

form a charm by words of incantation over a sick man is the act of a savage, and pouring a few drops of medicated fluid into his mouth betokens only too often an equally ignorant and debased mental condition. A rational system of treatment, founded on natural methods, and necessarily requiring time, comes only with culture and enlightenment.

I take it, however, that nearly all public work which has been rationally attempted for the health of the community by societies like this has had reference to the removal or avoidance of those deleterious influences which produce specific diseases, and the object has been to prevent the occurrence or spread of the latter by improvements in drainage, ventilation, and in similar measures of the kind; but there is another class of diseases besides the specific, which are far more important for us to consider, viz. those which are slowly and insidiously affecting us by causes inherent within us, and by influences which are continually surrounding us. There is, therefore, a natural primary division of diseases into two classes—the one in which our bodies are suddenly attacked from without by a subtle morbid agency, spreading its devastating effects over young and old; the other class in which the cause has its origin within us and the results are more slowly brought about. The destruction in the one case is like what happens in the body politic, which, although compact and united, is overpowered by the superior strength of the enemy; in the other case it resembles an internal decay arising from civil wars springing up in the midst of the community. An epidemic may now and then come upon us as a fearful scourge, and alarm us by its sudden fury, and by our futile attempts to ward off its blows; but the mortality produced by it is nothing compared with that which is caused by consumption, bronchitis, apoplexy, or liver disease. It is therefore equally important to endeavor to discover under what circumstances these common diseases are produced and by what means they can best be averted. Now in this attempt we have to consider the nature or temperament of the individual to be acted upon as well as the circumstances surrounding him which are prone to be injurious; and if a morbid condition or derangement of the system is set up we call that 'the disease.' Most of these derangements or maladies derive their name from the manifest disturbance of some particular organ, and we are accustomed to say that the seat of the disease is situated there; but we often mean nothing more than the derangement is most conspicuous at that particular spot. It has been said that life rests upon a triphod, this being composed of three vital organs, the brain, the lungs, and the heart, and that if