VERMONT STATE BOARD OF HEALTH.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY, BRATTLEBORO.

Dear Doctor:—The enclosed leaflet is issued in the interest of prevention of venereal diseases. It is for you to give each patient who consults you suffering from either gonorrhea or syphilis. It has been prepared so as to be concise and in language to be understood by everyone. This, we hope, will cause it to be read by those to whom it is handed. It will introduce the subject of prevention, thus enabling you to give your patient further information of the extent of this scourge. Additional copies of this leaflet can be had on request.

It is estimated that 80 per cent. of all deaths from pelvic diseases in women are due to gonorrhea. Twenty per cent. of all blindness is due to gonorrheal infection of the newborn. Fifty per cent. of all involuntary childless marriages are caused by gonorrhea of the female organs of generation, of which 45 per cent. are due to marital infection by men. In this country it is impossible to quote statistics, as they never have been gathered. The committee of fifteen estimated that there were annually 200,000 cases in New York City alone. In Prussia, where they have more reliable data, it has been stated that typhoid fever represents a yearly loss of 8,000,000 marks, while the increased expenses and decreased income caused by venereal diseases amount to 90,000,000 marks annually, an amount which exceeds that caused by tuberculosis. But the financial loss is of minor importance compared with the enormous social changes and consequent social misery.

In view of these startling facts, which indicate the increasing danger to our people, will you not, my dear doctor, aid your state board of health in gaining reliable statistics relative to these diseases, by returning to the secretary each year the following blank with every question answered?

Cases of gonorrhea observed during the year 190.. Male....
Female.... Married.... Single.... Number having children....
Number without children....

Cases of syphilis.... Male.... Female.... Married.... Single
.... Number having children.... Number without children....

CIRCULAR OF INFORMATION ADOPTED BY THE CONFERENCE OF STATE AND PROVINCIAL BOARDS OF HEALTH OF NORTH AMERICA.

Issued by the State Board of Health of Vermont.

We hand you this leaflet believing that you would not willingly communicate your disease to some innocent person.

Many fail to comprehend the exceedingly disastrous results that often follow these diseases. Many cases of blindness, complete disability, and not infrequently death results from them. Gonorrhea is one of the most frequent causes of diseases peculiar to women. So serious a menace have these diseases become to the public health that the medical profession and sanitarians in all countries have become alarmed; and are advocating measures for their prevention.

Syphilis (or pox) is especially a disease from which innocent persons may suffer, as it usually produces sores in the mouth or on the lips, hence may be conveyed by kissing, drinking from the same cup, or using anything which has been put to the lips or into the mouth of one affected by the disease.

These diseases are often communicated when the patient thinks he has recovered. Hence marriages contracted at this time of the disease result in much unhappiness, and often in the death of the wife. To protect yourself and others, we earnestly advise the following.

IN THE INTEREST OF PREVENTION OF YOUR DISEASE.

What to do and what not to do, to get well and to prevent giving your disease to any other person.

Follow strictly the advice of your doctor, use no other treatment. Remember that it takes a long time to entirely recover.

Carefully wash your hands with soap and hot water whenever you handle the private parts.

Do not have intercourse and avoid all sexual excitement until your physician says you are completely cured. Be especially careful not to rub your eyes with your fingers.

Do not allow any person to use any cup, glass, spoon, fork or anything that you have put in your mouth.

Do not kiss anyone or wipe the face of a child with a handkerchief you have used. Always use a separate towel. Burn all cloths or cotton soiled by discharges.

It was then considered desirable to send the circular of information to the principals of preparatory schools and to the presidents of all colleges, with a request that they call the attention of their medical officer to the subject, to the end that it should be presented to the students in their respective institutions. The committee not having funds to defray the expenses of printing and postage, applied to the trustees of this Association, asking that the printing office of the Association aid them, but were refused this assistance. So far as we are informed, these circulars have only been sent out in Ohio, Florida, Minnesota and Vermont.

If all cases were reported to boards of health as other communicable diseases are (without names), so that we could arrive at a fairly accurate estimate of the whole number of cases occurring, the number of each, the manner acquired—whether innocently or otherwise—and the effects on procreation, we should have a foundation on which to base recommendations for prevention. A

more accurate recognition and division of the manner of communication, whether from the ordinary courtesan, clandestine embrace, or from entirely innocent sources, is also of importance.

THE WAR AGAINST THE VENEREAL DISEASES IN FRANCE.*

THEODORE TUFFIER, M.D.

Professor Agrégé of the Faculty of Medicine of Paris; Surgeon to the Hospital Beaujon,
PARIS, FRANCE.

The question of venereal prophylaxis is the order of the day in our country; from all sides medical men, statesmen and even literary men are combining their efforts to contend against this scourge. New measures are being studied and our *Société de Prophylaxie*, composed of internalists, surgeons, obstetricians, the most eminent members of the school of law and the principal police officials, meets once a month to consider important matters relative to the subject. This society has been productive of definite results.

The system in use in France is composed of two separate branches—absolutely different—that is, the police and the medical service. Government surveillance is exercised in reference to houses of prostitution as well as to the so-called free prostitutes who are registered at police headquarters. The inmates of all houses are examined once a week, the others are obliged to report to the examiner once in two weeks. A card is given them which shows the absence of every venereal symptom at this visit, and is in effect an authorization to continue their calling. There is also clandestine prostitution, the object of special consideration by the police, which constitutes, strange to say, a third of all diseased women. When arrested, these women are kept in a special hospital—Saint Lazar—until cured.

This system which has been in existence for numerous years is now violently attacked. It is said that an examination made so infrequently is necessarily illusory as regards any benefit. It is claimed that prostitution should be free. The dictum has gone forth: "A free woman on a free sidewalk." The abolitionists in France are represented chiefly by an extraparlimentary constituency. Everybody believes that the system should be modified, and various modifications are being studied.

ACTIVE FORCES IN THIS WORK.

Among the most active forces in the study of this prophylaxis and the practical methods best adapted for its realization must be mentioned the collaboration of Professor Fournier, the world-renowned syphilographer, and Mr. Brioux, a dramatic writer of great talent. They have already done much for the cause, one by his authoritative writings and the other by his theatrical representations, of which "Les Avariés" has achieved a universal recognition. Their program is this: To tell everybody regarding the existence and the danger of syphilis and to increase the facilities for treatment. The education of the people regarding venereal matters is effected by an active propaganda. A series of conferences is established wherever men are grouped together. In the army and navy this is done officially by the medical officers. In great industrial centers, which are the hot-beds of syphilitic propagation, instruction is given

* Translated by Denslow Lewis, M.D., Chicago.

* Read in the Section on Hygiene and Sanitary Science of the American Medical Association, at the Fifty-seventh Annual Session, June, 1906.

and thousands of pamphlets are distributed. For example, "The League Against Syphilis," "The Social Danger of Syphilis," "For Our Sons When Eighteen Years Old," etc., are short articles of some thirty pages, capable of being read and understood by all who are ignorant of medical terms. More than 20,000 copies of these pamphlets have been distributed.

A propaganda of this kind is the only means of reaching the man in France, because here no ordinance, no law can affect one who is tainted (*avarié*). The soldiers and sailors alone are subject to military regulations and can be placed in a position where they can do no harm until they are free from disease. Unfortunately, the fear of this enforced sequestration causes much dissimulation by all kinds of methods and favors a continuance of infection for a protracted period before the men are finally interned.

It is the woman alone and chiefly that reglementation can affect, but reglementation in her case must, above all things, be humane and legal. If it is impossible to arrest a woman known to be syphilitic, unless she solicits, it is in our power to limit the deplorable effects of her calling by decreeing that no woman shall publicly solicit patronage unless she can show a certificate of health signed by some physician. Unquestionably there is wide latitude in this statement, "some physician," but the responsibility attested by a signature under these conditions is such that we do not believe it is ever given without a full knowledge of the facts.

The propaganda against syphilis, the partial reglementation, these are the first two elements of the new program. The third consists in the increased facilities for treatment, and in this connection there has been considerable discussion as to the advisability of increased venereal therapeutics in special hospitals or in a special service in all general hospitals. The first fact of importance, on which all are agreed, is the recognition of the necessity of more frequent examinations. Fournier and Brioux have insisted on an examination night and morning every day, including holidays. Practical experiments at Saint Lazar and the *Hopital du Midi* have shown good results. The evening examination, which is for the benefit of those employed during the day, that is, the great majority, results often in the discovery of an increased number of diseased women who are at once removed from the possibility of pursuing their calling, and thus diminish the chance of contamination. A second fact, very generally acknowledged, is that all physicians who make these examinations must be venereal specialists. Such practitioners alone bring to each examination a personal interest which ensures an adequate, competent and necessary understanding of each individual case.

EXAMINING STATIONS.

As regards the location of examining stations, most medical men believe that in connection with all special and general hospitals there should be a dispensary—a special service—devoted exclusively to the venereal diseases.

Such is the new plan, proposed, discussed, elaborated and still the subject of study, which represents in France the result of our efforts against venereal infection. It is only a project, but by its simplicity and its logic it seems destined to rally to its support all of our voters and to secure the approbation of our government. "The right of the question is one of social protection and interest."

WHAT SHALL WE TEACH THE PUBLIC REGARDING VENEREAL DISEASES?*

ALBERT E. CARRIER, M.D.
DETROIT.

It seems to me that the answer to this question should be that required of a witness in a court of law, viz., to tell the truth, to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

It has been our custom in the past to tell a part of the truth only in regard to venereal infections, to apologize for not telling the whole truth, and to cover what we did tell with a coloring that has robbed these affections of their appalling nature. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and our profession is evidencing this in its efforts for better sanitary methods, better hygiene, the isolation of contagious diseases, and in educating the masses how to avoid contraction of these affections.

The object sought by these efforts is the reduction of the death rate. The enormous sums of money spent to reduce the death rate, one in a million, is considered well expended, while the labor involved and the sacrifice of health and even life are regarded as necessities. Were sanitary and hygienic methods directed solely to the prevention of morbidity, venereal disease would stand first in demanding attention, but to-day there are thousands of centers of infection against which the public has no protection; no measures have been instituted whereby the masses might be instructed in ways to avoid the contagion of venereal diseases, nor that these affections may be contracted innocently; more than this, these centers are ambulatory, traveling from place to place. In outlining any plan of instruction, conditions must be appreciated in order that our efforts may be along lines of least resistance.

The public is made up of individuals of both sexes, of all ages, of all nationalities, of all religions or none, of the educated and the ignorant, of the affluent and the poverty stricken, of the virtuous and the vicious. Different peoples have different viewpoints of chastity, of purity and morals in general, and our methods of teaching the truth will require modifications to meet these different conditions. Illicit intercourse is wrong; probably 999 in 1,000 know that.

While the province of the physician lies in the prevention and cure of disease, there are times when he must enter the domain of morals also, and nowhere will he find better opportunity for teaching morality than in giving advice regarding the sexual apparatus, for here he can teach purity from the standpoint of health, while the spiritual adviser has less influence, because he teaches that the infringements of virtue are punished in a hereafter, an indefinite time and in an existence that is partly speculative.

There is a woful ignorance among the laity regarding the purposes of the sexual apparatus which needs dispelling. We must teach that these organs are not simply for the elimination of waste products, nor for the simple gratification of an animal passion.

We will need spend little time in attempts to prove illicit intercourse wrong, for that is pretty generally accepted, and there are other fields for us to cultivate that are more promising of results.

The hygiene of the generative organs has had little attention until about the age of puberty; up to this period it has been considered a shameful act to call at-

* Read in the Section on Hygiene and Sanitary Science of the American Medical Association, at the Fifty-seventh Annual Session, June, 1906.