

WHAT THE PUBLIC DEMAND.

It is to be noted that the public demand from the medical man an absolute dogmatism and an unwavering assumption of knowledge. The lawyer may talk to his client of the uncertainties of the law, of issues that are open to doubt, of conclusions that may prove to be wrong. The sick man will have none of this. He requires to know the name, nature, and intent of his disorder. He will listen to no possibilities. The adviser who owns that he does not know is soon replaced by the counsellor that does. This demand for absolute dogmatism—which is not always limited to the unintelligent—makes the path of the practitioner hard and possibly devious. Medicine is now fortunately approaching the state of a precise science, yet in olden days it shared with poetry the most favorable arena for the display of imagery and invention. The medieval patient demanded from his physician the truth, when the supply of that commodity was as limited as that of radium. As neither truth nor absolutism could be furnished from exact knowledge the deficiency had to be made good by fiction. The less that was known the more there was that must needs be invented. At this juncture there appeared, in the place of knowledge, that comforting fancy, the humoral pathology. The physician's real ignorance was pleasantly hidden by the assurance that a certain malady was due to a "mucous humor," while another owed its origin to the working of a "sanguineous humor." The sick man was satisfied by the ingenious myths, and the bewildered physician had peace. At the present day there is neither need nor excuse for gratuitous invention. It is not even necessary to babble of the patient's "constitution"—whatever that may be—of his lack of "tone," or of other agreeable matters which belong the limbo of mere words. On the other hand, there is a mass of sterling facts available which will satisfy all the demands of the unreasonable, and he who will be convincing in counsel must not only have them in his grasp, but must possess in addition a knowledge of the traits of those who wait upon his utterances.

THE VALUE OF SYMPATHY.

In every pursuit which deals intimately with the concerns of man sympathy counts for much. This quality is something more than a mere profession of kindness aptly expressed by suitable platitudes. It is rather such an attitude of mind as may be reached by any who can project themselves into another's place. The physician who is able to conceive of a disease not only as his art should show it him, but as it appears to the view of his patient, has grasped the foundations of therapeutics. Such a twofold vision will accredit him not only with gentleness and consideration, but also with tact and insight. Want of thought implies a greater void than want of heart when the lack involves an ignoring of the sick