

There is a feature of our public life which, I think, may fairly be described as a national characteristic, and that is our tolerance if not encouragement of quackery. I mention it here because I wish to point out the great injustice of this to our profession.

The youth who aspires to the practice of medicine is required by the laws of his country to undergo a certain course of study, tedious and expensive. He has to pass certain examinations and give proof of familiarity with the requirements of his profession. He has to satisfy the authorities as to the integrity of his moral character before he is allowed to begin practice. And now see him, embarking on the practice of his profession. From his window he sees the apothecary's shop, and knows that for one patient who has gone there to have a prescription filled, a dozen go to buy some proprietary medicine. He buys the morning paper and finds one-tenth to one-fifth of the space for which he pays taken up with advertisements of nostrums, often with testimonials signed by otherwise intelligent and moral people. He dines at his club and hears of nothing but the wonderful cures wrought by some itinerant quack who has never fulfilled one requirement of the Medical Act. Truly Demos loves the quack and seems to have a special spite at him who would practise his profession scientifically in accordance with the noble spirit of the Hippocratic oath.

There are, indeed, many ways in which the traits of national character may influence the health of the people.

In the Report of the Royal Commission on Physical Deterioration no evidence seems to me more interesting than that of Mrs. Close. This lady, who has given her life to the study of domestic conditions among the labouring classes of almost every country in Europe, has no doubt of a deterioration in the physique of the labouring classes in England. And the explanation of this she finds in a diminished sense of duty, a debased ideal of the duties of wife and mother. Love of amusement and the attractions of the theatre interfere with the old fashioned domestic economy. Houses are untidy. Food is badly cooked. Early rising is a vanished virtue. The children are hurried off to school without proper breakfast, and the husband finds in the public house the comfort he is denied at home. The picture is too true and its replica may be found in every town in Canada.

And now how may we in the exercise of our daily calling contribute to the development and growth of national character?

In the first place we should accustom ourselves to remember that the body with which we deal is of value only as the tenement and instrument of an indwelling spirit, and that the health of the body is our