

isting disease or taint. They have a right to know that their progeny shall not be the victims of hereditary diseases or of direct infection from the same source. Every unborn child, debarred as it is from choice of parentage, time, place, manner, and station of birth, has its recognized legal rights. Among these also should be placed the inalienable right to be born free from the blight of clearly preventable diseases.

We hold that it is plainly obligatory on the part of the state to protect those who, from the nature of the case, are powerless to protect themselves, by enforcing wise restrictive marriage laws. Matrimony is of the utmost importance to organized society. An institution so essential to the highest good of society should have few barriers imposed to its free exercise: manifestly only those who are qualified by the endowments of healthy bodies and minds should be allowed to enter on its privileges and responsibilities. Until recently the only restrictions in most of the states have been confined to questions of minority, ability to make a contract, and consanguinity. To these the Southern States have added miscegenation. North Dakota, besides redeeming herself from a pernicious divorce law, has led all her sister states in a genuine reform along the lines we have just mentioned. On Feb. 25, 1899, the Creed Bill to regulate marriage was passed by her senate. Under this bill no license to marry can be granted unless applicants present a certificate from a board of examining physicians, that they are free from infectious venereal diseases, epilepsy, habitual drunkenness, hereditary insanity and tuberculosis. This bill was modeled on the exact plan of the Parker Bill, which failed to pass the Ohio legislature a year ago last winter. Similar bills have been presented, or are ready for presentation, in several other states.

We confidently expect to see state after state following her lead in this most important legislation for the protection of innocent wives and their little ones, from contaminations which endanger not only the health and happiness of homes, but the very welfare of the nation. When the public comes to realize that unsanitary marriages are just as dangerous to the community as unsanitary dwellings and contaminated food and water-supply, then will this beneficent legislation be demanded and enforced.

3504 Ellis Avenue.

RESTRICTIVE MARRIAGE LEGISLATION FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE WIFE, MOTHER, AND HOME.*

BY MRS. ALICE LEE MOQUE.

WASHINGTON, D. C.

Before taking up the question of reforms in our marriage laws, it may be well for us to consider briefly, from the sociologic point of view, what marriage was in the past, that we may be able to logically deduce from what it was, and is, what it may become. To do this, it must be frankly stated at the beginning, I shall have to speak plainly of sexual conditions, but beg that my hearers will appreciate that, in the words of Leterneau, "I have striven never to depart from the scientific spirit, which purifies everything."

To the sentimentalist of to-day, the fundamental truth on which the marital tie rests is forgotten or ignored. Losing sight of the plain and homely facts, proving the humble origin, of what they are pleased to call "the

* Read in a Symposium on the Regulation of Marriage, before the Section on State Medicine, at the Fiftieth Annual Meeting of the American Medical Association, held at Columbus, Ohio, June 6-9, 1899.

divine sacrament," they insist on a blind conservatism, which clings tenaciously to beliefs and practices, absolutely criminal in their immutable effects. To the student of biology, sociology, and ethnology, the institution we call marriage is not alone a covenant of man, but is identical in purpose, and the result of the same instinct that brings together two of the lower vegetal cellules into one protoplasm, and in no way differs materially from the fundamental phenomenon of that generative fecundation known to exist among the lower animals, as well as among men.

In the animal kingdom we find the two primitive types of family, the matriarchate or maternal, and the patriarchate or paternal, as we do all the other forms of sexual relation from promiscuity and polygamy up to the highest monogamy. He is indeed a blind worshiper of the genus homo who fails to perceive that the principal traits of primitive man, as exemplified in the lives and customs of many low types still extant, but prove our close relationship to our brethren with fur and feathers.

Primitive man, like his anthropoid ancestors, secured his mates by using brute force; in time, marriage by capture, toned down into marriage by purchase, to be followed by marriage by servitude—or work done for the owner of the chattel, to secure her person. A woman merely represented value, whether wife or daughter, and from the dawn of history until to-day we see the father's claim to her services recognized.

Herbert Spencer, in his admirable work, "Synthetic Philosophy," after showing how the tribes changed from endogamy to exogamy, says: "The primitive relation of the sexes shows the cruelty, inconstancy, and indefiniteness of the union of men and women. The wills of the stronger, unchecked by political restraints, unguided by moral sentiments, determined all behavior." Even to-day there is no better guide for the student, by which he may gauge the civilization and advancement of the race or tribe, than is its treatment of women, and the care shown progeny. Thus we see all the old forms of sexual depravity being gradually eliminated, as we follow man's evolution from barbarism up to civilization, and see the new, and divine ideals of altruism, taking the place, once entirely swayed by the unbridled lubricity of male passion.

But while all other subjects of needed reform are openly and freely discussed, a false shame, a prurient mock-modesty blushes if the well-being of progeny is discussed, and seeks to silence all questions if they but remotely lead up to that most vital obligation, our responsibility to future generations.

"The final aim of all marriage, all love intrigues," says Schopenhauer, "is really of more importance than all other ends in human life; what it all turns on is nothing less than the weal or woe of the next generation. Not that of any one individual, but that of the human race to come, is here at stake."

In the past, the belief has been general that the superiority or inferiority of offspring was a matter for which what was termed "Divine Providence" alone was responsible, but to-day the world is awakening to the truth, and no longer can the bringing into existence of the maimed, the halt, the blind, be excused or palliated by throwing the onus of the crime on that Providence, which "doeth all things well."

"The sooner men and women realize the responsibility of parentage," says Wm. Windser, "the sooner deformity and idiocy will be diminished and obliterated. This realization of responsibility can only come through education, and every effort to disseminate knowledge in this

direction, however made, should be fostered and encouraged."

The time has come when men must fearlessly face the problems which confront them; when they must no longer suffer abuses which it is forbidden to name; when they must shake off the false sentimentality which while prating glibly of love and marital affection, and objecting in stentorian tones to the "desecration of marriage by restrictive laws," is every day and night in the Christian calendar, disobeying those laws of Nature, for which the penalty imposed is nothing less than life-long misery for the helpless little ones, who will reap the harvest sown by the "sins of the father."

"I conclude that each generation has enormous power over the natural gifts of those that follow," says Francis Galton in "Hereditary Genius," "and maintain, that it is a duty we owe humanity to investigate the range of that power, and to exercise it in a way, that, without being unwise toward ourselves, shall be most advantageous to future generations."

In this enlightened era, it is evident that there can be no individual right, which, in its very nature, is a public wrong. While it may seem to some a grievous thing to say to two young persons desiring to marry, you must not, yet these same sentimentalists seem to see nothing wrong in the wedlock which must inevitably—by natural law—result in a crime against progeny. As the Bible states, one does not 'gather figs of thistles,' and science proves the immutability of hereditary taint. As Dr. Trall well says: "Nature punishes *always* and pardons *never!*" when her laws are violated or disregarded.

Whether the result of an ill-advised match between those not in a physical, mental or moral condition to become parents is disease of one or both parties, or personal alienation, or depraved or imperfect offspring, or all, there is no possible escape from the penalties.

To what a terrible extent just one depraved family can vitiate the human tide, statistics have already amply proven, and it is well before condemning restrictive legislation, to see if it is not indeed at least the lesser of two evils. Dugdale, a member of the Prison Association of New York, gathered data of a criminal family named Juke, and as figures can not lie, the tale they tell is worth considering. Five Juke sisters, in seventy-five years, had 1200 descendants, embracing every form of degenerate: paupers, 280; criminals, 140; thieves, 60; murderers, 7; prostitutes, 165; illegitimate children, 91; venereally diseased, 480 known cases. The years of pauperism and infamy cost the State of New York \$1,308,000. Can any one really believe that these Juke women had the right to so saddle the community with this burden of debt and infamy? Surely not, nor can any sane man or woman really believe that their maternity was anything less than a crime against progeny in such a case, as well as a crime against the state and the tax-payers.

As the child is but the composite of what its parents are and their ancestors have been, the Presbyterian doctrine of being born to be damned is not so far from the truth as we may think. "If we could be born right the first time," says Dr. Chase, in his work on the "Responsibility of Sex," "the difficulties in being 'born again' would be materially lessened, and it made unnecessary." "We know," he says, "that for any one knowingly possessed of contaminated blood, to enter the parental relation, is a crime. I say a crime, and no less so, because human law and justice are too materialized to reach it. The crime is two-fold: first it is a crime against the offspring of such wedlock. The wrong inflicted smites the defenseless, the poison scattered corrupts the inno-

cent. Second, the crime is against the race; its infancy is weakness, its maturity is frailty, its old age disease."

From the standpoint of a woman, a wife and mother, it appears to me that no thought can be higher, no desire more in keeping with the maternal instinct, than this effort to protect the unborn, and this law to uphold the inalienable rights of progeny to be well-born—or at least we see that they be not handicapped, by being forced into being, deprived of their birthright, health. In the woman of normal conscientiousness, the maternal instinct will always be found to be well developed, and if she be taught to understand the responsibility resting on her, as mother of future generations, we shall soon find her living up to the new and higher ideals, as soon as she, by the knowledge given her, shall acquire a more perfect appreciation of her status. To the female of low moral, physical, and mental condition, we can not hope to appeal in any other way than by force, as the maternal as well as other instincts are blunted, and sensuality alone is the *raison d'être* of motherhood, coupled with ignorance as to how to escape the burden and the too frequent determination to shift the care of the accidentally-begotten encumbrance on the public, at the earliest possible moment. We speak lightly of what we term "the animal instinct," and yet the maternal love of animals and the maternal instinct of the smallest creatures often puts to the blush our boasted pretensions of superiority over our little sisters of the woods and valleys. We will not but touch on the ignorance, the sin and the shame of those poor degraded individuals who swarm in the tenements of our large cities, whose bloated figures and crime-hardened faces show the lives they lead; we need not dwell on the known fact that maternity with them is but an accident, and their offspring, when not used as a means of beggary to procure strong drink for the besotted parent, is left at the door of a foundling asylum, or the little puny body found strangled in some ash-barrel. Maternity with them is indeed a misfortune, as they consider it, but how much more a misfortune to the poor, miserable child, and to the community at large.

But let us turn our eyes from this appalling lack of mother-love, and view the solicitous care of the little sand-moth, as she prepares, with patient industry, the hole in the sand in which to lay her eggs. Let us watch her as she carefully covers them up, and follow her as she diligently searches for the proper food which will nourish the young ones she will never see, and watch the little mother as she places it beside the eggs, and then, her labors over, lies down and her little life is over, for the preparation for the welfare of her progeny is complete. Ah yes, we, the highest creation, may learn much from the devotion and maternal care exhibited by these little mothers for their offspring, and the lesson will teach us to rightly appreciate our own responsibility as mothers of men, when we learn from the little sand-moth how diligently we should prepare the way before birth, for the well-being of our own progeny.

"All laws," says Dr. Trall, "are sacred in the sight of the law-giver, and woman's instincts can recognize no higher law—whatever she may assert to intellectuality—than that of self-preservation, and no duty greater than that of bringing into the world children of sound and vigorous constitution, or none at all." To no woman more than myself can the sentimental side of marriage appeal, by none can a love marriage be more appreciated as necessary or a love-mate more dear, but to me, the thought of obtaining a selfish gratification and happiness at the expense of my own little ones would

be something abhorrent. It is too much like the Fijians, who propitiate their gods by offering up their children as living sacrifices.

No mother-love, nor maternal care after birth, can ever make up to a child for the sins committed against it by forcing it into being, unasked, to suffer the penalty imposed by Nature for broken laws. "No good will, no charity however splendid," says Helen Campbell in her book on "Prisoners of Poverty," "can fill the place owned by that need which is forever first, and most vital between man and man—Justice. No labor, no love, no self-sacrifice, ever can balance that scale in which justice has no place."

Is it then too much to claim that none should more religiously uphold the inalienable rights of the unborn and unbegotten than the mothers of the land? Is it too much to claim that to no one will the boon be more surely given than to wives, when restrictive marriage laws are enforced and the medical examination is the guardian of the young wife's health and happiness, as well as the custodian of the rights of progeny. Women as a rule are most bitterly opposed to reform, particularly when it concerns themselves; they are swayed by their emotions, not ruled by reason, and are more devout partisans of fashions and follies, more servile followers of custom than are men. And yet, if the race is to be lifted up, if we are to reach a higher status than that of the present, if we are to be the progenitors of a better, nobler, healthier race, it must come through woman, for no stream can rise higher than its source, and as Emerson has pointed out, "A man is what his mother made him," and it is idle to inquire why a loom which weaves only huckaback does not turn out cashmere. The women, the wives, the mothers, must be taught the truth, they must be told facts, and learn the hideous result to themselves, their children, and the world at large, of perpetuating the diseases and imperfections which threaten the race. They must be enlightened as to the cause and effect, and learn that God's laws are all perfect, and that the bringing into the world of the imperfect and degenerates, the imbecile and the dipsomaniac, the consumptive and the diseased, is a crime against the child, against the home, and against the nation, a crime which no woman with the heart and instinct of true mother-love will knowingly commit.

But, while a great step in advance would undoubtedly be taken, if restrictive marriage laws could be enforced, I have some sympathy with those who claim that because a person has been unfortunately born, he should not be denied the privilege of mating with "the dearer one yet than all others;" and again we must, if we be honest and straightforward, admit that many of the most vicious, depraved and diseased are not the result of wedlock, so restrictive marriage laws would not, even if enforced, prevent the procreation of criminals. What then can be done to overcome this difficulty? What method can we suggest which, while working no hardship on the individual, will protect the community?

George Sand, the French writer, naively said: "A man asserts, a woman may merely suggest," and so I do not assert, but simply ask your consideration of the question, in a reasonable, logical light, reiterating the former thought that no private right is lawful if it is a public wrong. We may be very sorry for the thief, but we lock him up when he steals our silver; we pity the imbecile and the insane, but we can not permit them to remain at large; we pray for the drunkard, but we put him in the inebriate asylum when he becomes troublesome; we weep for the murderer, but we imprison him, and when the

safety of the community demands it we hang him. In other words, we protect ourselves from every form of depravity, but we leave the one most vital part unprotected. "We imprison the thief and point the finger of shame at the prostitute," says George F. Talbot, "but when they come together in the 'holy bonds of matrimony,' the minister of religion pronounces it an ordinance of God, and society stands helpless before the teeming swarms of vicious progeny that are to be the fruits of such a marriage."

But we must not only have a physical examination, to insure the health of progeny born in wedlock; we must find a reasonable and logical, as well as just and humane, method of protecting humanity from those "teeming hordes," Talbot speaks of who may or may not marry, but who will undoubtedly "increase and multiply," and impoverish the earth.

In the *N. Y. Medical Journal* (Jan. 28, 1899) there was an article referring to a new method of procedure for effecting the sterilization of women, as practiced by Professor Spenelli of Turin. In an editorial the *Journal* states: "The danger (arising from the procreation of diseased and degenerate offspring) is undoubtedly a real one, and if we are honestly and firmly opposed to all restrictive marriage legislation, it is not because we are not in hearty accord with the object aimed at, but because we think it would create evils more far-reaching, more deplorable than even the results against which they are directed. We have contended that with the union of the man and the woman, *per se*, the community has nothing to do. It is only by virtue of its potential results that the community acquires any right to intervene. Now, it is conceded, that the unrestrained reproduction of the physically or mentally diseased or degenerate is a menace to the welfare of the community, but we can not but feel that there are numberless instances in which a safe and easy method of rendering women sterile, as that mentioned by Spenelli, when pregnancy would be a source of more than ordinary danger to the individual, or a direct wrong to the community, is far better than a harsh prohibition of marriage."

It is unnecessary to give any of the details of this new method of sterilization, as you all know much more about it than I could tell you, but I beg that you will consider it in this connection, together with an article by Dr. A. J. Ochsner,¹ which I read with much pleasure, on the "Surgical Treatment of Habitual Criminals." May it not be that surgical science shall be the means of giving humanity the panacea so long sought for all the horrors and crimes committed against progeny by the criminal and degenerate classes? May it not be that Dr. Ochsner's method of sterilization, in conjunction with Professor Spenelli's—both simple surgical operations without danger of pain to the patient—shall be found to be the answer to those who, while objecting to restrictive marriage laws, are yet honest enough to acknowledge the menace to the health and well-being of the community at large, which unrestricted criminal procreation now presents.

"The law of marriage is no respecter of persons," and "ignorance of the law excuses no one," so it behooves us to know the truth, and face facts, even if they be unlovely ones. Those who rightly understand the responsibilities of sex, and particularly those arising from wedlock, will see the necessity of unselfishly seeking the way to insure future generations from contamination of blood. To the educated, enlightened, thoughtful man and woman,

¹ THE JOURNAL, April 22, 1899.

the rights of the helpless babe will appeal, and we shall yet see the world accepting the necessity of a physical examination for the protection of the state, the wife, mother and home, as they now accept the necessity of a physical examination for those desirous of taking out a life insurance policy, to protect the company. More than this, with education along rational and altruistic lines will come the conviction that, with the vicious, the depraved, the perverts and degenerate, as well as the diseased and imperfects, who have no consciousness of the wrong they commit, the crime against the child is a crime against the race, and they must be made incapable of perpetrating it.

Let us, as a last thought, fix our minds on the necessity of protecting and caring for those who can not help themselves. Let us remember that while those needing the medicine may object to the dose, we, having diagnosed the disease, must fearlessly display the contagious-disease placard, and not forgetting our duty to the individual, must never lose sight of our supreme responsibility to the community. "Diseases, which as a class, engraft themselves on the life-forces," says Dr. S. B. Chase, "so grow into it, and become an integral part of its constitution, as to stamp themselves irrevocably on the individuality of either parent. This is a solemn and startling truth, and should be written in letters of inextinguishable light upon the altar of every home where consumption haunts with hectic beauty and cheating hope, or where scrofula stalks with hydrocephalic head, distorted vertebra and leprous skin, or where misery-making idiocy has made wreck of all that is beautiful in human form. Let this fact be insisted upon, that diseases are a part of our individuality and become transmitted in impregnation, with the mournful truth, worthy of solemn mention, that such diseases when inherited or acquired are irrevocably and beyond the reach of art or medicine."

Let us then blush not to hear and know the truth. Let us uphold the law, remembering that: "Of law there can be no less acknowledged than that her voice is the harmony of the world," while aware that the heart of every lover of his kind echoes with the altruistic desire to protect the wife, the mother, the child, and the home. For that end we shall band together fearlessly, conscious that "Ignorance is the curse of God, Knowledge the wings wherewith we fly to heaven."

DISCUSSION ON SYMPOSIUM ON MARRIAGE.

DR. G. L. RICHARDS, Fall River, Mass.—I am glad to see the AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION take some notice of these problems and help in their solution. While most of us admit that the time is not yet ripe for restrictive marriage legislation, it certainly is time for at least a beginning to be made, and I was very much interested in Mr. Parker's conclusions that, on account of his political experiences, he felt that the bill introduced by him in the Ohio Legislature was too drastic to pass. It is true that restrictive marriage laws will not reach a large number of those persons who will always be a burden to society, as Mrs. Lee Moqué has said in the latter part of her paper, where she referred to the Jukes family. If I remember rightly, very few of this family ever took the trouble to marry, and we must admit that if we had restrictive marriage laws they would have but little effect on people of that class, the very ones we wish most of all to reach. In spite of that it becomes our duty as physicians to insist on more care being taken along these lines and to see to it that those afflicted with diseases which we all regard as in the main hereditary, such as insanity, idiocy, dipsomania, syphilis, and tuberculosis do not marry without a protest on our part. I would also go so far as to say that no person who has ever been an inmate of an institution for the care of feeble-minded should be allowed to marry. We have a very excellent school for the feeble-minded

in Massachusetts, and under the care of that institution a great many of the children are being trained and developed so that they afterward may take care of themselves. These children we are glad to educate at public expense; it is much cheaper than having them grow up to be inmates of almshouses and jails. I want them to be self-supporting individuals, as far as possible, but I do not want them to marry and raise up a race of imbeciles like themselves. It is time that the medical profession took up the ideas expressed in the most excellent address¹ of our President, Dr. Mathews, and laid down the law or doctrine that syphilitics should never marry. I hold that it is absolutely wrong for any physician to give his consent to the marriage of a syphilitic. I will grant that syphilis is theoretically curable, but must at the same time insist that practically it is not, simply because the patient will not follow the advice of the doctor a sufficiently long time to effect a perfect cure, and because too many physicians fail to sufficiently realize the gravity of the disease and the long time required to effectively rid the system of its poison. The result is that the patients follow the treatment for a while; as long as there are any active symptoms; with the subsidence of these they feel better and cease their visits to us. A few years later the same patient comes to us or some one else, and a syphilitic lesion is recognized in the throat or elsewhere. This lesion may be in the body of the other party, if a marriage has taken place. On sending for the principal, we shall probably be told that his physician had informed him he was cured and he could safely marry. A young man came to me a few weeks ago with an undoubted syphilitic lesion in his throat, although he had regarded himself as cured. He was engaged and wished to know how soon he could marry with safety. I replied: "You can never marry with my consent. You can find plenty of doctors who will tell you that after a certain time you can marry, but you can never marry with my consent."

I am very glad to hear these matters discussed here to-day. They are matters which affect the well-being of the race. No farmer would consent to breed pigs, cows or chickens with half the carelessness with which we bring new human lives into the world. I have often thought of one of the opening remarks in Lawrence Sterne's novel of "Tristram Shandy." The story may be somewhat under the ban, but the remark is so pertinent to the present discussion that I will take the liberty of quoting it entire. The hero remarks: "I wish either my father or my mother or both, as they were in duty, both equally bound to it, had minded what they were doing when they begot me; had they duly considered how much depended upon what they were doing, that not only the production of a rational being was concerned in it, but that possibly the happy formation and temperament of his body, perhaps his genius and the very cast of his mind and for aught they knew to the contrary even the fortunes of his whole house might take their turn from the humors and dispositions that were then uppermost. Had they duly weighed and considered all this and proceeded accordingly I am verily persuaded I should have made quite a different figure on the whole from that in which the reader is likely to see me. Believe me good folks this is not so inconsiderable a thing as many of you think it." Will not the coming generations have a right to feel that way toward us unless we look out for their interests better in the future than we have done in the past. Dr. Holmes' remark that the education of a child should begin a hundred years before he is born still has great force.

DR. S. L. JEPSON, Wheeling, W. Va.—The papers of the afternoon have brought before this ASSOCIATION matters upon which I have been thinking for quite a number of years. I have never had the courage to present my thoughts to the medical profession, but I am glad somebody else has been thinking as well as myself, and that these thoughts have been presented to us in such a practical way. Dr. Brower has laid before us the social phase on which this discussion must be based. That is, that neglect of proper precautions in choosing companions in marriage tends to the degeneracy of the offspring. We might go further than that. It tends to the degeneracy of the nation, and might tend to its destruction. I claim, therefore that the state has a right to intervene in behalf of her own preservation. Mrs. Moqué has presented an eloquent appeal in behalf of the "poor little mortal cast out on

¹ THE JOURNAL, June 10, 1899.

life's portal without ever a thought or a wish of its own." I would go one step further, and enter a plea on behalf of the people who pay the taxes, and on behalf of this great nation which we hope to see excel any other that the world has ever produced.

When we allow marriages of diseased persons to go on unrestricted, we are simply hastening the degeneracy of the whole human race. No man with a positive disease has any moral right to marry. Whenever the rights of the individual interfere with the rights of the state, then the state has a right to interfere. When smallpox exists in a community we step in and interfere with the rights of the individual, and protect him and the community by insisting on vaccination and rigid quarantine. So in this case the state should intervene, and when a man or woman is about to marry who has an active disease, whether tuberculosis or syphilis, that tends to produce a degenerate offspring, I claim the law should step in and prevent it. Any man who has practiced medicine has seen the evidence of the bad results coming from such marriages. I know of the case of a man who, it was claimed, had been allowed to marry, by his own physician, and within a month after marriage he imprinted a kiss on his wife which gave her syphilis. She has now been under my care for years, and I suppose it is the experience with all of you that a woman with syphilis is a very hard patient to treat, because she will not do as you wish her to. She thinks she is cured as soon as active symptoms disappear, and she insists on having her own way about it. The difficulty is doubled, if she is to be kept in ignorance as to the true nature of her disease. I believe these matters may be slow in coming, but we are making a good start to-day, and the question should be agitated year after year until its importance is impressed on the laity and finally we may hope for some legislation on the subject.

DR. C. F. ULRICH, Wheeling, W. Va.—I am very glad that these subjects are being discussed here in this Section. I have attended this ASSOCIATION for a good many years, and have always affiliated with this Section, but have never seen such a meeting as we are now having. Public thought is being awakened, and those who have previously been afraid to express their thoughts for fear of shocking some one are taking courage of their convictions and coming to the front to speak out. This subject is a very important one. It is just beginning to come before the public. Now and then it has been mentioned and printed in books that nobody ever reads, but now it is brought before us in such a way that everybody is compelled to notice it. This will start the people to thinking, and ultimately this question will come to the front and laws will be enacted and enforced, and the world will be reformed. In the first papers that were read there was much said about the restriction of marriage and curing the evil by that means. All that time I was thinking to myself: "What becomes of all the illegitimate offspring that these marriage laws would not affect at all?" But Mrs. Moqué has touched the right chord in suggesting sterilization. I have seen this suggested in THE JOURNAL as a punishment of a certain class of criminals, which would also serve to prevent a repetition of the crime; it met my hearty approval, but I have never heard it expressed so forcibly and fearlessly as in the paper that has just been read, and I most heartily approve every word contained in this presentation of the subject.

DR. D. R. BROWER, Chicago—I wish to express my thanks for the very great interest this important subject has raised here. It is most gratifying to me to see this Section as it is to-day, crowded with people who are here at more or less personal discomfort to testify to their appreciation of the work that is being carried on here and by other organizations. The laity must be educated and doctors must be the educators. There are some of our practitioners who are afraid that if they talk about these things before lay audiences, they are violating the Code of Ethics. It is, on the contrary, in true harmony with the Code, for it is assisting in the elevation of those who are around about us and who are dependent on us for care and guidance. I desire to thank Mrs. Moqué, who has given us such a very eloquent exposition of this question, for her very emphatic references to one of the things that I tried to emphasize in a feeble way yesterday, the sterilization of these defectives and degenerates.

CAN THE STATE SUPPRESS GENITO-URINARY DISEASES?*

BY FERD. C. VALENTINE, M.D.

Professor of Genito-Urinary Diseases, New York School of Clinical Medicine; Genito-Urinary Surgeon, West Side German Dispensary; Genito Urinary Consultant United Hebrew Charities, etc.

NEW YORK CITY.

It is but meet that I preface this effort with my thanks to your chairman, for the compliment given me in his invitation to prepare a paper for this meeting.

Never having made a special study of state medicine, I can not offer more than the outcome of practical experience, observation and thought on the devastations caused by the diseases which are the subject of my investigations. Over twenty years ago I strenuously advocated the registration and systematic examination of the unfortunates believed to be the principal disseminators of genito-urinary diseases. Subsequent study, however, and personal observation since then, especially in Europe, have shown me that the control of public prostitution, even if ideally carried out, can be but a small factor in the prevention of genito-urinary diseases. Ideal compliance with the law is indeed impossible, as the following considerations show.

Five years ago there were 20,000 registered prostitutes in Berlin. These were regularly examined and, if found infected, were confined until cured. Most conservatively tracing the possible course of such an individual, it may, for illustration's sake, be assumed that she is examined and found uninfected on a Monday. On the same day she has relations with a man infected with gonorrhoea. For a person in her life it would be rare if she cohabited with but one man a day. But assuming this to be the number, she has had opportunity to infect at least three men, one on Tuesday, another on Wednesday and possibly a third on Thursday, before presenting herself for examination on that day. Even then the new infection may not be manifest and she might receive her certificate of health—practically a license to continue infecting more men—until her next examination the following Monday. Maintaining our strict conservatism, we will adhere to the three men she has infected. These three, each cohabiting during the week with only two women, can infect them. Without considering the more than probable geometric progression, we have within one week at least three men and six women infected with gonorrhoea, nine persons in all. And what is said regarding this disease will apply equally to other venereal affections.

In Berlin, therefore, where the most rigorous and complete system of registration and examination is conducted by the *Sittenpolizei*—police of morals—the whole plan falls exceedingly short of its purpose. But in Berlin, too, where 20,000 licensed prostitutes are subject to biweekly examination, there are estimated to be 25,000 clandestine ones who escape the vigilance of the police. The diseases they convey are beyond numerical calculation.

In France, a similar system of registration and examination prevails. At its very inception, its futility was manifest. Sanger¹ says in this connection: ". . . it appears that a serious effort was made to put it (prostitution) down under the sovereignty of Catherine de Medicis. An ordinance of Charles IX, dated 1560, prohibited the opening or keeping of any brothel or house of reception for prostitutes in Paris . . . the

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