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EDITORIAL.

THE DOOR OF OPPORTUNITY.

"The first duty of medicine is not to cure disease, but to prevent it." With these words Sir George Newman, Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Health, begins a memorandum addressed to the Minister of Health,* in accordance with his instructions, on "some of the principal medical matters having relation to the practice of Preventive Medicine." He defines the objects of Preventive Medicine as follows:—

(i) To develop and fortify the physique of the individual, and thus to increase the capacity and powers of resistance of the individual and the community:

(ii) To prevent or remove the causes and conditions of disease, or of its propagation.

(iii) To postpone the event of death, and thus prolong the span of man's life.

Much, says Sir George Newman, has already been achieved in these three directions, and to-day human life is potentially a better thing than in the past: Leprosy, sweating sickness, and the plague have disappeared in England; cholera has not been epidemic since 1866; the small-pox; though liable to outbreak, appears to be vanishing under our eyes, and compared with only a century ago is relatively a rare and mild disease; typhus, or gaol fever, is rarer still; typhoid and diphtheria are yielding to improved sanitation and isolation, and the use of antitoxin; hospital gangrene and sepsis in their gross forms have largely disappeared in response to the application of antiseptic treatment; and some of the greatest scourges of the world, such as malaria and yellow fever, are coming steadily under control. The advance in the public health has been remarkable in degree, wide in scope, and steady in occurrence. We have, therefore, substantial grounds of hope in the future. Yet this must not blind our eyes to the issues remaining.

* "An Outline of the Practice of Preventive Medicine." H.M. Stationery Office, Imperial House, Kingsway, W.C. 2. Price 6d. net.

THE SCIENCE AND ART OF HEALTH.

The science and art of medicine, we are told, is not restricted to the diagnosis and cure of disease in its gross forms; it includes also a knowledge of how disease comes to be, of its earliest beginnings, and of its prevention. It is, in fact, the science and art of Health, of how a man may learn to live a healthy life at the top of his capacity of body and mind, avoiding or removing external or internal conditions unfavourable to such a standard, able to work to the highest power, able to resist to the fullest, growing in strength and efficiency.

The first line of defence is a *healthy, well-nourished, and resistant human body*. And to this end, says Sir George Newman, the whole man must be dealt with, for he is something more than animal. His body is, in greater or less degree, the instrument and expression of emotion, intellect and will. There is thus a psychological aspect of clinical and preventive medicine hitherto greatly neglected.

Preventive medicine must define and secure the maximum of those conditions of life for the individual and the community which are the frontier defence against disease, and establish the foundations of sound living. For the health and physique of the people is the principal asset of a nation.

THE CARE OF MATERNITY.

Concerning the care of maternity, Sir George Newman considers a complete maternity scheme includes (a) an adequate medical, midwifery, and nursing service; (b) the satisfactory and sufficient nutrition of the mother; (c) maternity centres and ante-natal supervision; (d) maternity home and hospital accommodation; (e) domestic aid before, at the time of, and after child-birth; (f) maternity benefit and other financial aid in certain cases; and (g) notification of births and still-births.

The author also insists, in regard to mental disease, on the practicability of establishing suitable psychiatric clinics for dealing with early cases of mental and nervous disorder, with a special medical and nursing staff, and free from powers of detention or the control of the Poor Law.

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