

for women than for children, and a greater elective affinity for old than for young women.

Without denying that there is such a thing as elective action I would suggest that by professing to explain the way in which lead singles out one of several victims by the term of "elective action," we are in many cases just glossing over our ignorance by a plausible and pretty figure of speech. There must be some causes for the elective action of lead, and, although in many cases they may elude us, let us endeavor to search for them, and not take refuge in such an empty phrase as "elective action." I suggest, as one explanation of this elective action, that whatever hinders metabolism or checks excretion will enhance the susceptibility to lead poisoning. Children with active metabolic processes and vigorous excretory organs rarely suffer. Women, whose kidneys are less often afflicted with Bright's disease than those of men, are less frequently the subjects of lead poisoning; while my own cases suggest that young women suffer much less severely than old ones. *A priori* there is a strong presumption that men, from more frequent exposure to sources of poisoning, should suffer more often than women. But this presumption can only be held when the cases of workers in lead are considered. In my twenty-two cases one man and one woman were poisoned by lead other than that derived from lead service pipes. Twenty cases remain—thirteen in males and seven in females, or not quite two to one. In all these cases the source of the lead, on chemical examination, was found to be the drinking water.

Now, in cases of poisoning from a water-supply, it is the wife and not the husband, who is the more exposed to the poison. She spends her greater part of her time at home; she takes all her meals at home, and often takes supplementary meals or cups of tea when her lord and master is at business. It is, therefore, much more likely that she and her little ones will imbibe more of the toxic material than her frequently absent spouse. The point was illustrated in the case of *Milnes v. the Corporation of Huddersfield*. The plaintiff, a solicitor of Huddersfield, being lead-poisoned, sought for the lead, not in the domestic