

## CHAPTER V.

### THE PUBLIC HEALTH CONTROL AND PERSONAL PROPHYLAXIS OF SYPHILIS AND GONORRHOEA.

*The Public Health Control of Syphilis and Gonorrhœa.*—Public health control of the genital infections is meant to include those elements which organized public health work contributes directly to the campaign against these diseases. As legitimate parts of public health activity we must rate the systematic suppression of temptation to indecency involved in the abolition of prostitution, and the extinction of the liquor traffic. No attempt to control syphilis and gonorrhœa deserves serious consideration until it has a thoroughly organized and uncompromising policy with reference to these two factors. The gross stimulation of sexual impulses must go. This and other essentials of a public health campaign against syphilis and gonorrhœa are admirably illustrated in the policy of the United States Government as outlined by Major Sawyer, and need not be duplicated here.

*The Church and the Problem.*—Attention has already been called to a point of contact between the church and the problem, which deserves re-emphasizing; that is, the influence of the former over the solemnization of marriage. Few obligations seem more obvious than that the institution which stands determinedly for the inviolability of this moral and social bond should feel a direct sense of obligation in determining the fitness of those who enter into it. The clergyman and the priest are exercising their highest function in company with the physician and the parent when they feel toward the marriages of their parishioners a sense of responsibility greater than that attached to any other duty which they may perform. If they feel that sense of responsibility, the marrying parson and the ecclesiastical marriage mill will cease to exist. A closer guardianship of the entrance into marriage will obviate the necessity for so much emphasis on divorce, inasmuch as the permanence of the bond is directly proportional not to penalties placed on its violation, but to the wisdom that presided when it was entered into.

*The New Responsibilities of the Medical Profession.*—The awakening with respect to syphilis and gonorrhœa will place new responsibilities upon the medical profession, to which attention has been directed from time to time in this study.

The existing situation is not satisfactory. It is unsatisfactory, not because the physician does not feel the need for better things and does not seek them, but because better things have not been available. To know syphilis and gonorrhœa one must be taught, and taught not by men to whom the subject is incidental drudgery, but by enthusiasts. Such men have formed no part of the staff of the medical schools of the past. Even to-day the number of schools which are teaching syphilis and gonorrhœa with the energy that their place in medicine and public health