocrates, much that is regarded as novel would be found foreshadowed, if not described.¹

We turn first, however, to his position as a sanitary physician, and it is, perhaps, in this character that the man appears to speak more prophetically to modern practice than in any other. From the work on *Air, Waters, and Places*, we may gather the first considerations that weighed with Hippocrates in his general view of disease, and probably very few sanitarians could sum up their duties towards the determination of the clinical aspects of disease, in more concise and instructive language than that given by Hippocrates.

1. Determine the influence which the situation of towns has upon the maintenance of health and the production of disease.
2. Examine the properties and quality of the water, whether it is good or bad.
3. Record the diseases which prevail according to the seasons, and according to their succession.
4. Contrast climates, and distinguish the physical and moral characters of the inhabitants according to the differences of country, occupation, and climate.

Gentlemen, the economical tendencies of sanitary science are now but slowly taking root. In the city in which we now are, it is open to doubt whether they have taken root, for the drainage and water-supply of the city remain to be patched, and perhaps upheld by words, but not remedied. Surely, then, it is a thought stirring to us, if it be not unworthy of the age in which we live, with our boasted advancement, that we are only now beginning to re-echo and realise the extent of the knowledge of him who lived 400 years before the Christian era. It is even questionable whether medical men have

¹ For the cure of sterility, e.g., fumigation of the uterus (a practice resorted to at Continental spas) is recommended; and the method of performing it, by means of a tube introduced into the os uteri, and connected with a vessel which emits aromatic fumes, is described. When sterility is connected with the shutting up of the os uteri, directions are given for expanding it by means of pipes; and in uterine hæmorrhage, astringent pessaries were used.