

ASEXUALIZATION AS A REMEDY FOR CRIME.

It is generally admitted that in our present methods of dealing with crime and criminals by imprisonment, we not only utterly fail to remedy the tendency to evil doing among the criminal classes, but by keeping people of varying degrees of badness closely associated together, we bring them all down to the level of the worst. So that, as a rule, the criminal comes out of prison very much worse than when he went in. It is also well known that the criminal tendencies of the father are transmitted to the offspring to a greater or less extent; and as there is nothing to limit the number of children a hardened criminal may leave behind him, the country is being burdened every year more and more with the support of these parasites on society. Although the honest citizen is protected for the period of the criminal's incarceration from the latter's depredation, still the former is punished as well as the criminal, for he has to work, not only for the support of himself and his own family, but he has to contribute largely toward the feeding and clothing of the burglar and his numerous progeny.

Moreover, under our present system, the cost of supporting the criminal class may be considered a fixed charge on the community. There is no hope of it ever being any less, but on the contrary it may be taken for granted that it will continually increase, and the worst of it is the honest and industrious have to bear the expense of raising a great generation of criminals who will in due time prey upon them. Another injury which the habitual criminal inflicts upon the working class is the competition of convict labor with free labor.

And yet a remedy for all these defects is easily found: Dr. Orpheus Everts, in an able article in the *Cincinnati Lancet Clinic*, recommends asexualization as a penalty for crime and the reformation of criminals. He formulates his propositions thus: "Surgical asexualization of all criminals convicted of offences that, circumstantially considered, indicate constitutional deformities that are recognized as transferable by heredity, is not only practicable but expedient for the protection of society against the ever impending danger of invasion by the savages of civilization, known as the vicious, criminal, or defective classes,—and would, properly enforced by law, eventuate in an effectual diminution of crime and the reformation of criminals."

There was a well known case recorded of one prostitute or female tramp, having left a progeny of over 150 criminals, including perpetrators of nearly every kind of crime in the calendar. Had she been spayed on her second or third conviction,—she was convicted a great number of times,—the country would have been saved the care of this small army of outlaws.

The writer terminates his article as follows: "Imprisonment alone for short terms at labor or in solitude, however cruelly or humanely practised with usual instruction or without, protects society but partially and for short intervals, and fails signally to reform the imprisoned or diminish the number of the classes to which they belong. Were each man or woman returned to society from penitentiaries deprived of reproductive capabilities, how different would be the story. Public sentiment might not now sustain such an innovation. The public sentiment of the future is destined to be more improved by science, and will eventually adopt its suggestions in matters of state craft and social economics, including criminal jurisprudence, as well as in other affairs of life."

THE CODE OF ETHICS OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

ART. III.—*Of the duties of physicians as respects vicarious offices.*

I. The affairs of life, the pursuit of health, and the various accidents and contingencies to which a medical man is peculiarly exposed sometimes require him temporarily to withdraw from his duties to his patients, and to request some of his professional brethren to officiate for him. Compliance with this request is an act of courtesy, which should always be performed with the utmost consideration for the interest and character of the family physician; and when exercised for a short period, all the pecuniary obligations for such service should be awarded to him. But if a member of the profession neglect his business in quest of pleasure and amusement, he cannot be considered as entitled to the advantages of the frequent and long-continued exercise to this fraternal courtesy, without awarding to the physician who officiates the fees arising from the discharge of his professional duties.

In obstetrical and important surgical cases, which give rise to unusual fatigue, anxiety and responsibility, it is just that the fees accruing therefrom should be awarded to the physician who officiates.