

choly fact, observes—" There is food for sad contemplation, in the fact now proved by statistics, that nearly one-half (in 1877 more than half) of the human race dies before reaching maturity; were it to be discovered that one quarter, or even one eighth of all the sheep, hogs, cattle and horses which come into life, were dying of preventible disease, before they reached maturity, would not the public take alarm, and clamour at the doors of Parliament for sanitary measures, tending to remove the causes of so terrible a fatality!" " Much," he continues, " has been done by legal enactment, for the protection of human life, but much remains to be done, and will be done when public sentiment (having been aroused by the knowledge of the portentous fact just referred to) will support the enactment of measures found necessary for the prolongation of life." In an address recently delivered before the faculty and students of one of the medical schools of *this* city, the audience were told that the science of medicine had so greatly advanced that whereas *seven* professors used to be able to conduct a medical college, *thirteen* are now required for the discharge of this important function! Spite of legislative enactments and the *alleged* advantages of medical science however, *the death-rate steadily increases* both in the city of New York and in the Province of Ontario; in Ontario, from 39,000 in 1878 to 44,000 in 1880. Scientists (so-styled) have for ages been ransacking every department of nature, in search of causes of disease and death, and many finely spun theories have been advanced until the people, like the six hundred of Balacava, are surrounded by disease-producing agencies more fatal than the cannon of the world-renowned charge.

They tell us of *poison* in the air we breathe—in the water we drink—in the food we eat, and also on the walls of the rooms in which we live, so that, to parody the lines of Tennyson, we might write:—

Poison to right of them,
Poison to left of them,
Poison in front of them, etc.

But as all theories, as to causes, or devices for prevention, have proved insufficient to stay the hand of death, we must look in other directions for a solution of the sad mystery.

The London *Lancet* has "struck a lead," which if followed, will, I doubt not, clear away much of the mist which beclouds the medical profession. It says—" It is high time that attention were directed to the subject of narcotics generally, and to the use of chloral and bromide of potassium in particular. Incalculable injury is being done, and public opinion is being grievously misled, by the tolerance given to the use of 'sleeping draughts' falsely so called.* In regard to this matter, and that of the reckless use of the hypodermic injections of morphia, the profession should seek to form a deliberate judgment, and gravely deliver itself. At the present moment, we are under a heavy responsibility which it is idle to deny, and vain to disown."

The legislators of New York appear to have suspected that "there is something rotten in the state of (the medical) Denmark;" they have decreed that "any physician who while intoxicated, or by mistake, gives any drug to his patient in such dose as to kill, is guilty of murder in the second degree;" these legislators thus recognize the awful fact that physicians are administering to the sick, agents which by a slight error may cause the death of those who look to them for life. On a future occasion I will endeavour to show that in the direction above indicated, important truths lie hidden, which need but to be unearthed in order to explain what has until the present time, with many, been a mystery.

* Is not death a sleep?—ED.