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## THE VENEREAL DISEASE PROBLEM.\*

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It cannot be said that the subject to be discussed is one which is palatable or delightful, yet the situation must be faced and faced honestly and without flinching. We may not find it as pleasant to speak of the cesspool and the scavenger as of the rose garden and the gardener—and yet the one may be as important as the other, or vastly more so. There are diseases which are eating the heart out of our people, sapping their very life—unless well grounded estimates are gravely wrong half a million of Canadians are infected with the most serious form of venereal disease; in Toronto at least forty thousand, many, very many without knowing it. For one reason or another, the terrible extent of these diseases is not generally known—delicacy has been considered to forbid the discussion of them in public and those who suffer from them do not disclose their disease willingly. In insanity we know that until the other day it was considered not only a calamity but also a disgrace that any one of the family should be considered insane; a little of the same feeling lingers in respect of cancer and perhaps other diseases.

In venereal diseases there has been a widespread view that those who suffer from them are being punished for sin. That thought has prevented the members of the family of the affected from making

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