ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS

VENEREAL DISEASES AS WE SEE THEM TO-DAY.

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GENERAL.

SIX years have now elapsed since the memorable meeting in the Albert Hall, and it would be well, in my opinion, to sum up the successes which have been gained and the failures experienced during this period. It is only by recognizing and correcting these failures, that we can ultimately reach the goal at which we have aimed.

The propaganda work has succeeded in opening the eyes of the public to the dangers of venereal diseases, with the result that patients come up for treatment at an earlier stage than formerly. It has failed to reduce the incidence of venereal diseases. The vivid and exaggerated pictures which have been drawn of the rarer sequelæ of these diseases have given the public false impressions, and victims have become so terrified that there has been produced a venereal neurasthenia, which is infinitely more difficult to cure than the actual disease itself.

Prophylaxis has engaged the attention of many, and is now delegated to a position subordinate to moral training. Although the prophylastic measures used have saved many from infection, at the best it was only shutting the stable door after the horse had been stolen. It was a pity to issue "prophylactic packets," when micturition and washing with soap and water immediately after connection are simpler and just as efficacious. Possibly because of the simplicity of this teaching, which hailed from the medical school at Salerno four or five centuries ago, it was thought that more reliance would be placed by the public upon special outfits. Because mercury has been used for syphilis since the disease came to Europe, when it was confounded with scabies, which had been treated with mercury for hundreds of years before, and because Metchnikoff had found that rubbing calomel ointment into a sacrified wound on a monkey's forehead—an insult to which the penis is seldom subjected—prevented infection with syphilis, and because potassium permanganate has been used in the treatment of gonorrhœa for so long, it was thought that the outfits should contain both calomel and potassium permanaganate. As a matter of fact, tubes containing a semi-liquid colloidal mercury cream, and supplied under the name of