

as is now being attempted, they, too, are going to indulge in this most delightful mode of locomotion.

#### HEALTHY OFFSPRING—RACE IMPROVEMENT.

The Japanese, according to the Hospital Gazette, use their reasoning powers in the selection of a partner in a way we outer barbarians might envy. The physical antecedents of a girl are thoroughly scrutinised, and candidates with any diathetic or hereditary taint are infallibly blackballed. Would that a little of this caution could be introduced into our "courting" customs instead of leaving this important question to be decided by passion, proverbially blind, or interest, not less proverbially indiscriminating, from a health point of view. At the last annual meeting of the California State Medical Society, the president, Dr. Lindley, in his address, said: While in many ways the human race is progressing, and while the world is more temperate and charitable than in ages past, yet in many things we are really retrograding. Particularly is this the case in regard to the importance of raising healthy children. The Spartan woman's business was to be the mother of brave and robust children. This was one of the principal points observed by Plato in his Philosophical Republic. Recently the State Board of Health, perceiving the contagious nature of tuberculosis, have requested all Superior judges, before sentencing a prisoner to the State penitentiary, to have him examined by the county physician in order that special measures may be taken to prevent the contraction of this disease by other criminals. This movement we all applaud. But if the lives of these malefactors are so important, are not the lives of those who do not belong to the criminal class important? Why should not the State adopt some means to prevent the marriage of individuals who have diseases that would be likely to be perpetuated in the offspring? There is not a physician before me to-day but knows of marriages that he realized were unwise at the time they were made, and that resulted in children who were born to suffering, sickness, and early death.

Now, what remedy can we offer for this terrible state of affairs, which is said to be undermining the strength of the people of California? If the county physician can

examine every criminal before he is sent to the penitentiary, why should not every man and woman who desire a license for marriage be required, before such license is issued, to show the county clerk a certificate from the county physician certifying that both he and she are free from any taint of consumption, gonorrhoea, syphilis, or scrofula? We certainly should do as much to protect the human race from degeneracy as the farmer would to protect the breed of his horses and cattle.

#### ON NATIONAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS—A SINGLE HEAD ADVOCATED.

At the forty-first Annual Meeting last month of the American Medical Association, the president, Dr. Moore, of Rochester, took for the subject of his address, Hygiene and its relation to the Government. He said—"The National Board of Health had a splendid record. It had achieved a success that was the most remarkable in the history of hygiene. The Marine-Hospital Service, founded in 1798, was, he said, the most active and prominent among the functionaries of health under the direct rules of the National Government. There was still another field for sanitary action—that of the consideration of animal diseases. In 1884 the Bureau of Animal Industry had been organized for the study of the contagious diseases of cattle, and placed under the control of the Commissioner of Agriculture, who had been successful in arresting the spread of pluro-pneumonia. The speaker then reviewed the work of this branch of the Government. The Government had shown willingness to advance in the great march of hygiene, but did not take the initiative. Taking up the question of the regulation of commerce, he asked if a national board of health would meet the requirements indicated in the exclusion of epidemics from our borders, their passage from State to State, the hygiene of cars, the drainage of swamps in malarial districts, the prevention of adulteration of food, and various other matters which would come within its province. The work would be too great for such a body. The Secretary of the Treasury was now obliged to make regulations through the Marine-Hospital Service. The service had its own labors, and the army, the navy, and the Bureau of Animal Industry had