

Reprinted from the *New York Medical Journal* for
October 9, 1920.

AN EARLY VIEW OF VENEREAL DISEASE

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The terrible prevalence of venereal diseases has been forced upon the attention of the Canadian government and a national council has been formed to assist the central and local governments in combating the evil. As president of this council I was led to examine again what some of the older authorities had to say about these diseases.

From a somewhat extensive collection of ancient medical literature in my library, I select as one of the most instructive and interesting a volume of 516 pages, licensed September 2, 1664, and published in London in the following year. The title of the work is *Medela Medicinæ, a Plea for the Free Profession and a Renovation of the Art of Physick*. The author is given as M. N., Med. Londinensis, the motto *Medice cura teipsum*. It is known, however, that the author was Marchmont Nedham (or Needham), a versatile journalist (1).

Medela Medicinæ, healing of medicine, is an attack on the formal practice of the physicians of the time. It attacks the Methodists who strictly followed rule, Galenists who care not if a patient die so long as he has been treated *secundum artem* ("Let him die, if he will, so he die *secundum artem*." (2), like Balzac's physician of Mantua, who "did not only not particularly inquire into the cure of diseases but boasted that he had killed a man by the fairest method in the world." The writer urges