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are quite under our control, and our means of successful treatment are being constantly increased, there is sure ever to remain a large class of cases, whose condition was hopeless, long before the physician was called in, and in whom the disease will run its course, unaffected by any treatment which we may adopt. But while we admit that our power of curing disease, will in all human probability, always be limited, it is a grand, a glorious satisfaction to know that our power of preventing it admits of indefinite extension. This is the true answer to the objections against the utility of our art, on the ground that, by enabling the feeble and sickly to live and breed, we are really promoting the growth of an unhealthy population.

Recognising, as we now do, that all forms of sickness—whether it be those awful visitations of epidemic pestilence which our ancestors regarded as caused by the direct interposition of supernatural power, or those far more mysterious and inexplicable constitutional taints which, handed down, from parent to child, are the fruitful cause of so much disease—all these, I say, are really due to material causes, and governed by natural laws, which are to a great extent in our control. If, therefore, we can succeed in removing these causes, and so cut off any fresh developments, we may expect the gradual extinction even of the most distinctly hereditary diseases—for, do what we will, the tainted part of the community is far too heavily weighted to prevail ultimately in the race of life. Such, then, being our objects, I think that, so far from being excluded from the state, we deserve a place among its guardians.

Our knowledge, indeed, of the causes of diseases,