

We must tell you what old Prior said very many years ago:—

“For a distemper of this kind
(Blackmore and Hannes are of my mind),
If once it youthful blood infects,
And chiefly of the female sex,
'Tis scarce removed by pill or potion,
Whate'er might be our doctor's notion.”

Quo Vadis Domine? I present the ballad (Syphilis), by John Gay (1685-1732):

“I knew a yeoman who for thirst of gain to the great city drove from Devon's plain his numerous herd. His herds he sold, and his deep leathern pocket bagged with gold. Drawn by a fraudulent nymph, he gazed, he sighed; unmindful of his home and distant bride, she leads the willing victim to his doom through winding alleys to her cobweb room; thence through the streets he reels from post to post. The vagrant wretch the assembled watchman spies, he waves his hanger, and their poles defies. Deep in the roundhouse pent all night he snores, the next morning vain his fate deplores. Ah! hapless swain! unused to pains and ills, canst thou forego roast beef for nauseous pills? How wilt thou lift to heaven thy eyes and hands when the long scroll the surgeon's fees demands? Or else (ye gods avert that worst disgrace) thy ruined nose falls level with thy face; then shall thy wife thy loathsome kiss disdain, and wholesome neighbors from thy mug refrain.” It is needless to state that the germ of syphilis is the *spirochetæ pallida*, or the spiral-shaped germ. Timothy, in his second epistle, reminds us that there were Devonians in his day, and says: “For of this sort are they which creep into houses and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led by divers lusts.”

Aristotle says: “Drunken women have children like unto themselves,” and Plutarch remarks: “The drunkard by inheritance is a more helpless slave than his progenitor, and his children are more helpless still, unless on his mother's side there is an untainted blood. For there is not only a propensity transmitted, but an actual disease of the nervous system.” Robert W. Service in *Sourdough* makes the *Parson's Son* say: “If God made me in His likeness, sure he left the devil inside,” and, no doubt, these were parts of the Devonian farmer's prayers; if not, he could console himself with Byron's words:

“My days are in the yellow leaf,
The flowers, the fruits of love are gone;
The worm, the canker, and the grief are mine alone.”