

Original Communications.

SANITARY PROGRESS.*

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To the ordinary superficial observer, sanitation appears to be to some extent a "fad," and even to some of the members of the profession it does not convey such a definite idea as its importance demands. Yet thanks to it we rarely have the people in civilized countries decimated by plague as did occur formerly and does now when hygienic rules are neglected by the mass of the people as in India for example, and within the memory of members of the profession it scarcely existed in an active form in the body politic.

Modern sanitation results from a definite pathological knowledge of recent date, for which we are indebted to Pasteur and his pupils in France and the many talented minds that have been at work in Germany and England, as well as by careful observers and workers in other countries.

At one time, and even yet with many, the belief prevailed that an epidemic was a "visitation of God," that consumption was an inherited malady, and that disease generally was inherent in humanity and but little modified by the acts or environment of the individual, except in so far as exposure to cold, too much or too little exertion, indulgence in the passions, and gross causes that the individual and not the body politic had under control. Under such conditions sanitation as we now know it was an impossibility.

Systematic hygiene was of slow growth. When Jenner discovered the method of controlling the ravages of small pox and it was demonstrated that tape worm and measly pork were associated conditions under definite biological laws, new avenues of pathological research were opened up, and the end is not yet.

When the lines between chemical affinity and biology were matters of dispute, and materialistic theories in the hands of able men successfully combated for a time the law of life, "omne vivum ex ovo."

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