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## CONTENTS.

### ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

The Question of Prostitution and its Relations to the Public Health, by Casey A. Wood, C.M., M.D., Attending Physician to the Woman's Hospital, Prof. of Chemistry Medical Faculty Bishop's College, 49—Inflammation: Its Chemical cause and Cure, by W. Y. Brunton, M.D., 60—On Septicæmia

and its Effects, by Dr. Litten, of Berlin.....61

### PROGRESS OF MEDICAL SCIENCE

Incontinence of Urine in Children, 62—Notes on the Croton-Oil Treatment of Ringworm, 63—Treatment of Housemaid's Knee, 64—Treatment of Nocturnal Incontinence of Urine, by Dr. Kelp, 64—Ointment for Itch.....64

### EDITORIAL.

To our Subscribers, 65—Animal Vaccine, how it is Propagated, 65—Typhoid Fever at Bishop's College School, Lennoxville, 67—The Case of Psoriasis Lepraformis, 67—Dr. Robert Nelson, 68—College of Physicians and Surgeons, Province of Quebec, 69—An Omission, 69—Reviews, 69—Meeting of Medico-Chirurgical Society....72

## Original Communications.

### THE QUESTION OF PROSTITUTION

AND ITS

### RELATIONS TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH.

BY

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Whatever action may be taken regarding them by the people at large, whatever influence may be subsequently exerted by public opinion, questions of Hygiene are primarily the property of the medical profession. For example, it is rarely that we have to thank the priest, with his time occupied with matters of another world, and caring little for things of earth; nor the statesman, with his attention taken up by affairs apparently more important; nor even the laity, who have ever exemplified the proverb, "what's everybody's business is nobody's business"—we have seldom been indebted to any of these for the inauguration of whatever progress has been made in a single department of sanitary science. No fact could add more to the dignity of our profession, because, in consequence, it must prove to all candid observers that, as a rule, medical men really hope and work for a permanent lessening of the diseases that infect the race.

The statement that the primary discussion of any measure to improve the health of communities and individuals has almost always been introduced by medical men might be supplemented by showing that the conclusions arrived at by them have always formed an important factor in determining action taken by the authorities to remedy the trouble under consideration. It is a fortunate circumstance, perhaps, that such is the case in the questions about to be ventilated in this article, for the same spirit of false modesty which prevents a proper discussion by the laity of many a vital question affecting the social economy has relegated the treatment of prostitution and its attendant evils to whomsoever cares to occupy himself with it. With this double warrant there can be no reason why the matter should not be freely and fully discussed in the pages of a medical journal, no reason why the medical scientist should not decide what measures will have the greatest influence in limiting the spread of prostitution and in neutralizing those moral and physical maladies it so uniformly gives rise to.

"*Fornicatio autem—nec nominetur in vobis sicut decet sanctos,*" wrote Paul to the little church at Ephesus, but probably he never imagined that in later times a whole people would arise who, while tacitly ignoring the spirit, would scrupulously insist upon its *literal* obedience! But only in these latter days, for, "in the good old days, when George the Third was king," Fielding was