

Hygiene and Morality.

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THE PREVENTION OF VENEREAL DISEASE.

In previous issues we have dealt with the two first Sections of Miss L. L. Dock's book, "Hygiene and Morality." This week we propose to deal with the third, "The Prevention of Venereal Disease."

Dealing with the Underlying Principles of Prevention, Miss Dock says that "The genuine prevention of venereal disease is only made possible by the prevention of prostitution. Prostitution cannot be retained, and the diseases fostered in it be eliminated. Prostitution must be rooted out unless modern civilised states are content to look forward to the same fate which befel ancient Rome. . . .

"Even if the immoral projects of some writers could be realised in the use of immunising vaccines or serums to enable men to continue indulgence with greater security, venereal diseases would continue to exist while prostitution exists, and unless every man and woman in the world could be so vaccinated there would be no security that the reckless, the unthinking, and the unsuspecting innocent would not continue to fall victims to, and to become carriers of, these deadly scourges. Nor is it credible that the aroused moral sense of humanity would consent to the general compulsory vaccination of syphilis and gonorrhœa as it does to that of smallpox, because moral sense, or even every day common sense, will distinguish between diseases which cannot be extirpated by moral living, and the exertion of self-control through the power of the intelligent will, and diseases which can be so extirpated. The deliberate use of immunising substances with the intention of making it hygienically safe for men to continue a brutal misuse of women such as falls far below the practices of animals in vileness, could only be tolerated in a society that was ready for its own ruin. . . . Dr. Prince A. Morrow, President of the American Society of Sanitary and Moral Prophylaxis, says:—'It is not a question of making prostitution safe, but of preventing the making of prostitutes.' This lofty teaching is now being reiterated by ever larger numbers of the foremost leaders of medical science. There are in truth no other diseases whose absolute prevention lies so wholly in human power as these."

The writer then points out that "the first essential in a campaign of prevention is full, open, and serious instruction for all classes of society, upon the situation as it exists to-day; instruction without exaggeration, but also without concealment, of the present extent of disease

of venereal origin, and with the most emphatic and positive information upon the real source of danger in prostitution. . . . As in combating typhoid fever and the plague the first thing needful is that all shall know that there are such diseases, whence their origin, and how they may be cut off at their source, so it is essential that every citizen shall know that there are venereal diseases, where they arise, and how they may be exterminated. . . . Extreme difficulties meet this movement at the outset, arising from the peculiarly personal origin of these diseases, the prevailing false modesty as to the reproductive functions, and the generally dense ignorance of the physiology and hygiene of the generative organs. The vulgar prudery and hypocrisy of a past age compelled all such subjects to be tabooed, as being indelicate and improper. Perhaps this point of view has been encouraged by those whose interests were selfish or evil; certainly nothing could better serve such interests than the veil of silence and the cloak of embarrassment drawn over subjects so vital, pertaining to functions by nature so sacred, but by man so horribly debased. The function of reproduction, for which the organs of generation have been evolved, though it has been dragged through the mire of vulgar thoughts and cruel abuse, is yet the noblest, as it should be the most held in reverence, of all human powers. Reproduction is natural, and should no more be regarded vulgarly than are the changes of the seasons. It is a type and symbol of immortality. It is indeed a present and visible immortality, and its humble physical phenomena should never obscure its exalted significance. The generative act should only be performed in the sincerity of aspiration to bring a new being into the world. Such being the truth, the depravity of exercising so miraculous a power for the sole desire of a passing pleasure of sensation, often combining with it drunkenness and orgies in which all human dignity and decency are cast away, is so complete that the decay and fall of nations would seem to need no further explanation. . . .

"The education of fathers and mothers must, in the future, include the principles of heredity, the toxic effect of unholy passions upon temperament and character, and the study of eugenics, the new science for the improvement of the race of man.

"First and last, women need to be encouraged to revolt against a status of political and legal inferiority, which is the direct cause of their economic and social degradation."

Concerning the Practical Means of Prevention, Miss Dock writes:—"These may be divided into two classes: One, the means of in-

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