

are things not explained nor dreamt of in his philosophy, will look for more facts yet before he rushes into such a wretched crudity as the fæcal theory of propagation.

The manner in which this sudden visitation died out is certainly remarkable. That the pump-handle should have been removed on the 12th, and that no case should have occurred after the 13th, is a fact which deserves attention. The water of the well was undoubtedly very unwholesome, and may possibly have predisposed the Abbey-row population to develop an imported contagion. We will not dogmatize upon the subject further than to declare our positive conviction that unwholesome water, like any other cause of depression, will not only render the constitution more prone to receive a morbid poison, but less able to survive its effects.

But there is a general reflection suggested by these cases of cholera. The warning has been sounded. It was so in former times. A few cases at Sunderland in October, 1831—and “mourning and lamentation and woe” in 1832. It was so in 1848, and the next year we had a fierce but short visitation. Again, we had a warning in 1853, and in the following year there perished in this city alone nearly 10,000 souls. And so it will be again. We are no gloomy vaticinators, but we cannot shut out the conviction that cholera is upon us. We may have it next year.

With the past to guide us, however, we may accomplish much. There are six clear months before us for sanitary improvements—six months for organizing a thoroughly efficient staff of officers, and for pre-arranging a concerted method of action. There ought to be the most vigorous and rapid progress in sanitary matters during the ensuing half-year, for the avenger is behind us, and do what we may it will go hardly but many a home is desolated, and many a loved friend laid low.

IF the late action against the quack extortioner “KAHN” should fail to put anyway persons on their guard, it will not be the fault of THE LANCET. For years an iniquitous quackery has been practised in this metropolis and other large towns in this kingdom, with results so disastrous to the public health and morality, that it is impossible to estimate the gravity of the evil. KAHN is but a type of a herd of illiterate and unprincipled adventurers, who fatten upon the weaknesses and diseases of mankind. The system has been pursued almost without any check from legislation; indeed, the law hitherto seems to have favoured the quack extortion. It remains to be seen whether Lord CAMPBELL’S Act will have any influence in arresting the progress of these harpies. If it fail in doing so, it will be a grievous misfortune. A Medical Reform Bill, containing a stringent clause respecting the assumption of medical titles by unprincipled and unqualified persons may do much; but exposures will do more. Already the late trial in the Bloomsbury County Court has had its good results. It has had the effect of excluding from the columns of *The Times* the advertisements of the filthy museum in Coventry-street, and has enlisted in the cause of morality and the profession the valuable labours of *Punch*, *Lloyd’s Newspaper*, *The Morning Star*, and other journals of large circulation. If the public press generally were true to its mission, the career of such extortioners as KAHN would soon be at an end. But, alas! it is not so. Filthy and obscene advertisements are still admitted into the great majority of the public papers. Last

week a correspondent forwarded to us nearly a column of these documents which he had cut out from one of the morning papers. He observed, that the papers containing such advertisements were unfit to be placed upon the table of a man who had sons and daughters; and he suggested that every respectable medical practitioner should forward a remonstrance to the conductors of those periodicals who admitted offensive and obscene appeals to the credulity and ignorance of their readers. The hint is not without its value. If the profession were united in discouraging the papers which admit these offensive advertisements, the result would be more decisive than any legislative enactment. This is a public question. The public are the sufferers. The money extorted by quacks is so much loss to the public, but takes nothing from the pockets of the profession. Legitimate practitioners, when any real disease presents itself, have at length to be consulted. The shattered constitution, the broken spirit of the quack’s patient, must, in the order of things, eventually come under the treatment of the honourable practitioner. That which in its original condition could have been arrested or cured in the course of a few days, or weeks at most, becomes, after the quack-treatment, a serious and lengthened disease. “Bad surgeons,” said JOHN HUNTER, “are like bad carpenters, they make work for the good ones.” The maltreatment of the quack furnishes a prolific source of income to the educated practitioner. As in the furtherance of all other sanitary measures, the attempt to suppress quackery has not a selfish object on the part of the profession; on the contrary, its suppression must be injurious to the mere pecuniary interests of honourable men. But all men educated in the true principles of medicine, which have for their object the alleviation of the sorrows and miseries of mankind, are anxious to shake off the merest semblance of connexion with a herd of mercenary adventurers, whose only object is to grow rich by acting in opposition to all those rules of conduct which guide honourable men.

KAHN’S Museum is about to be removed. If the alteration of locality effects no change in the character of that disgusting exhibition, the authorities are bound, by every principle of honesty and morality, to put it down. If they fail in this, the public press will assuredly not fail; it will still continue to raise its voice against extortion and obscenity.

Medical Annotations.

“Ne quid nimis.”

PROSTITUTION—THE NEED FOR ITS REFORM.

“THIS,” said Mr. Disraeli in a recent speech, “I believe to be the age of statistical imposture;” and an ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer should be no mean authority on such a point. As concerns prostitution, the elaborate statistics collected represent in only a faint degree the amount of evil that is doing. Like a hideous parasite, it has swollen into rank and filthy luxuriance in the shade thrown over it. Its dimensions have been very accurately measured. We know, on the best authority,* that one house in sixty in London is a brothel, and one in every sixteen females (of all ages) is, *de facto*, a prostitute. Yet, startling as these figures appear, we repeat that they convey but a feeble impression of the effects produced on Society by the mass of sanctioned wickedness thus represented. High and low, rich and poor, the virtuous and the vicious, alike

* Mr. Talbot and other careful observers calculate the number of brothels in London at 5000, and the number of prostitutes at 80,000.

present evidence of the taint. We plume ourselves on the decorum of our court; yet the sworn testimony of many witnesses in frequent trials proves that there is a strong undercurrent of licentiousness and immorality—that the powerful influences of the most virtuous court in Europe is no match for the allurements of Dalilah—that the high and mighty rush from the fane of the patrician Pudicitia to abase themselves in the temple of the Immodest Venus. There is, to be sure, a flimsy veil thrown over such doings—and herein only does the vice of the courtier differ from that of the costermonger, who attempts no concealment, but lives openly in his sin. “But one in twenty,” says Mr. Mayhew, “of the street folks, who live as man and wife, are married;” and if their matter-of-fact lives are passed in sin, by whom is the first stone to be cast?

It is, however, amongst the middle classes—incomparably the most important to the welfare of a state—that the chief mischief is done by the evil that they are the most persistent in ignoring. The typical Pater-familias, living in a grand house near the park, sees his sons allured into debauchery, dares not walk with his daughters through the streets after nightfall, and is disturbed from his night-slumbers by the drunken screams and foul oaths of prostitutes reeling home with daylight. If he look from his window, he sees the pavement—his pavement—occupied by the flaunting daughters of sin, whose loud, ribald talk forces him to keep his casement closed. Yet he refuses to sanction any practical means for remedying the evil, or to lend his aid to its reform. He not only allows the dirt to accumulate, because it is dirt, but scrupulously carries out the social code under which prostitution has so notably increased of late years.

It has grown into a custom to oppose to marriage every resistance that the most over-strained prudence can suggest; except under circumstances seldom attained until middle life by a man of good and even high social position. In the meantime society cares little what may be his private life during the long years that he is ineligible. It has even invented a lying, wicked phrase about his “sowing his wild oats,” (as though God had freighted him with wickedness which must perforce be scattered abroad,) in order to shift the burden on his shoulders, and thus avoid the recollection that every incentive to immorality is encouraged to lead him astray, and that even if he would avoid the “social sin that wars against the strength of youth,” his resolves are combated by temptation from which there is no escape, and vice that dogs his very footsteps in the streets, and solicits him to evil

“By unchaste looks, loose gesture, and foul talk.”

The effects of this arrangement may be easily surmised: men marry at more advanced ages, or not at all. Of women in London above twenty years of age, forty per cent. are unmarried. In England and Wales nearly 50,000 illegitimate children are born whose mothers have all taken the first step in prostitution. And this number, it is supposed, scarcely amounts to one-third of the actual cases where wrong is done, yet no evidence of shame transpires. If we remember that in no case does any legal penalty attach to the betrayer for the wrong he has done to the woman, whilst the cordon of prudery is drawn so tight around her that she has little chance of escape from the wide-opened portals of the way that leads to destruction, it can hardly be wondered that the ranks of prostitution are densely filled. And now the hollow hypocrisy of the present system begins to show itself. The woman who has cast virtue behind her, who has said, in the bitterness of her heart, “Evil, be thou my good,” is accorded a licence granted to none others of her sex. She may come and go as she will; no law restrains her—no thought of “what the world will say.” The best streets are given up to her, and arranged so as to suit her hours (we refer to police management, gas-lighting, cab-stands, &c.) She may thrust virtue into the mud without rebuke, may leer at the passers-by, accost them with her solicitations, and insult them if they shrink from contact with

her. In her haunts she reigns omnipotent; for the fortunes of many tradesmen are built up by the wages of prostitution. Taverns, cafés, restaurants, &c., where she resorts, are allowed to remain open all night for her convenience. And, lest her allurements should fail for want of gaudy trappings, there are booths in Vanity Fair, (whose owners pride themselves on moral characters of the choicest kind,) kept by traders called “tally-men,” who supply her with clothes on terms especially adapted to her precarious trade, charging exorbitant prices to cover all risks, and being paid by instalments. How these are gained is matter of indifference to men who would scarcely have hesitated to pocket the thirty pieces that Judas cast from him. It is in grateful acknowledgment of these provisions for their comfort that loose women flock to London from all parts of Europe.

Turning from the prostitute to her companion, we see how the evil that she does gradually makes itself felt. There is many a slang word used in the *boudoir* which, though uttered by lips that know no guile, is only a left-off epithet of the harlot, carried home by her paramour, and taught to his sisters. For one miserable result of unrestrainedly permitting these women and their companions to assemble in public places and exchange the kind of banter in which they indulge, is the production of a race of wretched boys, half-fledged in manhood, who take pride in a knowledge of what is vile, who think they are clever when they are only blasphemous, and witty when they are only obscene.

The one fool who especially makes many, is the vicious fool. Thus clerks, students, youths with homes rendered sad by their evil conduct, men who take the Queen’s money and disgrace her service, with many others of like sort, are attracted by companions, or entrapped by harlots, to join the Saturnalia allowed to continue throughout the night in certain of the streets of London. The first visit is seldom the last; for the vice of sensuality is to degraded minds as attractive as the vice of gambling. There is work to be done, perchance, in the morning; but the shaking hand, the heavy eyes, the aching head, are unfit to do it. Perhaps there is a path in life to be won; but he who walks in sin is little likely to hap upon it. And if the poor deluded fool follows out the evil course that our present social system renders it difficult for him to altogether escape, his physical degradation too frequently keeps pace with his mental depravity. His settlement in life is but that of a foul sediment. Vitiated himself, and “*mox daturus progeniem vitiosorem*,” his constitution too often points to twelve on the dial of life whilst his years are at six.

These, then, are the pet, prodigal children of Society; these are the bright results of non-interference with the vice of prostitution; these are the human beings tempted or driven into vice, and for whom Society has so carefully chosen and ploughed the ground that they may “sow their wild oats” unchecked.

Oh! blind, shirking, hypocritical criers of “Peace!” when there is no peace—who is it reaps the harvest?

DENTAL DISPENSARIES.

OUR London thieves have been accredited with a professional skill that enables them to “steal the very teeth out of your head.” And this is literally true as regards one class of this gentry—the quack dentists; only one degree less injurious than the quack doctors, because their power is more limited. We refer to the folks who, without education or scientific knowledge, presume to announce themselves as dentists, and have often the barefaced impudence to assume the name of some deservedly celebrated man as “one of the firm,” the better to delude the public.

Every medical man is aware how important to digestion is proper mastication, and how essential to this is the possession of sound, or at least serviceable, teeth. Therefore the art of