

SELECTED ARTICLES.

ON THE PRESENT STATUS OF THERAPY AND ITS FUTURE.*

By LEWELLYS F. BARKER, M.B., *Tor.*,
Associate Professor of Pathology, Johns Hopkins University.

The only means we have of judging what the future has in store is to review the history of the past and to view accurately the present tendency or drift. The history of therapy is the history of medicine, for medicine began with therapy. It is not my purpose in the time allotted to me to undertake a recital of this history; I shall have to be content simply with an enumeration of epochs and perhaps a hint at the periods of progress.

Historians are gradually collecting for us the data concerning the earliest therapeutic efforts. The history of the earliest medicine shows of what a jumble these efforts consisted. With the dawn of intelligence the sympathy which was gradually evolved through the sense of pain led the primitive man to attempt to relieve the pain of his fellows. You recall the lines of a literary medical man :

"The hunt is o'er; the stone-armed spears have won;
Dead on the hillside lies the mastodon.
Unmoved the warriors their wounded leave;
The world is young and has not learned to grieve.
But one, a gentler sharer of the fray,
Waits in the twilight of the western day,
Where 'neath his gaze a cave-man, hairy, grim,
Groans out the anguish of his mangled limb.
Caught in the net of thought the watcher kneels,
With tender doubt the tortured member feels,
And, first of men a healing thought to know,
He finds his hand can check the life-blood's flow.

Disease is as old as man—it is only the knowledge of disease that is recent. In the fiercer physical struggle for existence which must have characterized the life of our primitive forefathers, external wounds and mangleings, as well as physical injuries due to exposure to the weather, to extremes of cold and heat, must have been common. Crude surgical procedures evolved by herdsman or shepherd began to be applied to man. The diseases peculiar to the female sex were first treated by the wise old women who had lived through the mysteries of the life of that sex. Of the nature of disease in general and particular the ghost of a true idea did not exist. Obscure diseases were regarded as instances of demoniacal possession. Prayers, chants and sacrifices to healing goods were univer-

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