

He may never see either again nor does he bother about it; he has too much to do and can employ what small amount of leisure time he has in some more profitable employment. Nor does it hurt him to be accused by his envious confreres of being incompetent, a stealer of patients. The fact of having a large practice is evidence in itself of being successful and in demand and in this as in everything else "nothing succeeds like success."

One word of parting advice. Defaming others and accusing them of incompetence and of stealing patients advertises them and increases their revenue and success. Look to your own affairs and try to make success on your own merits. Study, and treat patients properly, do not have any petty vices or bad habits, be clean morally and physically, and mind your own business and you will be a success. You will have so much to do that you will not be able to pick out the flaws in others and as a reward, you will become one of the successful 'patient stealers.'—*Medical Review.*

## Progress of Science.

### THE INFLUENCE OF HEREDITY IN THE PREVENTION OF DISEASE.

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I have ventured to call attention to this most important, but most difficult and indefinite subject, not with the hope of making any original additions to our knowledge of it, but simply to question how we are to interpret some of the facts already known and to provoke a general discussion of the subject in the light of wider and riper experience. We so often hear and read of the influence of heredity in the production and propagation of disease, and the subject in its concrete form is so frequently thrust upon us in our professional experience, that we are, I think, in no small danger of neglecting and almost forgetting the other and larger form of its action, and of regarding it as an almost malevolent rather than as a grandly beneficent influence. It is too often true, from the pathologist's as well as from the historian's point of view, that "the evil that men do lives after them, the good is oft interred with their bones." A few painful instances of inherited taint or predisposition are

allowed to subtend a larger angle in our mind's eye than a silent host of cases of equally truly inherited immunity, or vigor that defies attack. Our most deeply rooted and fundamental characteristics have come down to us through a long illustrious line of mammalian and pre-mammalian descent, by a rigorous selection and perpetuation of the useful and healthful results of heredity, and are not to be smothered or perverted by the upstart legacies of an odd generation or two of morbid action. The pedigree of the most aristocratic of diseases is but of mushroom length. The inheritance of abnormality of structure is rigidly self-limited, partly by the disadvantages at which it places its possessors and partly by the strong tendency of the system to revert to earlier and more vigorous and serviceable types. This tendency of our oldest ancestral traits to assert their supremacy we term the *vis medicatrix nature*—that sleeping lion to rouse which into action all our drugs and remedies are but as feeble stings and javelins. Heredity is not only vigorously limited in its influence for evil, but is the very basis of all remedial action. And, when we come to examine it closely, its evil influence is almost purely of a negative character—an absence of vigor, not the presence of a virus. Inherited deficiency suffers and cries out loudly for relief. Inherited vigor can take care of itself, and is silent with the great, calm silence of Nature. Are we not in danger of allowing our view of the question to be unconsciously influenced by this state of affairs even to the extent of regarding and speaking of disease as an independent entity with boundless powers of self-propagation and extension? We gloomily talk about disease being on the increase. We vehemently urge our legislators to prevent the marriage of consumptives, to restrain inebriates from propagating their kind, to forbid the bans of all whose pedigree shows the taint of insanity, as if the whole race were threatened with physical degeneracy, unless something be done to take the case out of the incompetent hands of Nature. We write of the consumptive, the neurasthenic, the epileptic, as a much-to-be-dreaded source of lasting danger to the community and to future generations, instead of as one whom Nature has branded with her verdict, "Weighed and found wanting" and marked for destruction. We seem almost to forget that even when the unfortunate sufferer escapes an immediate or directly fatal termination and succeeds in maintaining an existence for two-thirds or three-fourths of the natural term, of all his vital functions the reproductive suffers first and most severely, as is shown in the well known infertility of wild animals in captivity, the suppression of menstruation in consumptive females, and the deadly abortifacient effect upon both sperm and germ of the syphilitic virus. When the vigor of the organism is sufficient to resist the tendency