

thinking citizens of a community to act as watch-dogs in keeping any particular municipal health authorities up to the highest standard of efficiency, so far as regards municipalized public health, for, as Huxley correctly states: "The higher and more complex the organization of the social body, the more closely is the life of each member bound with that of the whole," and failure in action results seriously to a community.

Unfortunately in the past it has been the custom for most men and women to think they should do nothing but that which it pleases them to do without the least reference to the welfare of the home, and particularly as to the welfare of the community in which they live. In fact, if we look around the world from the sanitarian's standpoint, every prospect pleases and only man is vile. It is time the people realized to the full all the meaning of the words of Milton: "Accuse not nature; she hath done her part. Do thou thine."

These are times for action, and it is in the personal responsibility of the individual wherein lies the success or failure in attaining all that public health means to a people. It begins with the parents in the prenatal period of their offspring, and continues with increasing import until their offspring in turn leave the home to assume similar responsibilities.

Canon Kingsely very truly stated some fifty years ago, it is our duty to see that every child that is born shall be developed to the highest possible pitch of development in physical strength, in intellect and virtue. And if this most desirable end is to be reached, one of the chief factors must be by the adoption and enforcement of all the known rules of hygiene in the home within municipal limits, and in conformity with uniform State enactments, wisely and properly directed and assisted.

Unfortunately for the nation there is a widespread ignorance on the part of parents of the principles, the knowledge of which is essential in properly caring for infants. This alarming and widespread ignorance is most disastrous from a national standpoint, and the fact that their helplessness has not gained for them the interest they deserve in the home, we must claim it as their right as citizens, and by municipal and State enactment provide for that most valuable of all national assets, that by which it lives and is perpetrated, viz., the lives of its children.

In respect to many of the small tombstones and of the unmarked graves, how correctly could be written the epitaph: "Victims of Parental Ignorance in respect to Public Health." It is no exaggeration to say that 75 per cent. of the deaths of all first-born infants are preventable, their deaths being largely due to parental ignorance. I include both father and mother in respect to the rearing of their offspring.

It must be remembered that ignorance of the temporal law is no excuse. How much greater, then, is the personal responsibility where the health of the nation's greatest wealth is concerned?

I may be pardoned for a brief reference to what is, perhaps, of still greater moment than the care of children, one which has been felt by at least one of the great European nations, and one which certainly would have been considered by one nation of this continent had it not been less prominent, owing to the great tide of immigration, which has increased by leaps and bounds its population. I refer to that very important question popularly known as race suicide—that damnably pernicious and criminal practice now so common in all classes of the community, but particularly in vogue amongst the wealthy and those of the middle walks of life—the prevention of conception. The guilty parties are to be found in both sexes, and the guilt may be placed at the door of both fathers and mothers, for if the former are the chief offenders or criminals as regards prevention, certainly the latter are the criminals in respect to the inducing of miscarriage, and thereby bringing on the physiological process of menstruation at a much earlier period than would be normally the case after conception has once taken place.

This is a subject in which some few of the members of the medical profession have at least in some portions of the country been too much identified with, and if for nothing higher and better, certainly for the credit and ennobling of the medical profession, the sooner such men are prevented from countenancing such pernicious practices under the cloak of a medical license the better.

Certainly but little progress will be made against the insidious inroads made by these pernicious customs into the social life of our people until the men and women of our country are educated as to their great evil, and of the dangers which follow their practice.

Returning again to the question of the children—a child may be taught in school a few of the cardinal rules of hygiene, but if he returns to a home where every rule of health is ignored, what profiteth the child? Similarly, he may be given the best physical instruction, but much of the good is undone if the home be dark and sunless and God's fresh air is regularly excluded during the eight or ten hours he spends in sleep, all on account of the ignorance of fond parents.



Dr. C. A. Hodgetts.

It is not the purport of this paper to indicate how the knowledge appertaining to public health shall be disseminated to the people; enough has been said to indicate the lines of individual responsibility. Parents must know the laws of health before sanitarians can hope for them to exemplify the same in their lives—many know of them in the abstract, but to be of any worth they must know them of a truth, and they must teach them to their children. Parents must realize the importance of the body as well as of the soul and mind. They must know that it is their duty to study the rules of hygiene as they apply to growth and development of the body and the adoption of all preventive measures which will protect the child as it passes through life. They must realize the importance of the sound body as well as of an educated mind, for in life's struggle the latter will little avail if the offspring is a mental prodigy.

And looking higher still, and considering the body as the earthly temple, surely it is essential, it is fitting and proper that the individual should know how to preserve it in health, strength and purity, for certainly as regards our bodies each one should realize his responsibility.

Of personal responsibilities perhaps that of the physician is the most onerous. Certainly the great advances made in medical science along the lines of serum therapy, the application of toxines, and similar therapeutic agents, as also the general and particular application of preventive medicine, all enhance their responsibilities, and the medical practitioner who does not teach and practice to the full public health is simply a charlatan.