

About the middle of the seventeenth century, one in every forty or fifty women delivered in London, died of child-birth and its consequences; but as medical science has advanced, that mortality has decreased, till now about 1 in 150 or 200 die. There are about 600,000 accouchments yearly in Great Britain, still about 3000 mothers perish. If the old mortality held good, not less than 11,000 or 12,000 maternal lives would now be lost. Consequently we may proudly point to this modern advancement in medical science, effecting, as it does, in this item alone, a saving of the lives of 7000 or 8000 mothers a year.

The mortality in the army, years ago, was immense. It was a disgrace to those in authority who positively refused to listen to the repeated appeals of the medical staff. And it was not till after the Crimean War, when Miss Nightingale brought the fact before the nation, that the laws which preventive medicine had established and applied in civil life were put in force. The result was that since the period named, the mortality in the Guards has fallen from 20 to 9, and in the infantry from 18 to 8. And the improvement in war is still more striking. In the Crimean war, the sick in hospital were nearly seven times the number of the killed, while in the Chinese war they were nearly equal. The relative proportions of zymotic sickness in the two campaigns were as 6 to 60.

The present death-rate of fever in England amounts to 385 per 10,000 of population, while a century ago, its death-rate was nearly 539, and at the middle of the last century the annual death-rate from all causes in London, was 355 per 10,000 of population, but in the middle of the present century, it was only 249. In Sweden, in the period from 1755 to 1775, the death-rate was 289 per 10,000 of population, while from 1841 to 1850 it was reduced to 205.

In pursuing this subject let us contrast the state of the unfortunate lunatic of the present day with what it was sixty years ago, when deemed incapable of human feelings he was incarcerated in a dungeon, bound with chains, surrounded by filth, cut off from the friendship and charity of his fellow mortals, and treated with contumely, scorn, and stripes, a human being buried, yet living. Need I say to you how changed all this is now, and with what happy results? With the knowledge that the poor sufferer possesses the feelings, impulses, and affections of man, he is surrounded by comfort, all restraint is, or should be removed; and he is put under proper medical and moral management.

The preservation of human health, and the prolongation of human life, are two of the great and noble objects of practical medicine. These objects are to be attained more by the prevention of disease than by its cure. But to enable us to prevent diseases, we should be well