

holding that such provision is altogether unnecessary, and another contending that, if necessary, it has been, in this case, extravagantly carried out. Both classes exhibit a considerable lack of accurate knowledge upon the subject. The former have, apparently, not yet realised that modern science believes in the prevention of disease being more suitable than cure; and that it is almost as much for preventive purposes as for curative that Fever Hospitals are erected. The latter class assert that even if the argument of the medical profession be accepted, and Fever Hospitals be built, they should at any rate cost the public as small a sum as possible. And both classes unite in their failure to understand that illness means not only a loss of productive power to the individual and his family, but indirectly to the whole community of which he is a member; thus implying a waste of national wealth. It is, then, upon the ground not only of sanitary science, but even of political economy, that we would traverse the arguments that have been brought forward in this matter.

In consequence of the greater knowledge which is now possessed concerning the diffusion of epidemics, all medical men are agreed that, if an outbreak of fever is to be efficiently treated, it is necessary not only to cure those who are attacked, but to prevent the spread of the disease to the healthy. This can only be done by immediate and effective isolation of those who are suffering from the infection, so as to enable the epidemic to be localised and stamped out. And it is this reason, therefore, which led to the institution of Fever Hospitals, because by the erection of such buildings it was alone possible to admit large numbers of such cases, and so remove them from their own dwellings. It requires no argument to prove that, in the homes of the poor, isolation is an absolute impossibility, and that when infectious disease attacks one member of a family, consisting, perhaps, of five or six or more individuals all living together in one, or, perhaps at most, in two rooms, it is hopeless to expect that the infection will not spread from the sick to the healthy. For that reason, in former days, fever epidemics devastated whole neighbourhoods. At the present time—thanks in no small measure to the more efficient system of Notification of these complaints, and to the provision by many parishes of a Fever Hospital for their inhabitants—it is possible at once to remove from their own

homes many who are thus a source of danger to their neighbours. It is therefore an incontestable truth that, in those localities in which Notification and immediate isolation are most efficiently carried out, the spread of infectious diseases is most rapidly controlled.

With regard to the second point, it is a clear economy to erect a large Hospital for the admission of such cases, rather than a smaller one which may, in time of unusual epidemics, prove to be too limited in its accommodation; and so far as the treatment of the sick themselves is concerned, it is beyond all argument that greater efficiency as well as economy is secured when a large number of patients are nursed and fed and cared for in one great Hospital, than when the same number, perhaps, are divided amongst a number of smaller Institutions, each with its own particular medical, nursing, and lay, staff; each with its own commissariat and domestic departments.

Economy as well as efficiency requires that the Fever Hospitals, provided for the admission of the middle and lower classes of the community suffering from infectious diseases, shall be properly equipped for their work, so that their inmates may be as speedily as possible restored to health. So far as the expenditure upon the Brook Fever Hospital is concerned, it affords us much pleasure, from personal inspection of the new buildings, and from considerable knowledge of the working of the Metropolitan Asylums Board, to be able to testify to the admirable manner in which the national work of the Board is carried out, and to the remarkable completeness and general excellence with which the new Hospital has been planned and built. In our judgment the best is almost invariably the cheapest in Hospital matters, and we have good reason to believe that it will prove to be by far the most economical proceeding in the end that the Brook Fever Hospital has been so well designed and fitted for the work which it has to do. We believe that the Guardians of the Poor, who now complain, will in due time discover that the expenditure upon the Brook Fever Hospital, large as it may seem to them to be, represents not the extravagance many of them now seem to consider it, but really a most admirable and remunerative form of insurance against the spread of disease in the community, and therefore an outlay of the highest value to every section of the population.

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