SECTION I.
SANITARY SCIENCE & PREVENTIVE MEDICINE.
INTRODUCTION

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IN opening this Section without any elaborate or formal address I may be departing from custom, and even from what is expected of its President.

The fact, however, is that what I might have to say on the subject of Sanitary Science, has either been said by myself already on public occasions, or has been carried far beyond my work as an amateur by others, by men who are devoting their whole time and energies to one of the most weighty subjects which can occupy the attention of those whose duty it is to look after the weal of the commonwealth of this empire.

It is six-and-twenty years since there was in Leeds a general public discussion of Sanitary Science, in its broadest sense, when in the section of "Health," presided over by Mr. Godwin, the editor of *The Builder*, the Social Science Congress had gathered together the comparatively small band of sanitary pioneers. These men were urging upon the attention of the country, not too ready to listen, the critical importance of sanitary work, and the dangerous position into which we had drifted. Such were Rawlinson, Edwin Chadwick, Acland, Fergus and others.

It is interesting, in reading the papers and discussions on that occasion, to observe how many points then urged, almost as if open to doubt, or at any rate as needing strong arguments to compel acceptance, now "go without saying"; how forecasts as to the possibility of diminished death-rate under improved sanitary conditions have been fulfilled, and how the public conscience has been awakened to the necessity of securing improved conditions of living, not only in the great

towns, but also in villages and scattered hamlets. What was then almost sanitary chaos, is now, as far as legislative plan is concerned, bit by bit, being reduced to order; and the possibility has been established of such order reaching every corner of the country.

The very title of our Section marks advance. The corresponding title used by the Social Science Association was "Health." The title used by the British Medical Association was "Public Health." Our younger society adopts the significant title "Preventive Medicine," coupled with "Sanitary Science." Medicine is concerning itself more and more in tracking out to their source the origins of disease with a view to "prevention," and is no longer content merely to repair the ravages of disease which ought to have been prevented. "Sanitary Science" works as the hand-maid of medicine in devising the methods and the mechanism by which evils can be averted, and health can be made more secure.

When we contemplate the immense organisation of the preventive medicine service of the kingdom, in which we may include not only sanitary authorities, medical officers of health and sanitary inspectors, but also nearly every practising medical man in the kingdom, it is interesting to look back but eighteen years, when the first edition of "Dangers to Health" was published. The view which I then took of the state of medical knowledge as to the direct connection between defective house drainage and illness may be judged from the dedication "to those of my medical brethren who have studied, investigated, and corrected the sanitary arrangements of their own houses, in the hope that what is now perhaps a small minority may, before many years are over, become a large majority of the medical men of the United Kingdom." This is dated January 1st, 1879.

In the third edition, published two years later, a new dedication points to the fact that it seemed to me that there was a distinct advance in the state of medical knowledge of sanitary work, and of interest in it: "Dedicated to the medical profession whose members, in the matter of health, public and private, have deemed it their duty, not only to restore, but to conserve—not only to remedy, but to prevent—not only to place their labours at the service of present suffering, but, pointing out through evil report and good report the sources of such suffering, to spend their energies in averting some of the thousand ills that flesh is heir to." Again in the preface to this edition I state that "many of my friends and professional brethren tell me with pride and evident satisfaction of their sanitary discoveries, feeling that they are

conferring a welcome favour by telling me of some 'new fault' for my book."

In the same edition (1881) there is the following amongst the sanitary maxims, which may be taken I hope as marking a great contrast with the state of public opinion at the present day: "No. 3. As a rule the soundness of the sanitary arrangements of a house is taken for granted and never questioned until 'drain-begotten' illness has broken out. In other words we employ illness and death as our drain detectives."

Much remains to be done. "Preventive medicine," as a young science, has we trust the vigour and enthusiasm of youth, and during the last thirty years has achieved much, especially in winning public opinion to its side. Let us therefore take heart.