

own protection will first see that every infected person who is so disposed will be able to secure the best modern treatment without regard to his means or lack of them. Having fulfilled its duty in this regard, it will be justified in demanding that all infected persons, regardless of personal vagaries and desires, shall be treated, and that if they show themselves inconsiderate of the welfare of others, they shall feel the force of the law.

Legislation Needed on Medical Professional Confidence.—A necessary corollary to all progressive legislation on such matters is a provision which unbinds the tongue of the physician¹ where infection is about to be transmitted, and even punishes him as an accessory to a crime if he fails to do his duty in making the facts known to the proper persons.

Personal Prophylaxis; Continence.—The so-called personal prophylaxis of genital infections is the final consideration in a discussion of the prevention of these diseases. Personal prophylaxis includes those things which the individual can himself do to avoid acquiring gonorrhœa or syphilis. *The standard of personal prophylaxis is abstinence from sexual relations and personal intimacies except in normal marriage with a healthy person.* It has no substitutes, and no competitors.

The Medical Prevention of Syphilis and Gonorrhœa.—The medical prophylaxis of the genital infections rests upon a discovery by Metchnikoff, Roux and Maisonneuve in 1906, that a properly prepared medicinal ointment containing certain mercurial salts, if rubbed into the place where the germs of syphilis had been deposited, within a few hours after exposure, was able to prevent the development of a chancre by killing them before they could gain a foothold. This method has been found to have a certain amount of efficiency in the prevention of gonorrhœa also, but it has been discarded for this purpose in favour of the use of certain injections into the urethral canal. The combined prophylaxis of syphilis and gonorrhœa was rapidly adopted into all the armies of the world following a series of rigorous tests, and has demonstrated a remarkable degree of efficiency, which has been increased by the realization that to be of the greatest service it must be administered within an hour after exposure, and be given by a specially trained attendant under medical supervision. Medical prophylaxis is not infallible. Even when rigorously carried out it offers no protection against the grave risks of extra-genital infection. Its percentage of failure is highest precisely where the risk of infection is greatest, among those who cannot exercise intelligence in its application. Then, too, apparently trifling variations upon the standard methods often render it ineffective, a fact which accords with the familiar experience of physicians as to the uselessness of the average attempt of a knowing patient to avoid infection by washes and similar applications. The prophylaxis of syphilis and gonorrhœa will to some extent become common knowledge as a result of the wholesale spread of such information through army service. This does not alter the fact that to be at its best it must remain under the control of the

¹ As in the State of