

this has been an advantage to the evolution of the human race as a whole is a disputable point. Karl Pearson says:

The very existence of human society depends upon a strong gregarious instinct, having been evolved among men. Our highest human product, sympathy with our fellow men, is as much a product of evolution as the gregarious instinct of a herd of deer, or the combined action of a pack of wolves. Only it is more completely developed, and with increasing knowledge we have lost more and more touch with its instinctive gratification. The sympathy is there, ready to run riot in a thousand ways, which sober reflection may not show to be for the ultimate advantage of the herd. It is easy to give a shilling to a beggar, to subscribe a pound to a charity, or to found stipends for the blind or the deaf and dumb. Our strong instinct of sympathy with suffering has been gratified, but shall we really have contributed to the total enjoyment of the race? May be, and may be not—the pedigrees of general medical and physical degeneracy which I place before you may help you to a judgment. Of one thing, however, I feel sure, that no judgment will lead to lasting social gain which is reached by appeal to the emotions, which is based on inadequate knowledge of facts, or which collects data with the view of supporting any preconceived opinion.

The Scriptures say that it is more blessed to give than to receive, and I think I can claim, on behalf of our profession that, whether we have always been right or not, we have been ever actuated by a spirit of altruism. The process of vicarious charity, at the expense of the medical profession, has gradually grown so that in the present day at least a fourth of the population of England receives free medical advice. Why should all this charity be necessary? Why should such a large proportion of the population be pauperized? It would seem to me that it is because we are producing an inferior breed, because we are not raising up a healthy, independent race. The struggle for existence is not merely an individual question, but it is becoming more and more a national question, and the nation which produces the finest race is sure to win in the long run. As Professor Arthur Thomson says,

what children usually die of is their parents, and what a nation dies of is lack of men.

In future medical men must not be content with treating the diseases of the community, they must point out the lines along which the nation is to be improved by encouraging the multiplication of the fit, and controlling the increase of the unfit. The public must be taught that the health of the nation is its most valuable asset, and that the maintenance of health is of much more importance than the treatment of disease. This departure in placing physiological processes before pathology involves a higher form of medical education than that prevalent in our medical schools of today—an education in which only men of the highest intelligence should take part.

“Prevention is better than cure” is one of those half-truths which readily command public acceptance as axioms which cannot be gainsaid; but it is not Nature’s method, and medical men are incessantly talking about following the laws of Nature. The prevention of disease is very important to the individual, but when it enables undesirables to go on generation after generation propagating their species it can be of no advantage to the race. In an address on preventive medicine which I gave four years ago I stated that if the public were only alive to their own interests they would pay medical men liberally for directing them in the paths of truth and in the ways of health rather than for treating their diseases. If the money which is spent in the treatment of disease were devoted to the preservation of health, our huge hospitals would not be half filled, purveyors of synthetic remedies and artificial foods might find a suitable place in a home for the destitute, the necessity for surgeons and specialists would largely disappear and physicians would be fully occupied in advising their *clientèle* on the preservation of health and in looking after the aged. I am afraid we are still a long way off those halcyon days when our hospital buildings will be pointed out as relics of a decadent age; but still we should at least aim at transmitting high ideals to our successors. We can best attain those ideals by improving the stock; no environment will ever produce a genius.

Hitherto medical men have been devot-