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Contributors

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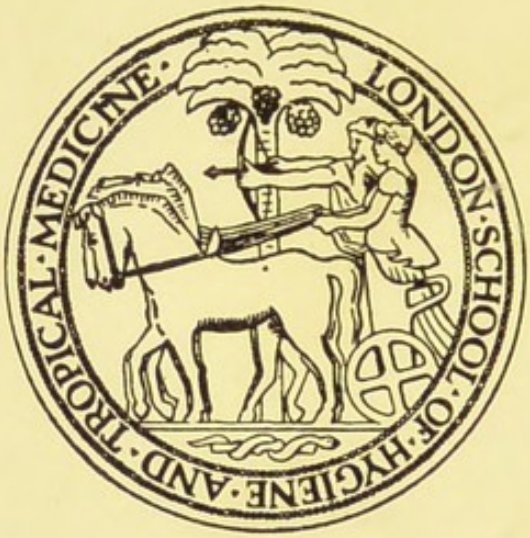
MARX & WILLIS
ON THE
DECREASE OF DISEASE



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ON THE

DECREASE OF DISEASE

EFFECTED BY THE

PROGRESS OF CIVILIZATION.

By C. F. H. MARX, M.D.

PROFESSOR OF MEDICINE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GÖTTINGEN, ETC.

AND

R. WILLIS, M.D.

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS, ETC.

LONDON:

LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS,

PATERNOSTER ROW.

1844.

WILSON AND OGILVY, 57, SKINNER STREET, SNOWHILL, LONDON.

TO

EDWIN CHADWICK, ESQ.

Barrister-at-Law, &c. &c.

Dear Sir,

There is no man in this great empire, whose name can be so appropriately placed at the head of an essay on the Decrease of Disease by the Progress of Civilization, as your own. Allow us the pleasure of placing it there, of expressing, at the same time, the high sense we entertain of your labours, and of associating you, though not of our profession, with its very highest offices,—the diminution of the causes of disease, and through this, the elevation of mankind in the intellectual and moral scale. Your General Report on the Sanitary State of Towns, is, beyond all question, one of the most valuable contributions that has lately been made to

the noblest department of medical science,—the Art of preserving the Health of the Community,—and will have an influence upon the human family as long as it exists.

With an expression of our sincere respect, and warmest sympathy with your labours,

Believe us,

Dear Sir,

To be yours very sincerely,

C. F. H. MARX,
R. WILLIS.

June 18th, 1844.

PREFACE

BY THE ENGLISH EDITOR.

My distinguished friend, Dr. Marx, won all hearts on the occasion of his visit to England in the summer of 1841, and I have always been anxious publicly to show him in what dear remembrance I hold his short stay among us, and how much I prize his friendship and esteem. It seemed to me that I could do this in no better way than by making him known in England in our mother tongue, and I have for some time intended to give to my professional brethren one or other of his smaller works in an English dress. The excellent essay of my friend, "On the Decrease of Disease effected by the Progress of Civilization," enables me, I trust, to present him to a wider circle than that which is merely professional, and thus to extend the sphere of his influence and usefulness.

Physicians have no place in the body politic; it would be well for humanity if they had; for who, since the revival of letters in Europe, have been fore-

most in every undertaking whose object has been to extend the boundaries of knowledge, and to exalt mankind? Who know half so much of the wants and the wishes, of the joys and the sorrows, of the community?—who are the friends and comforters, in adversity especially, of persons in every grade of life—from the sovereign and the peer, to the wretched outcast of the streets, houseless, homeless, friendless else? Who disarm pestilence of its power, and give Jenners to the world? Who follow in the field through the thickest of the fire, not that they may aid destruction in her work, but, God-like, that they may staunch the wounds she makes? In one word—the medical profession, medical men. The servant of religion hath not more of true sanctity about him than the good physician; the service, indeed, that was rendered of old in special temples to the Divinity conceived in one of his most beautiful attributes, is not yet extinct upon earth, but has its ministering priest, ennobled by Christianity, in every worthy member of the medical profession. Oh! let society cherish and exalt its medical community: let it become aware, that if *science* cannot aid it in its struggles with disease, neither can *ignorance;* that nothing can by possibility be known to the quacksalver and

empiric that is not familiar to the educated physician; that a youth of preparation, and a life, however protracted, of ceaseless devotion to his art, are all too little to familiarize him with all the varieties of disease, and the means of meeting them successfully; and that there is no access to the Temple of Medicine save through an intimate knowledge of the laws by which we live, and move, and have our being.

In publishing this little work, I ought to say that I have rather paraphrased than translated my friend; that I have often added to his words, sometimes retrenched from them, sometimes made him speak otherwise than he does of himself.—I had not only to make him speak English, but also to speak as an Englishman: in short, I had done so much, that it became necessary for me to submit the proof-sheets of the work to Dr. Marx, and it is with his concurrence and wish that my name is associated with his own on the title-page. In a letter which I lately received from him, he says: "Wie wir auf dem Titelblatte zusammenstehen, so wollen wir, wie die Dioscuren, treuvereint immer beisammen bleiben."

R. WILLIS.

ON THE

DECREASE OF DISEASE, &c.

We frequently hear complaints, to the effect that the present times, however rapidly and certainly they advance in a material and intellectual point of view, still fall short physically and morally of what they ought to be; that mankind are weaker and more fragile than they were once; that they are obnoxious to many more dangers now than formerly; and that diseases, in particular, have increased both in number and severity.

There is much that, on a hasty survey, seems to countenance such complaints; in especial, the excessive refinement of manners, and the luxuries which civilization brings in her train; whence effeminacy and debility;—whilst the swelling nomenclature of diseases, and the new and endless variety of means imagined for their cure, are assumed as unquestionable evidence of the fact, that matters are even going on with mankind from bad to worse.

Such a view, however, although it may greatly commend itself to us at first, is soon discovered, when fairly put to the proof, to be wholly without foundation. It will, therefore, I believe, be held as neither uninteresting nor unnecessary, if I undertake, by a somewhat circumstantial detail, to show that with the increase and spread of civilization, the sanatory condition of states and smaller communities has undergone an actual improvement; that diseases, far from augmenting, have rather been falling off in number, and decreasing in intensity; and that every onward step in the path of knowledge and true refinement has had a beneficial influence on the entire corporeal being of mankind.

It is, in fact, not difficult to show that the efforts of science, co-operating with a general humanity of manners, have succeeded not only in eradicating the seeds of many diseases, but even in arresting in the bud such as have come to life; so circumscribing them, that, finding no congenial soil, they have soon died out, never extending beyond the isolated spot in which they sprung.

It is unquestionable, indeed, that, with the progress of civilization, not only does population in general increase, but that the length of individual life is augmented, whilst the liability to sickness, and the amount of suffering to which every being born may be assumed as obnoxious, are lessened. Epidemical diseases, which, in the olden time, and even in ages not far removed from our own, were regarded as

necessary evils, and inseparable from our humanity, are now known within the bounds of truly policied nations by the name alone; and many which were looked upon as punishments for the perversity of the will and spirit, and as hindrances ordained of God in the way of the enjoyment of life, now receive their natural explanation, and meet with their successful remedies. Some of the evils which decimated the race of men still living, and destroyed at once the blessing of sight and the bloom of beauty, approach their end; whilst others that were held as the necessary accompaniments of corporeal and mental development, of arts and of industry, are now known and combated by enlightened theory and experience as strange intruders into the community.

We are perhaps even disposed to believe that a life of perfect freedom—a natural life, as it has been called, spent in tilling the ground, in fishing, in hunting, &c.—must afford the greatest number of hours for undisturbed enjoyment. The walk, the residence in the country, the excursion, which, with such wonderful certainty and celerity fill the mind with joy, shed such a comfortable sense of well-being over the whole material man, seem of themselves to give us assurance that the intercourse with nature is the secret of health, the panacea for the ills of earthly existence; and that separation from her has sickness and infirmity for its consequence. However true this may be in many respects, it is still indispensably necessary to draw the distinction between

that intercourse with nature which is taken as pastime, and for short intervals, and that which is necessary and incessant, and is given as a means of supporting life. The peasant, the fisherman, the hunter, have other tales to tell besides those that are connected with the pleasures and felicities of their several callings. What nature yields must mostly be won with patient endurance or with persevering toil. He who refers himself to her singly and alone, hath indeed room enough for the exercise of his powers; but he hath also a burthen on his shoulders heavy enough to bear.

In the absence of all occupation for the higher faculties, the soul dreams on but too readily in a slumbering or half waking state. But to real, to perfect health, harmony of the corporeal and spiritual aptitudes is indispensable. He who is nothing more than bodily whole, differs but little from the beasts.

The individual, like the kind, has indubitably other duties, other work to do, than by the nearest way to pursue health, and health alone. To secure this inestimable blessing, whilst other objects are attained, is one of the grand purposes of civilization. The cultivation of the higher powers is nowise in itself, and necessarily, coupled with aught that is pernicious. That mental culture is alone injurious to the body which proceeds without regard to time, or means, or measure. True culture knows best of all what measure is right, what means are proper, what time is fit, and to lay down those rules of being

and of doing which fulfil all that is needful to bodily as well as to spiritual health.

The requirements of society, results of our social state, but so often opposed to reason, the omnipotent behests of custom and of fashion, the various springs put into motion by passion and party spirit, are constant causes of a more passing or more permanent interruption of the sense of well-being; but with a little prudence, firmness, and reason, all of which are legitimate fruits of good education, the prejudicial influences of such circumstances may be greatly diminished, or entirely superseded. In no case are dark and clouded views of the civilized state significant enough to raise doubts of the comfort of its light and sunshine. The impressions made, the knowledge infused, the enlarged views engendered under the mighty influence of social co-operation, of the contemplation of noble works of art, of reading, of oral instruction, and of example, conscious and unconscious,—all arouse the corporeal energies also, and give them play and power. In virtue of the support derived from cultivated intellectual faculties, from acquired force of character and religious submissiveness, man becomes capable of giving ceaseless and successful battle to all the external influences that tend to his detriment. Good sense and moral equilibrium present themselves to us as the means best adapted for achieving elasticity and pliancy under the sorest bodily inflictions. The hardy nursling of rude nature, without all support from

higher sources, sinks, in general, under serious and continued illness, much more certainly and sooner than the tenderly nurtured son of refinement, who, from each achievement of science and art, from intellectual communion through books, from intercourse and conversation with relatives and friends, draws vital refreshment, as it were, from a never-failing spring.

The accounts we have from travellers who have lived long among uncivilized tribes and nations, differ materially in regard to the health and liability to disease of these communities. Whilst some speak of but few diseases as prevalent among them, others assure us that they had there observed the principal maladies to which we ourselves are subject. But when travellers notice few diseases, are we, therefore, certain that these are rarities in fact? Is not the reason rather to be sought for in the inhumanity of the natives, which is in some sort commanded by necessity, as it is sanctioned by custom, and the insufficiency of the remedial means with which they are acquainted? They are precisely those diseases which are most likely to meet the eye that are not seen among savages—chronic distempers, slow in their progress, consuming the body by degrees, against which science struggles with might and main, to which she only gives ground inch by inch, or which, more fortunate, she gradually compels to yield, and finally overcomes. Neither are those diseases observed among savage nations, the first

symptoms of which neglected or not duly met hurry the patient rapidly to his grave.

It is well known that fractures of the extremities in our domestic animals do not readily unite, in consequence of the impossibility of keeping them at rest: animals seldom lie; they pass the greater part of their lives standing. Their owners, therefore, rarely risk the trouble and expense of attempting a cure, the completeness and even moderate success of which is always problematical; so that the horse or ox which breaks his leg is usually put out of the way. But should we, therefore, say that fractures of the bones never occur among our domestic animals?

Tribes and nations which pass their time in war, and have always more or less of difficulty in providing for their wants in the essential article of food, cannot bestow the necessary care upon their sick when affected with lingering diseases. Simple good will is soon exhausted; the instinct of self-preservation prevails over natural affection even for the nearest relative; and in dull indifference, or with some show of sympathy, the victim of disease is by and by left to his fate.

In communities where every one who would be fed must both aid in procuring and deserve his ration, very little care can be taken of those who are affected in their mind, who can do no work, and are only felt as hindrances in the way of every enterprise. The insane are but a kind of corpses, which can only be restored to life through the continued self-sacrifice of the sane who surround them. Left to their fate, and soon sinking under privations from which they

cannot escape, they are, of course, more rarely met with among savage or half policied communities than in civilized societies, where every thing is done for their comfort and maintenance and restoration.

It is also difficult to conceive a life similar to that which we are wont to regard as having been led by man in his earliest estate, as either peculiarly pleasant in itself or advantageous to health; and when the olden poets tell us that the first races of men knew nothing of disease,* this is to be taken in the same sense as the assertion that before the fall the earth was without poisonous plants, and the rose without thorns.†

From a much deeper insight into the truth, we find another of the great poets of antiquity‡ ranking it among the benefits which Prometheus, besides the light and warmth of fire, conferred on the first of men, that he taught them physic:—

> ——————"When prostrate with disease,
> And means were none of cure,—no quickening drink,
> No soothing balm, nothing but death before them—
> 'Twas then they learned of me the art to draw
> The healing potion from the leaf and root."

To place the influence of civilization on the physical state of man in a true light, however, it is not

* Hesiod, for example (Opera et Dies, v. 90):—
Πρὶν μὲν γὰρ ζώεσκον επι χθονι φῦλ' ἀνθρώπων
Νόσφιν ἄτερ τε κακῶν, καὶ ἄτερ χαλεποῖο πόνοιο,
Νούσων τ' αργαλέων, αἵτ' ανδρασι γῆρας ἔδωκαν.
For once there dwelt on earth a race of men
Exempt from evil, from the need of toil,
And eke from each infirmity that brings
Untimely age on us.

† Etmüller, in Ephem. Natur. Curios. Cent. 7 et 8, App. p. 209.

‡ Æschylus, in the Prometheus Vinctus, v. 475—481.

enough to show that the increase of disease which is presumed to have followed in her train is apparent only; it is easy to do more than this; to prove that a large proportion of the causes of disease with which she has been charged, and which, indeed, are necessarily connected with her, are, nevertheless, diminished in their influence, neutralized, and in many cases made altogether inoperative. The Grecian fable tells us of a lance whose point could wound, indeed, but whose shaft had virtue to heal the wound inflicted*.

One of these causes, which has not, perhaps, always been acknowledged, but which must nevertheless be taken as of great importance, is the remarkable fact, that the population of the countries of Europe has long been progressively on the increase, whilst the relative mortality is as continually on the decline†.

But it is obvious, that if the present race of men

* The lance of Achilles; whence the proverb or adage ὁ τρώσας ἰάσεται. *Vide* O. Jahn's Telephos and Troilos. *Kiel*, 1841.

† See Sir Gilbert Blane's Select Dissertations, Lond. 1822. He observes that in the year 1822 the population of England had increased sevenfold what it was between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries, threefold from the end of the sixteenth century, and that it had nearly doubled in the course of the last twenty years. The mortality in England, again, appears, from Dr. Hawkins' Medical Statistics (Lond. 1829), to have been 1 : 40 in 1780, and 1 : 58 in 1821; it had, therefore, become about one-third smaller in the course of forty years. In the year 1697 the number of deaths in London amounted to 21,000; a century later, in 1797, despite the vast increase of population, they were but 17,000.

A corresponding ratio is also obvious in other countries, of

lives longer than that which has passed away*, and the dangerous periods of infancy and early youth are more happily got over now than formerly, there is, as it were, a larger theatre for disease in general to display itself upon, and particularly for that to which the riper, and even the declining, years of man is liable†.

One, and that an almost inevitable, consequence of the progress of man in the improvement of the mechanical powers, in the extension of the manufacturing system, is the continually increasing multitude of poor labourers, by which the gulph between comfort with respectability and utter destitution is rendered ever the more apparent. Shall not this destitution, this pauperism, of the labouring classes, for which the Saint-Simonians, the Socialists, the

which somewhat accurately compiled statistical tables exist. In the city of Stuttgart, for instance, according to Dr. Stimmel (On the Population of Stuttgart, Tubing. 1834, in German), the population had increased fourfold in the course of the last two centuries. The number of the births has long considerably surpassed that of the deaths; but this has been the case more particularly in the course of the last twenty-two years.

* Casper informs us that there are accurate bills of mortality extant for the city of Berlin for more than a century, from which it appears, that forty-eight per thousand fewer now die in infancy than used to perish eighty years ago, and that twenty-seven per thousand more now reach extreme old age than formerly. See his Probable Duration of the Life of Man, Berlin, 1835; and his Lectures on the same subject, ib. 1843 (both in German).

† In Stuttgart, for example, of one hundred born alive, forty-seven more than formerly now attain their fifteenth year. (See Stemmler on the Change in the Laws of Mortality induced by Vaccination, Diss. Inaug. Tubing. 1827 (in German).

Communists, &c. look around them in vain for some remedy, turn out a powerful and finally unmitigable cause of disease? Shall not the habitual use of spirits, which only became common about the beginning of the sixteenth century, the article till then having been reckoned among medicaments, and which is now so frequently abused, not turn out of itself a potent cause, increasing the number of sick in contrast with former times? However certainly this question must be answered in the affirmative, with no less certainty may it be maintained that, along with the apparently inevitable and prejudicial influences of our present social state, the means of meeting and confining them within narrow bounds are developed in like and even in greater proportion.

We even encounter in the higher development of the understanding and moral nature of man, what appears to be a new and powerful cause of disease. The more this is cultivated, the more that is exalted, the more, it seems, are causes accumulated which lead to derangement and disease of the higher organization*. As an assurance that this is so, the fact of

* Esquirol, who certainly ought to have a voice in such a question, maintains (Ann. d'Hygiène, Dec. 1830) that advances in civilization increase the frequency of insanity. Idiocy, he holds, may depend on soil, situation, and material influences; but insanity, he says, is frequently in the direct ratio of civilization—it is an effect of social relations, of intellectual and moral influences. In the paper in which he discusses the question: Whether or not there were more maniacs forty years ago than at present (Mém. de l'Acad. Royal de Médecine, t. 1, 1828),

the general increase in the number and extent of houses destined for the reception of the unfortunate sufferer under idiocy, delusion, and insanity, might be, and indeed has been, quoted.

A remark of the Stagirite* appears to accord with this, viz. that men who have been distinguished for their talents in philosophy, in politics, in poetry, and other arts, are disposed to melancholy; and also the conclusion of a late Belgian statist†, that mankind are more disposed to insanity between forty and fifty years of age, when intellectual works of the highest mark and likelihood are generally produced, than at any other period of life.

A more careful examination of the question shews, however, how insecure and one-sided such conclusions are, and how greatly they who draw them are exposed to error. Much even depends on the meaning attached to words in the inquiry. When the ancients spoke of any one as melancholic, they no more meant to say that he was mentally diseased than we do in ordinary parlance when we make use of the same expression; they rather implied that the individual was disposed to live in self-communion, and abstraction from ordinary affairs, or that he was under the in-

he declares that the increase is no more than apparent. The interest taken in this class of sufferers is now greater than it was formerly. Very poor persons have frequently simulated insanity; and individuals addicted to drinking, who disturb the public tranquillity, are sometimes sent to mad-honses.

* Aristoteles, Problem xxx.

† Quetelet, De l'Homme, &c.

fluence of some higher impulse. Genius—decided mental ability in a particular direction—is most rarely in contradiction with itself and overtaken by disease: if it be, however, the case attracts so much attention that it scarcely fails to wax and multiply in the narration that is made of the event.—One man of genius becomes insane, *therefore* genius is prone to insanity; such is the reasoning.

Every man who gets beyond his contemporaries in ingenuity, in ability, in character, is very commonly spoken of as eccentric—perhaps as mad. In historical cases, too, it is always indispensable to inquire into particulars: when it is narrated of the author of the Jerusalem Delivered that he was mentally insane, it still remains to be proven that he was so in reality; and then, if he were, to ask what brought him to so sad a pass?

The most richly endowed nature may unquestionably become mentally diseased as well as the most poverty stricken in point of intellect; but in the one it will be regarded as an accident and unusual, in the other as likely and not uncommon.

To regard the culture of the mental powers at large, or of one or more among them, as a ground of their derangement or destruction, is certainly a somewhat hasty procedure. It is not culture, but half culture, that has a pernicious influence upon the mind*. The more numerous and the better the

* See Riecke's Medical Topography of Wirtemberg, Tubing. 1833; Fuch's Medical Statistics of Insanity, in Friedreich's Neue Magazin für Seelenkunde, Würzb. 1833.

educational institutions of a country are, the less numerous are the insane*. The more the whole of the mental faculties are brought into play, the more certainly will imperfections be set aside. Inaction occasions derangement still more frequently than activity†.

How rarely do we see men of letters, who labour in peace and due measure, become the subjects of insanity‡! It is not, in truth, even intense application of the higher faculties in the noblest ends of life that overthrows the mind, but passion and the changing accidents of fortune, against which, in sooth, elevation of soul supplies the truest remedy. When we see it asserted, therefore, by a late respectable authority§, that suicide has become more common with the progress of civilization, as it is called, it is a pseudo-civilization that is to blame, not real civilization, which leads us, at an early period of our intercourse with her, to know that the end of life is not mere sensual enjoyment, and that each sore proof to which we are put must be manfully borne.

As an insanity among animals has even been made subject of discussion of late years, and the activity of observers has laid the foundation of a comparative

* Fuchs, op. cit. p. 88.

† According to Louis Raybaud, in Quetelet, op. cit.

‡ Fuchs, l. c. p. 114.

§ Bernoulli on Population, Ulm, 1811. Diez (on Suicide, Tubing. 1838), warns us, however, that the assertion of M. Ch. Dupin, "that with the increasing civilization of communities the number of murders or assassinations decreased as certainly and remarkably as that of suicides augmented," is not to be taken, for a truth, without considerable limitation.

psychiatria*. many might be disposed to search for the cause of the apparent increase of such accidents in the increase of civilization. But we do not see that our domestic animals are now worse fed, or lodged, or accommodated, than formerly; on the contrary, their management is better understood than ever it was: and then is it not quite certain that the more general application of purely mechanical forces has long tended, and still tends, continually to lessen the demands made upon animals for extraordinary efforts? If there be increase of psychical disease among animals, therefore, the civilization of man can have nothing to do with it.

Whether the relative number of insane persons is actually greater now than it was in former times cannot be precisely ascertained. The very latest lists we have from our establishments for lunatics are not altogether unimpeachable. Even as little as the court-fools of the olden time can be referred to the category of insane persons, so little do all who are now confined as lunatics truly belong to it. One at least of the persons now shut up in Bethlem Hospital, as a lunatic, is not insane.

It is not very long since those who were so unfortunate as to be visited with insanity were commonly enough concealed in the private parts of dwelling-houses, on various grounds: now, to conceal the family misfor-

* Pierquin, De la Folie des Animaux, de ses rapports avec celle de l'homme et les législations actuelles. Paris, 1809, 2 tom. 8vo.

tune—the disgrace as it was held—and again to escape the public interference with relatives, &c. In the present day, insane persons are all but invariably placed in establishments especially destined for their reception, and held under the supervision of the state. These once served merely as places of confinement; every effort has of late years been made to render them places of cure. Formerly, the insane used to be visited, or means taken for their recovery, only when they became alarmingly ill, and towards the end of their disease; now they are placed under treatment from the first dawn of their distemper*. This is one grand cause for the necessity of the larger space and the new establishments which we see devoted, of late years, to the accommodation of the insane; and then, the lunatic, considered as an object of special medical care, is found to require more room than another patient, if he would have the best chance given him for recovery: when the object was merely to seclude the madman, very little space sufficed; when humanity insists that the object is to restore him to reason, he must have better entertainment.

Even as little, therefore, as civilization in general can be regarded as the nurse of mental disease, in the same proportion, on the other side, does she step forward as the requirer of the purest humanity in its treatment. Sympathy with man in his afflictions

* More than two-thirds of all the recoveries take place in the course of the first year.

the devotion which, in utter unselfishness, makes sacrifice of itself, never put forth fairer blossoms than do many among our present establishments for the treatment of insanity.

The more we advance in our knowledge of this kind of disease, the greater the number of forms which it assumes do we distinguish. But we do not infer from this that the same diversity did not obtain in former times. On the contrary, some shapes of mental aberration which we find indicated by our predecessors seem to have disappeared, others to be becoming rarer and rarer in their occurrence. One species of madness, lykanthropy, has ceased entirely, although in the third and fourth centuries, maniacs who roved about at nights in solitary places, and howled in churchyards like wolves, were extant in many countries, and in no inconsiderable numbers*.

Congenital idiocy, particularly cretinism, hitherto held hopeless and irremediable, has nevertheless, in these days, been assailed, and the visitation sought to be made more tolerable by a skilful combination of medical art with the means suggested by enlightened humanity.

The lower animals are often characterised as *dumb*; and there is a certain sympathy with their condition, and pity that they are without any means of intercourse, implied in the expression. But it is only in very recent times that society has shown the least

* Sprengel, History of Medicine, 3d edit. 2d vol. p. 243.

solicitude about those unfortunates among men to whom nature has denied the sense of hearing, and so taken from them the power of developing and using to purpose their organs of speech. The philanthropist and the teacher, however, have now associated themselves with the physician to inquire into the cause and origin of the privation in each particular case of surdity and mutism, with the special object in view of rendering the state of its subject as endurable as possible, and of enabling him to hold converse with his fellow-men. The deaf and dumb were formerly a heavy burthen on society*. With the exception of a very few, favoured by position and circumstance, who attained to a certain grade of moral and social independence, all the rest—the great majority—were left to their own incapacity, to the unmitigated wretchedness of their isolation, in a state of moral and physical degradation, which made them objects not merely of compassion, but often of solicitude also. How different at the present time, when, brought up and educated in public institutions especially devoted to the purpose, instructed in reading and writing, their understanding is enlightened, means of communicating with the world around them are supplied, and a substitute is found them for their mute and unavailing organs of hearing and of speech! Let the cause of this abnormal

* Their number is greater than is generally imagined. In the kingdom of Wirtemberg, Riedle (Medical Statistics of Wirtemberg, Tubing. 1834) found 340 deaf and dumb children.

condition of the senses be what it may, civilization very certainly has no portion in it; far otherwise, the sole alleviation for the evil that can be had, comes from her hand.

Even as much may be said of all the establishments for the blind, the deformed, the halt and the lame, in which science and experience now remove or remedy ills that were certainly as frequent in former times as now, but which were then hopeless burthens to the individual, and sources of charge to the commonwealth.

Nor is it only as seeking to remedy corporeal and mental evils by every means at command that the present period is distinguished; measures are now systematically pursued in many lands which satisfy us that civilization will not be to blame if the germs of disease are suffered to go on engendering themselves anew and undisturbed in future years.

It were easy to point out the particular instances in which vast strides have been gradually made in this direction, but to do this would lead us too far from our subject, and would make it imperative on us to enter into a special analysis of the state of the human family, and its efforts at improvement and independence. It will be enough if I adduce a few of the more remarkable and influential of the many means brought into play by advancing civilization to diminish disease, in order to carry conviction to the reader's mind that the indubitable decrease of

disease cannot be ascribed to the absence of accidental epidemic influences, or to any thing like periodical cycles, but that it must be attributed to the efforts of the human mind, crowned with a large measure of success, as uninterrupted efforts ever are, to circumscribe the causes of disease, to remove them entirely, and to dispute every inch of ground with causes inimical to length of days.

When we look at the earliest circumstances in the life of the individual, we find everything vouching for the fact that each new century, each step taken in the path pointed out by enlightened religion and ennobled humanity, is distinguished by an increasing attention to the physical wants of infancy, and a diminution of its mortality. The solicitude even begins before children see the light, and is active the moment they do so: the relations between nature and art, in the important process of parturition, are much better understood now than formerly; well-timed interference is constantly saving the threatened life both of mother and child. And then, we are better informed as to the necessity of proper nursing: children are much less frequently sent to perish upon spoon meat than they used to be; and even in the cases where a nurse cannot be commanded, the system of feeding pursued is better adapted to the tender organs of the infant, and less destructive, than it was in former times.

Much is also now done to guard against the temp-

tation to commit child-murder; and fewer infants fall victims to the ignorance of mothers. Deserted or orphan children are commonly sent into the country during the first years of life, instead of being congregated in Foundling Hospitals situated in the midst of great cities, in which the mortality was always very high.

In the education of children we have not merely regard now, as formerly, to the development of the mental qualities; we pay some attention to the bodily powers; and in the event of any predisposition to disease, we seek by fair and reasonable means to repress its growth, or to eradicate its seeds.

The dress of the community, whatever room for improvement still remains among the female portion of it especially, is more convenient now than it was once; and all those articles that interfered with the free play of the organs are falling every day into greater and greater discredit. Infants are no longer swathed or swaddled as they used to be: since corsets have been made more roomy and pliant, much suffering has been spared to our women—when such villainous contrivances to distort the human form divine shall have been discarded entirely, much greater benefit will ensue. The feet of the wealthier classes of our females are no longer crippled by the high-heeled shoes which our grandmothers wore, which made necessary exercise painful or impossible, at the same time that by causing the lower vertebræ of the loins

to encroach upon the pelvis, they rendered labour difficult, and sometimes even fatal*.

We no longer grease and powder the hair, as did our fathers, by which we gain in cleanliness, and therefore in strength; and whilst we are aware of the necessity of watching the first and often painful process of teething, we have art to supply us in later life with the indispensable instruments of manducation, by which we are enabled to maintain the stomach unoppressed, and the body effectively nourished, to the very end of our days, and so undoubtedly to lengthen them.

The persuasion now current as to the necessity of using sedulously the various dietetic and hygienic means of strengthening the system, which experience has sanctioned, in youth, in manhood, in age, must also have its influence. The means to this, and which in former times were within the reach of the wealthier classes of society alone, are now becoming common.

The important influence which the functions of the skin exert upon the very highest operations of the organism, is now acknowledged, and the increase of habits of cleanliness, as mere matter of propriety, has undoubtedly contributed much to the preservation of health: the use of soap, now universal, was

* Camper has treated of this, among other useful matters, in his Essay on the best Fashion of Shoes,—a work that should be better known than it is. How many of us are crippled for life by the absurd shoes we are made to wear when children!
ENG. ED.

all but unknown between two and three centuries ago*. Habits of cleanliness are regarded, not without good reason, as among the most precious gifts of civilization.

With the extension of better views on the circumstances and conditions that influence the general weal, the anxiety to make them known, and the eagerness to carry them into practice, have gone hand in hand. These important words now find universal acceptation: "Whatever preserves health, serves society; for sickness, besides its vexation, occasions a loss of property, and a loss of time, and often it involves both the property and the time of others†." It is now almost everywhere held matter of moment, by wide streets, sufficient sewerage, and the discontinuance of sepulture in the midst of the dwellings of man, and even within the buildings dedicated to the service of the Creator, to secure due ventilation, and to keep the air sweet and wholesome. As the peace of nations becomes assured, let us trust that the high walls of fortified towns will be levelled, the pure air of heaven admitted to their inmost recesses, and the foul and marshy ditches which surrounded them, filled up and planted, become the means of delightful recreation and of health to their inhabitants‡.

* Soap was first made in London in 1554. Up to this time it was one of the articles of import.

† Ensor on the Population of Nations. London, 1818.

‡ What excuse shall we find for the foolish inhabitants of Paris, who, in the middle of the nineteenth century, have im-

The facilities for procuring wholesome food are now so great, that diseases which in former times spread over extensive tracts of country, from sheer want of aliment fitted for the use of man, are now unknown. Through the progress of agriculture, almost every spot of earth is rendered useful, and the produce of our lands is vastly increased and is still increasing. The cultivation of the potatoe, of fresh vegetables, and of various kinds of useful fruit, the apple, the plum, the chesnut, and the orange, in the different countries of Europe, materially repress the price of wheat, and have an unquestionable influence on the health of communities*.

mured themselves, and pointed a battery from every height in the vicinity of their city, at their own hearts? Verily, science and cleverness are not good sense and foresight, or our friends of the banks of the Seine would never have been guilty of the egregious act of childish folly which they have just committed. But children, in the pains they take to build up houses of cards, have generally a looking to the enjoyment they are to have in knocking them down again; and so we must needs presume have the Parisians.—ENG. ED.

* Two centuries ago, a salad was not to be bought in the markets of London for money; a cabbage-stock and a carrot were unknown; apples were scarce, and never used save in the crude and unnutritious state. Sir Walter Raleigh and Admiral Drake might have brought half a dozen oranges for the Queen's table, but the community had never seen the golden fruit of the Hesperides. At the present time we buy this delicious fruit at the rate of two for a penny in the streets of London! and, through the blessing of sugar, we are never at a loss for a meal for our children when we have an apple. Sugar is, in fact, one of the grand conquests of man's industry, and the barbarism of regarding it as a luxury, and making it a source of revenue, ought to be abandoned: it is one of the prime necessaries of life, and ought to be as free as air; the first act of the stomach upon the amylaceous principle, which constitutes about four-

Adulterations of articles of food are now much rarer than they were*. The use of lead in glazing articles of pottery that are to serve as kitchen utensils, the art of tinning copper vessels, and even of coating them with a layer of insoluble enamel, are all improvements that have their influence upon the average life of man. Accidental poisonings are every

fifths of our ordinary food, is to turn it into sugar, and dextrine, an insipid kind of sugar—a fact from which the value of sugar as an article of nourishment may be inferred. Nature presents us with the article ready formed, but we make it inaccessible by our absurd laws! It is little more than a century since the great bulk of the community lived upon salt provisions through the winter. Agriculture had made so little progress, that there were no green crops, no such staple as the turnip, not merely to keep cattle alive, but to fatten them; and so little hay was made, that it was always an object to save it for the use of the stock that must be maintained till the spring. The cattle which now supply us with fresh animal food through the whole of the winter, in our grandfathers' days would all have been slaughtered and salted down at Michaelmas: there was no more fresh meat until God's providence brought round the spring. In Sydenham and Morton's times, and even considerably later than these, among the grand causes for which the assistance of medical men was sought, were the scurvy and intermittent fever. The faculty would starve now did they depend on either one or other of these diseases. The *death* of the members of the community was then the source of professional income; now it is their *birth*. Juno Lucina is the true patron goddess of the medical profession in these days, not Apollo in his ire, and twanging his silver bow!—Eng. Ed.

* The high price of sugar, the consequence of high and discriminating or protecting duties, has unfortunately had the effect of establishing *manufactories of sugar* by a chemical process in the neighbourhood of London. There is one at Bow, where many tons per week are regularly produced, the whole of which *pays duty to government—is a source of revenue to the state*—and then goes to adulterate the sugar with which the poor man attempts to sweeten his tea, or to make his children's meal palatable, and additionally nutritious!—Eng. Ed.

year becoming more and more uncommon: within doors cast iron and tin plate have almost superseded copper; and without, poisonous plants give place to those that are useful; or the characters, and names, and deadly qualities, of such as still exist, being known and taught in every village school, accidents from them are very rare. The sale of poisonous articles, whether of mineral or vegetable origin, is also more restricted than it was; it is also in better hands, viz. those of the chemist and druggist, and therefore less liable to abuse. Does an accident by poisoning now occur? Immediately experiments are made, and antidotes are discovered. The great perfection of chemical analysis, too, has rendered the detection of almost every variety of poison that can be introduced into the body of man, a matter of such easy certainty, that an attempt upon a fellow-creature's life by poison is almost necessarily discovered, and the repetition of such practices of course most powerfully discouraged.

The care that is taken of the poor and helpless, in almost every country of Europe, is another important feature in our modern civilization; and the benevolent solicitude of private associations in most of our larger towns to provide firing for the poor during the severer months of the year*, as also to

* Vide Moser (in the Prussian Medical Journal, No. 21, 1835) and Quetelet (Sur l'Homme, &c.), who both show that in these countries the greatest mortality corresponds with the lowest temperatures, the least mortality with the highest temperatures. [Taxes upon fuel must be held as equally barbarous and im-

furnish convalescents from serious illness with proper food, and parturient women and new-born infants with suitable articles of clothing, all tends directly to the maintenance of health, and the prolongation of life, among our poorest classes*.

The experiment of colonizing thinly-peopled or absolutely uninhabited tracts of country within the boundaries of Europe, seems to promise permanent improvement and advantage to the human family, partly by ridding it here and there of a burthensome superfluity of population, but more by placing thousands of poor at once in a position to achieve comfortable independence for themselves, and by turning waste and unproductive solitudes, sources of pernicious effluvia, into fertile and healthy fields. M. Demidoff, in his Travels in Southern Russia, expresses himself in these words on this subject: "I am persuaded that pauperism, mendicity, and deserted infancy, may people these solitudes with

politic. The Corporation of the City of London raise a revenue of many thousand pounds per annum from the sea-borne coal that is consumed in the metropolis. No improvement that can be effected with the money so raised can compensate for the injury that is done by a tax so cruel, so destructive, and that presses so unequally upon the rich and poor.—ENG. ED.]

* The pauper in England has actually a better life than the man of rank and fortune, and one vastly superior to the tradesman and artizan. I find the mean average life of the gentry over 21 years of age, in twenty of the metropolitan districts, to be 60¼ years, of the tradesman, 50½, of the artizan, 49½, but of the pauper, it is 61 years and 7½ months. My data I had from an excellent paper by Mr. Chadwick, published in the April No. of the Statistical Journal.

vast advantage to society, to public morals, and to themselves*."

The improved construction and police of prisons is another important point. These are now not merely places of detention and of punishment, where there was great danger incurred of contracting deadly diseases†, but schools of improvement. Instead of proving, as formerly, certain means of confirming vice in its career, and corrupting innocence when suspicion led to temporary loss of liberty, there are now at all events the means proffered whereby the inmates may regain their moral with their personal liberty, and every pains taken that innocence may quit them uncontaminated. Much difference of opinion still prevails in regard to the

* M. Demidoff also thinks favourably of the "Colonial System for the Cure of Social Evils" (pour la Guérison des Maladies Sociales), which has been essayed in Holland. [There can be no doubt of the infinite advantages of the "allotment system," which is happily on the spread in England; the good that would certainly result from the general adoption of this system seems incalculable. Vide Mrs. Loudon's very able book on Political Economy, 8vo. London.—ENG. ED.]

† In former times, the prisoners in Newgate, and other large gaols, used to be decimated at intervals by typhoid fever of a bad kind, which was elaborately described under the name of jail fever, or jail distemper. Epidemic fever is now unknown in any of the London prisons. In the House of Correction, Coldbath Fields, where there are usually from 1300 to 1400 prisoners, the Infirmary has rarely more than three or four tenants at one time; and when I visited it, in company with the author of this essay, in September 1841, there was but a single patient—a poor young woman far gone in consumption, which she was suffering under when she came into the place.—ENG. ED.

advantages or disadvantages of the several plans of treating prisoners that have been proposed. But the time cannot be far off when the friends of humanity will be enabled to arrive at unanimity of opinion on the subject. If experience prove that the American or solitary system is a frequent cause of insanity, it must of course be very much restricted, or entirely superseded*.

The milder punishments now awarded have also their influence in preserving the health of those who have made themselves obnoxious to the law. Mutilations, and other kinds of what may be called organic inflictions, have happily become matter of tradition in all policied countries†.

In the military service harshness and severity are yielding every day—have already yielded—to humane and reasonable treatment. Attention to the cleanliness of his quarters, to the sufficiency of his clothing, and to the abundance and excellence of his food,

* In Bernoulli (op. cit. p. 82) it is stated, on the authority of Coindet, that of 329, 15, or 1 in 22, had become insane.

† All our experience seems to satisfy us, nevertheless, that the grand object with society should be to take away inducements to commit crime: once a "criminal always a criminal" is an axiom with every one who has had to do with this class, whether in America or England, and it is probably the same in other countries—the "reform of the criminal," they say, "is a dream." If this be so, our prisons might have Dante's lines over the gates of hell inscribed upon their doors:

"Lasciate ogni speranza
Voi che intrate qui."
"Leave hope behind, all ye who enter here!"

ENG. ED.

added to humane and civil treatment, go so far to secure the common soldier against disease, that on home service he is probably the healthiest man in the community. It has been well observed by a very competent authority*, that "a good commanding officer has generally a healthy regiment." Thousands are still living, who have to thank the military hospital, and the skill and devotion of its medical officers in the English, French, and German armies, for health recovered, for life and limb preserved.

It is the same in the naval service. The sailor is now treated as a man and a christian: crowding in quarters is avoided; his provisions are of the best—in long voyages he is supplied with preserved fresh meats and lemon-juice; instead of being taught to acquire a taste for spirituous liquors by being forced to drink his allowance of grog, he is now rather encouraged to abstinence, and all the evils that flowed from insubordination, the constant consequence of intemperance, are avoided. The ill effects of wetting between decks are now well known, and never encountered; dry rubbing with holly-stones is substituted for washing, and stoves are conveniently placed to secure ventilation; the ballast in all well-appointed ships is now some article that will not corrupt the air by its moisture and decomposition—it is pig iron, or, better still, large iron tanks filled with water, which afford the com-

* Sir James M'Grigor, Medical Sketches, p. 95, Lond. 1804.

pany a supply of that indispensable element, pure as when it came from the well, and almost *ad libitum*, through the whole course of even the longest voyage. The health of the navy has made truly wonderful progress within the last half century*.

The special scientific study of the diseases of artizans and labourers, in laying open the often hidden sources of their sufferings, has, at the same time, exposed the ways and means of removing them, or rendering them nugatory†. The physician and philosopher working hand in hand here, good fruits have certainly not been wanting. The draught furnace, as a means of ventilating mines, and the safety-lamp of Davy, have already saved lives innumerable. Undertakings which, in former times, had all to be accomplished by the labour of men's bodies, and often proved highly detrimental to health, are now, for the most part, performed by machinery‡.

* Vide Blane, Comparative Health of the British Navy, from the year 1790 to 1814, in his Select Disserts.; and the Report on the Health, &c. of the Navy, by Dr. Wilson.

† See the work of Rammazzini on the Diseases of Artificers, translated into French by Patissier, and into German, with additions, by Schlegel; also, Adelman, on the same subject, Würzburg, 1803; Fuchs on the Influence of Trades, &c. on Health, in Hecker's New Annals; [Turner Thackrah on the Effects of the principal Arts, Trades, and Professions, on Health and Longevity, 8vo. London, 1831; and Dr. Calvert Holland on Diseases of the Lungs from Mechanical Causes, 8vo. Lond. 1844.—ENG ED.]

‡ Ruptures are relatively much more frequent among the labouring than among the other classes of society. In Würtemberg it has been estimated that there are 30,000 persons affected with rupture. Riecke, p. 47.

If it shall be found that the mortality is actually greater in manufacturing districts* than in those where the population is chiefly employed in agriculture, it will, at the same time, be discovered that this is mainly due to inequality in the tide of occupation; that not unfrequently the stream of full employment and abundance is succeeded by the ebb of idleness and want. The advantages of savings banks, however, and of benefit societies, which are ever better understood and more appreciated, promise gradually to lessen the consequences of this inequality. It is unquestionable that in the majority of the mills and manufactories themselves, with their roomy, well ventilated, and comfortably warmed apartments, the labourer is infinitely better off than he is in his dwelling-

* Quetelet, op. cit. 213. [There can be no doubt of the fact being so. The mean length of life in Liverpool is 25 years; in some of the counties of England it is even as high as 45 years. But the defective police of the City from first to last, and the circumstances of the population, may be charged with the whole difference. In the city, hundreds, thousands, are suffered to herd in cellars below the level of the ground, and they are the most wretched of God's creatures: driven out in rags from their own country—Ireland—by starvation, they come to meet disease and death in the crowded avenues of Liverpool and Bristol, Glasgow and Manchester. But civilization can be rightly charged with nothing of all this misery; civilization has rather been struggling against it for centuries, but in vain. Thomas Carlyle, the philosopher, the poet, the friend of man, says well and truly, that England has always treated Ireland like a step-mother, and that Ireland has requited her by sending her starvelings forth to degrade the hardy yeoman of the English soil to the level of the mud-housed, rag-clad, potato-fed outcast of the misgoverned country (vide his "Chartism," Lond. 1840.) Eng. Ed.]

place, even though it be a cottage in the country*. To many of these magnificent establishments, too, medical officers are attached, so that disease is here nipped in the bud, and contagion is unknown.

The care that is taken of the sick poor in public hospitals, whether maintained at the cost of the community and out of the funds of the state, as on the continent of Europe, or by voluntary contributions and at the expense of individuals, as in England, also contributes essentially to repress mortality. In former times these establishments were far from being the blessings which they are at present: in the Hôtel-Dieu of Paris in particular the mortality used to be frightful: but since every patient has been placed in a separate bed, and since cleanliness and ventilation have been held paramount elements in the police of hospitals, the mortality has fallen to a minimum, and, in the best regulated establishments, probably does not exceed its amount among serious cases in the houses of the opulent. Much, too, has unquestionably been gained by classifying patients, and distributing them to different wards, or even to different hospitals, both in a remedial and scientific point of view. It would be well, in every great town, to have a separate hospital for

* In the work of Legoyt, "La France Statistique, d'après les documens officiels les plus recents," Paris, 1843, it is shown that in the seventeen departments of France distinguished for their industry and manufactures, the sanatory state of the population is much more favourable than in seventeen others where industry is least.

so infectious and deadly a disease as small-pox; for the important class of infantile diseases, for those affected with incurable diseases, for epileptics, for cutaneous diseases, &c.; and also distinct establishments for convalescents both in reference to bodily and mental infirmities.

The rescue and recovery of the apparently dead from drowning, exposure to irrespirable gases, &c. has not been left to the humanity and particular skill of individuals; the community have held the matter worthy of their attention; and, by their establishments under the name of "Humane Societies," their prizes, and their honourable distinction of those who have saved a fellow-creature's life, as well as by spreading abroad in their "Instructions" better knowledge of the means adapted to the recovery of drowned or asphyxiated persons, many have been rescued who, without such help, would have been snatched away from existence before their time.

Contagious diseases have of late years lost much of their virulence, first, from the watchfulness with which measures of precaution and prevention are enforced, and then from the care bestowed in exposing and airing, in washing, in heating, and, if need be, in burning suspicious bales and articles, in which infection might be supposed to lurk. May it not be that these wise measures have in fact rendered zymotic influences inoperative now, that in former ages proved pestilential? That the means taken to guard against contagion have, in fact, de-

stroyed it? That diseases such as plague and yellow fever, contagious in past times, are contagious no longer? The discovery of chlorine and its preparations has placed a powerful weapon in our hands against corruption and contamination.

The careful and enlightened study of which the veterinary art is now made the subject, has thrown light on several serious and even mortal diseases which are readily transmitted from animals to man. Not to speak of hydrophobia, which has been known from remote antiquity to be an incurable disease*, we now know that the anthracion or malignant pustule of the ox, and the affection closely allied to it, the tongue-canker, and, above all, glanders, are extremely apt to be inoculated upon the human subject, and to prove fatal when received. Knowledge of this kind of course leads to caution in the handling of diseased animals, and prevents the spread of their contagions. The tax upon dogs has also had a beneficial influence; the numbers kept are diminished; houseless and unowned animals are got rid of entirely; so that in some countries of Europe it often happens that no case of true hydrophobia occurs for several years*.

The attention that has of late years been paid to medical topography, has likewise contributed much,

* Vide Levin on the Diseases of Domestic Animals which are transmissible to Man: Berlin, 1829.

† Cless, Topography of Stuttgardt, informs us that in the course of eighteen years but one case of hydrophobia had occurred in that city.

and will undoubtedly contribute still more, to the eradication of the causes of endemical disease. The influence of particular localities, soils, and environs, upon the health of the community, and the measures calculated to repress or to annul whatever is prejudicial, have all been made the subject of careful study, and are now familiar to the medical men, the civil engineers, and even the statesmen, of most European countries. Wherever enlightened man spreads himself over the face of the earth, with his peaceful arts, and his freer institutions, there the swamp and the forest, and the damp and the pestilence that brooded over them in their natural state, disappear. Even as certainly does this ensue as its opposite: wherever the commercial and political weight of a community declines, where industry flags and population falls off, there do marsh and miasm, and their concomitants, disease and death, extend*.—Neglect brings punishment in her train, as surely as industry, and its sequence, improvement, lead affluence and long life in either hand.

No inconsiderable portion of the greater solicitude in regard to the public health displayed by governments, as also of the better private information now extant on the means of guarding against disease, may be fairly ascribed to the appearance, in the countries of Europe, and in England especially, of so many excellent popular works upon the subject of

* See Macculloch's Malaria. London, 1827.

hygiene; works composed by men of the highest attainments and most philosophic minds, conceived in the best spirit of enlightened philanthropy, and within reach of all in point of price*.

The incessant war waged against erroneous views and prejudices affecting the public health, in lectures, newspapers, magazines, and special works, as it is still victorious, so does it extend the empire of improvement. The more the sanatory state of the community is threatened by misuses having their root in ignorance and particular interests, the more loudly and incessantly must the better persuasion make itself heard. So long as the insanity prevailed, that sepulture in churches and chapels under the immediate protection of saints and martyrs assured a state of blissful futurity to the souls of the deceased, the faithful, at their prayers, must needs inhale the vapours of the grave.—A long series of years passed by before better knowledge sent the vital breath of heaven to blow with freedom through the damp and dingy city; superstition has long been

* Let me name with gratitude the writings of Dr. Andrew Combe (The Principles of Physiology applied to the Preservation of Health); of Dr. Southwood Smith (The Philosophy of Health); and of Dr. Thomas Hodgkin (Lectures on the Promotion and Preservation of Health, delivered before the Mechanics' Institution). Dr. Neil Arnott, too, has contributed largely, by his "Elements of Physics," and his tract "On Warming and Ventilating Houses," to make known the principles that lie at the root of almost all improvement; and Dr. Reid, in his elaborate work "On Ventilation," just published, has put the crown upon this branch of the subject.—ENG. ED.

on the wane, and the sepulture of the dead among the living ought now to cease*.

It has but lately been discovered that the cruel practice of Suttee, in India, in which the widow burned herself upon the funeral pile of her dead husband, proceeded from no peculiar feelings of ungratified affection, from no strong sense of conjugal duty; so that government have felt authorized, on the strong grounds of reason and humanity, to interfere and discourage, and even to interdict, the sacrifice.

The times are not so very remote when diseases in general, or in certain particular forms, were looked on as punishments sent by God, to which we were bound to submit without resistance†. These times have long gone by; or if, in some neighbouring countries, any such system of fatalism still finds accredence, it will very certainly disappear before the light of reason and humanity. It is never to be forgotten, however, that the first best gift which medical science

* Strange to say, it is in Protestant England that this abomination has still its strong hold. Roman Catholic France and Germany discontinued it long ago; and in Scotland burial in churches has been unknown since Knox's time. Mr. Walker, by his "Gatherings from Graveyards," though he has mixed "the horrible and awful" perhaps in too large proportion with his statements, has nevertheless done good service to the cause of true civilization. The Parliamentary Report on Interment in Towns, and Mr. Chadwick's Commentary on it, complete our information on the debasing, demoralizing, and deleterious effects of the practice; and leave neither the legislature nor any interest in the community a shadow of pretext for suffering it to go on any longer.—Eng. Ed.

† See my work, "Origines Contagii," p. 121.

has given to man—vaccination—was resisted and rejected, at first, on grounds both of religion and humanity: shall we venture to interfere with God's providence, it was said, or to engraft the humour of a brute upon the body of man*? We now laugh at such insanity.

Many notions and practices in connection with disease, which were prejudicial, are disappearing gradually but certainly. The custom of keeping patients labouring under the acute eruptive diseases,—scarlet fever, measles, small-pox,—in a close hot atmosphere, was extremely injurious, and cost many a life†. The dread of cool fresh air is now happily overcome: the nursery and sick room are kept well ventilated; children are carried freely into the open air; and, the earlier months of life left behind, we do not fear to sponge and wash over our most delicate infants with cold water, as a powerful means of giving tone to the system and strength to the limbs.

As the spread of true improvement has power to diminish disease, it may be fairly said that the increase of morality must have the same effect.

* Moseley, in his treatise on the Lues Bovilla, maintained that the practice of vaccination would by and by people the country with a race of minotaurs! (Vide Baron's Life of Jenner, vol. i. p. 353.)

† These are all occasionally very dangerous diseases. Small-pox has abated nothing of its malignity, and scarlatina is, from time to time, a deadly and, as it seems, altogether unmanageable disease. Measles is more rarely so destructive; but it often undermines a good constitution, and so cuts life short.

ENG. ED.

Whenever society shall combine, and rigidly put down all gaming-houses, a fruitful source of disease will be dried up.

Every philanthropic society contributes not merely to the temporal and moral welfare of the community, but to its health and longevity. Who shall deny the blessed effects of our temperance associations, even where they are but partially in operation, and their influence may be supposed to be least? To reclaim a drunkard is to effect the moral as well as physical salvation of a responsible being. What the educated man accomplishes over his inclinations upon principle and resolve, the ruder less cultivated nature must become accustomed to by example and a pledge. Sobriety is the first, most indispensable basis of all improvement, the founder and preserver of human happiness. If these times succeed in rearing to Temperance an universal temple, they will have accomplished one of the most noble of destinies. The mortality among males in towns and in countries where intemperance prevails, is greater than that among females, mainly because their lives are more dissipated and irregular.

Life-insurance societies, and those institutions, such as savings-banks, where earnings not immediately wanted can be safely stored against the hour of need, all contribute to bodily well-being, as they tend to put the mind at ease, and secure it against the tear and wear of anxiety, the destructive consequences of change.

If it do actually appear that the condition of the lowest classes of society improves, undoubtedly the circumstance will have a material influence on the general sanatory state*. Many of the children of the poor, that look strong and lusty at their birth, dwindle away by degrees, and finally die; so that there can be no question as to the truth of the proposition that, "in proportion as pauperism is rare, are more infants reared†."

The larger and more commodious houses of modern times, in addition to the better clothing and food of the community, prevent the spread, as well as the production, of diseases. How many of the worst forms of sickness have their homes in the dens of privation and misfortune! Blindness is most frequent amongst the poorest classes, not merely relatively but absolutely, and is owing, in the great

* The state of the poor in Great Britain has been variously estimated, according to the point of view from which it has been regarded. The well-informed and unprejudiced observer, however, sees it bettered on the whole, and holds the conclusion of Buret (De la misère des classes laborieuses en Angleterre et en France, Paris, 1841) when he says, "France is poor, England is miserable," as impressed with the seal of twofold exaggeration. [The state of the English *very* poor has commonly enough impressed the foreigner disadvantageously; an intelligent and kind-hearted German gentleman, Mr. König, who knew England well, used always to maintain that it was "the heaven of the rich, but the hell of the poor." Other countries may be, doubtless are, the same; to me there has always appeared too much of truth in the observations of Mr. König.—Eng. Ed.]

† Lichtenstein, On the Causes of the Great Mortality of Children in the First Years of Life. St. Petersburg, 1837.

majority of cases, to neglect and ignorance*. The chronic diseases of the eye, with which we see so many of the poor afflicted all their lives, are almost unknown among the middle and upper classes of the community.

A life passed in the open air, and hardening of the body by exposure, conduce, we will allow, to give it strength and durability; but when to these excessive toil is superadded, they immediately lose much of their beneficial influence. It is therefore indubitable that the simple natural state, as it has been called, is less favourable to longevity than the civilized condition. It has been ascertained, for instance, that women in the country have not such good lives during the years in which they are liable to become mothers, as those who live in towns. Want of proper assistance may occasionally be the cause of the difference, but there can be little doubt of its being mainly due to the bodily labour which country-women are so commonly compelled to undergo at a time when they require rest, and should be exempt from toil. The mortality in the country is certainly less than it is in great cities; certain diseases are also rarer there than in towns. The reason of this, however, is perhaps less to be sought for in the circumstance of crowding together, and the generation of gases and vapours which contaminate the atmosphere in towns, than in the fact that occasions to com-

* Bernoulli, Populat. p. 86.

mit excesses, to yield to courses that prejudice health and shorten life, are here more numerous*. But the better these are known, the more generally their pernicious influences are recognised, the more emphatically do the educated, and benevolent, and well-disposed, direct their minds to abate them in their ill effects, or to remove them entirely.

The mortality among the upper and middling classes is not only smaller than among the very poor†, because there comfort or superfluity, here want is at home‡, but also because amongst the rich cleanliness is more attended to, and moderation is more in vogue. It is well worthy of remark, that in England, where unquestionably the greatest amount of material comfort prevails among the community at large, the

* As Farr conjectured, in the First Annual Report of the Registrar-General of Births, Deaths, and Marriages in England, London, 1839. In the excellent review of this work, in Forbes's British and Foreign Medical Review, Vol. IX. 1840, it is observed that from the above statement we might conclude that civilization, by the side of so much whose tendency is to prolong life, brings one of vast power to curtail and destroy; that among the elements of longevity civilization still fosters one mighty element of destruction; but immediately afterwards it is shown that a closer view of the circumstances which influence the mortality of large towns leads to the conclusion that true civilization, far from having any part in them, rather strives against them, and successfully resists their tendencies.

† Quetelet, l. c. Moser (Laws of the Probable Duration of Life, Berlin, 1839) shows that the results we have in reference to the mortality of the affluent are not quite satisfactory, inasmuch as they are obtained from registries of deaths alone. He says, p. 155, "In these days the influence of affluence is estimated somewhat too highly."

‡ Lombard, in Ann. d'Hygiène Publique, July 1835, showed that poverty had great influence in abridging life.

greatest mean duration of human life, namely, 38 years, also occurs* : in Russia, on the contrary, it is no more than 21 years†. The man in comfortable or affluent circumstances does not only live better; he lives longer.

But the means of preserving health, and of recovering it when lost, are made every day more accessible to him who is less favoured of fortune; whilst commerce has made it more easy to procure medicinal substances of every description. It is no trifling recommendation of modern medicine, in its progressive improvement, to say, that it has discovered at once more powerful and less costly medicines than were formerly in use. Before the discovery of bark, how long must the sufferer from intermittent fever have been laid up useless, incapable of all exertion! how often must he have been the victim of the consequences of this once universal disease! But how

* Hawkins's conclusion (op. cit. p. 30) is fully borne out by the facts, when he says, "The man of affluence, the pauper patient of an hospital, the soldier and sailor on active service, the prisoner of war, the inmate of a gaol, all enjoy a better tenure of existence from this country than from any other of which we have been able to consult the records." [See a curious fact stated a few pages back, from which it appears that the absolute pauper has a better life than the artizan by about a dozen years, and than the gentleman by something more than a year. ENG. ED.]

† Cooper, Duration of Life, p. 23. An observation of Villermé, in connexion with England, is this: In Archangel, between 1809—1827, there were 15,017 births, and 18,323 deaths. In the course of eighteen years, therefore, the deaths exceeded the births by 3306. In England, on the contrary, for every 100 deaths there have long been very regularly 101,133 births, so that the population doubles itself every 75 years.

certainly is he now restored to himself and society by the discovery of the vegetable alkaloids! A labouring or handicrafts man who in former times was thrown out of work by the palsy of the hands and arms so familiarly known to follow poisoning with lead, was extremely apt to become for life a burthen upon, instead of a help and a stay to his family: with the assistance of strychnine and the sulphur bath the physician now sends him for the major part speedily back to his calling, his hands and arms restored to their former vigour and usefulness. Nor must the better education, the higher skill, of the present race of medical practitioners, be overlooked; it is impossible that this can be without effect on the mortality through accidental disease. To say nothing of the large share which the medical practitioner has at all times had in initiating sanatory measures, in enforcing and in spreading abroad information on hygiène, he now very constantly discovers, and nips in the bud, diseases that once allowed to get head are almost certainly fatal. Save in England, and here and there in Germany, quacks and pretenders to medical science, without preliminary education, are no longer suffered. In France society has outlived the quack-salver, if it has not quite outlived quackery.

There can be no question that the progress which has been made in the course of the last half century in the distinction or diagnosis of disease, as well as in its treatment, by medicines and surgical operations, has had the effect of saving many lives that

would else have been lost. In the beginning of the present century medicine was still without the means of distinguishing one form of disease of the heart and of the lungs from another, so that prescriptions were necessarily written in a great measure in the dark, or medicines were at best directed with a view to the alleviation of particular symptoms, never with the purpose of striking at the root of the evil. At the present time, with the aid of percussion and auscultation, it is admirable with what precision the diagnosis can be established in regard to almost every variety of disease to which the viscera of the thorax are obnoxious. Inflammation of the membranes of the brain, of the lungs, and of the bowels in infancy, had also been little studied until very lately; and being either overlooked or misunderstood, these formidable affections were of necessity indifferently treated, and very commonly proved fatal. The old mode of treating syphilitic diseases was often as fatal in its effects as these maladies themselves*. Aneurisms, which in former times were almost necessarily mortal, are now and since

* Such statements as the following are as true as they are encouraging:—"Riddled and honeycomb skulls, looking as if they had been eaten of worms and gnawed by dogs, are now, fortunately, rarely to be seen except in the glass cases and drawers of surgical museums, or in Cheselden's plates;—venerable relics of a past age, out of date, like the silk coat and full ruffles of the contemporaneous doctor. These were the consequences of a profuse abuse of mercury which is now rarely attempted."—*British and Foreign Med. Review*, 1840, vol. ix. p. 240.

Mr. Hunter lived almost as certainly treated with success; he who had an aneurism in his ham had scarcely a chance beyond that which amputation of the thigh afforded him. The hand of the master, through an incision two inches in length, now attains the artery in its course to the disease, passes a ligature around it, and in the great majority of instances the patient escapes with life and limb preserved. Deformities and imperfections, which were formerly the prey of ignorant empirics, have been made the subject of particular study, by men of liberal acquirements, under the guidance of anatomy and physiology, and are now removed and remedied by appropriate operations in innumerable instances. Squinting, which was always felt as so painful an imperfection by the individual, and which also made him incompetent in certain directions as a member of the community*, is now remedied by a simple snip, almost as certainly, and with little more pain, than stammering is treated by systematic exercise of the organs of speech†. How numerous the cases of blindness held irremediable in former years, which are now restored to sight!

And let it not be brought against all that has now

* In Würtemburg sixty-seven individuals were declared incapable of the military service in the course of five years, on account of determined squint.—*Riecke, op. cit.* p. 27.

† It must be allowed that surgery went wrong here. Several unwarrantably severe operations were performed on the root of the tongue, by way of curing stammering, and several lives were lost; but the mistake committed was soon discovered, and the barbarous procedure abandoned.—ENG. ED.

been said, that new names of diseases are every day appearing as evidences of their increase. Names are still no things. The botanist who should make new genera and species out of mere varieties, would no more enrich the flora of a country, than the nosologist who should raise symptoms and varieties to the rank of particular species, and designate each by a name, would add to the number of its diseases. The number of diseases, happily, has not increased in nature, but in books; classifications of our infirmities, not our infirmities themselves, have increased. It happens, not unfrequently, indeed, that diseases which, from description and at first, appear specifically distinct, are found after more careful investigation to differ but in degree, and to have suffered modification from climatic and national influences; for example, oriental plague, and our own typhus.

If certain diseases be spoken of at the present time as extremely common, and as still spreading, this frequently happens from a fashion in a particular school, or the influence of a single physician. Some persons meet everywhere with diseases of the heart*, others with affections of the spinal marrow.

* The Roman gladiators appear to have suffered frequently from inflammatory diseases of the heart, which, as well as affections of the great vessels, were well known to the ancients (*Vide* Sprengel, l. c., v. i. and ii.) The copious literature which the last ten or twenty years have produced upon diseases of the circulating system is no kind of evidence that such diseases have increased in number and severity; they are now much better known, and more regularly diagnosticated, than they used to be.

others with derangement of the stomach, of the liver, &c., and then it appears as if humanity were to be put to a new and a sore proof; but by and by the prevailing fancy passes, it is recognised as the effect of hypothesis, it has its day, and all returns to the ordinary and usual in sickness as well as in health.

And then, if it were granted that particular diseases are now more frequently observed than they used to be, have we any assurance that therefore these diseases are commoner in fact?

Among uncivilized tribes and nations a very large proportion of the more weakly children die in the course of the first year; in civilized communities such children are reared in great numbers, and only fall victims later in life to natural or accidental causes of decay. How can it be said that this or that disease has increased in frequency, when it is acknowledged that a much larger proportion of mankind, by attaining to old age, are made obnoxious to its attacks? Where there are few or no subjects for apoplexy to invade, there are few or no invasions of apoplexy. Civilization can only guard against and abate circumstances that induce disease; it has no power to bestow physical immortality. Precisely in the ratio of the greater mass of life and living energy that presents itself in the civilized world, is the glory of the victory that is won over the multiplied and infinitely various causes which threaten derangement and destruction. References to historical and statistical accounts of almost all diseases satisfy us of

the truth of this position. Let us select a few of the more remarkable for particular inquiry.

Phthisis pulmonalis.—The frequently asserted increase of this formidable disease*, which so constantly invades in the very flower of life, when the body has attained its growth, and the mind is close upon maturity, can by no means be allowed. The tables of mortality that could alone supply elements for definitive conclusions on the subject, are very far from being extant in even approximative completeness and authenticity.

One of the latest writers on consumption†, who has given a review of the deaths from consumption in London between 1700 and 1821, says:—

The opinion entertained by some authors, that consumption has increased since 1750, originates in the error of taking its *relative* mortality as compared with that from all diseases, instead of its absolute mortality in reference to the population.

And then, if the statistical tables of those cities and countries where they have been kept with care for a series of years, be referred to, it will be found that, instead of an increase, a positive diminution of pulmonary consumption has taken place. In Stuttgart, for example, fewer deaths from phthisis

* According to Bernoulli (Population, p. 308), in the year 1828, 1-9th of the whole mortality of Paris was due to phthisis—1-10th of the males, 1-8th of the females, having sunk under this disease. But this statement is not borne out by the figures of the writers (*Vide* Clark on Consumption.)

† Clark, op. cit.

are recorded year after year *. In the course of five years no more than three individuals had been found unfit for military service by reason of phthisis pulmonalis †.

The ancients frequently speak of phthisis, and, at the same time, dwell upon its hereditary transmissibility and contagious nature ‡. But as in the present day the term consumption is by no means restricted to signify the decay that attends upon tubercular disease of the lungs, so in former times the word phthisis was obviously used with considerable latitude. The Father of physic, however, condescends upon the period of life when phthisis occurs most frequently, between the 18th and 35th year,—an observation the truth of which accords remarkably with the latest statistical results obtained from Berlin, Paris, Edinburgh, Philadelphia, Nottingham, Chester, Carlisle, &c. §

Some countries, from geographical position and endemical relations, appear to be unfavourable to the

* Between 1787 and 1791, there died of consumption within the precincts of Stuttgart, 772 persons; between 1792 and 1796, 675 persons; between 1797 and 1801, 546 persons; between 1802 and 1806, 475 persons; between 1807 and 1818, 465 persons: ten less in these twelve years, therefore. than in the five years from 1802 to 1806 (Cless, Med. Topography of Stuttgart, p. 69.)

† Riecke, Contributions, &c. p. 43.

‡ Riecke, op. cit. p. 18.

§ Clark, op. cit. [The mortality in this country rises rapidly about the age of puberty; more so among females than among males: between 15 and 20 it is half as great again as it was between 10 and 15.—Eng. Ed.]

development of consumption; Egypt, for instance, has been known, from remote antiquity, to be propitious to the consumptive invalid *.

Those countries and districts that are obnoxious to fever and ague are said to suffer little from pulmonary consumption†. It is possible, however, that the countries from which this inference is drawn owe their reputation rather to the mildness and equality of their climate, to the absence of sudden changes of temperature, well known to try irritable lungs so severely, than to any miasmatic or fever-engendering influences ‡.

* Celsus, de Medicinâ, l. iii. 22. "Quod si vera phthisis est, inter initia protinus occurrere necessarium est * * aplissime Alexandriam ex Italia itur." Vide, also, Röser on some of the Diseases of the East (in German), Augsb. 1837.

† Vide Wells, Obs. on Pulmonary Consumption and Intermittent Fever, chiefly as diseases opposed to each other, in Trans. of a Society for improving Med. and Chirurg. Knowledge, Vol. iii. London, 1812. Also, Blane, in his Select Dissertations; and Hennen's Medical Topography of the Mediterranean. In the West Indies, however, where fever is so fatal, the mortality from pulmonary consumption is very great (Vide Clark, op. cit.)

[Much evidently depends upon *race* in regard to liability to phthisis in particular countries or climates: Great Britain is probably the healthiest country in the world—to its own children; to all the coloured races of men it proves a grave within one or two years. In Ceylon, phthisis is extremely rare among the natives; but the blacks very frequently die consumptive in that island. A regiment which, in Scotland, is losing regularly about 4·5 per 1000 from pulmonary disease, transferred to Jamaica, begins immediately to lose about 19 per 1000 from the same cause; transferred to India, it will lose about 11 per 1000 from liver disease and dysentery, and not above 1 or 2 per 1000 from pectoral complaints.—Eng. Ed.]

‡ Many districts of Italy are infested with fever of the in-

Consumptive diseases of all kinds must obviously run their course much more rapidly, and prove fatal far more inevitably, among unpolicied nations than among civilized communities. How speedily does phthisis generally bring the labouring person, exposed to fatigue and the inclemencies of the weather, to his end! Among the wealthier classes of society, however, it often runs its course very slowly; so slowly that individuals sometimes live for years with caverns in their lungs, and execute works of lasting value to mankind in spite of the circumstance*.

Since the deleterious influences of many handi-

termitting and remitting kind, without being therefore by any means exempt from pulmonary consumption, which appears, in fact, to be even more frequent and fatal in Italy than in England. Persons in aguish districts are aware of the necessity of clothing themselves warmly, and thereby probably become less liable to phthisis.—ENG. ED.

* My friend, the late Dr. M'Kinnal, knew himself that he was consumptive, that he had a cavern the size of the closed fist in one of his lungs; nevertheless, by leading a most temperate life, only shewing himself abroad during the fine months or weeks of our summers, &c. he lived for ten or twelve years, a life of great intellectual enjoyment. He even went, for two years, surgeon of a frigate to the coast of Africa, and all the while consumptive.—The distinguished author of several of the most useful works that were ever written in medicine—Physiology applied to the Preservation of Health; On the Treatment of Insanity; On Digestion; &c.—has lived, and still lives, with much enjoyment of existence to himself, with infinite advantage to the world, and all the while affected with true consumption: twenty years since, he had first one, and then another, tubercle deposited and softened in his lungs. May he live for twenty years to come, the delight of his friends, and to make the world still more his debtor than it is!—ENG. ED.

crafts, such as needle-pointing, knife and fork grinding, brush-making, stone-cutting, water-gilding, have been known, and their causes investigated, means for abating or rendering them ineffectual have been taken, and the mortality because of them has been lessened *.

It may safely be said that no disease ever arrested in a greater degree the serious attention of distinguished medical men than this of pulmonary consumption. The phenomena of tubercular deposition, which in the great majority of instances is the first appreciable link in the chain of morbid processes, have been so thoroughly investigated, the circumstances under which the deposit takes place, and those that favour its softening and elimination, are so well understood, that reasonable hopes may be entertained of our being one day in a condition, first, to prevent the formation of the inorganic mass, and then to secure its absorption or removal by a way less hazardous than that of internal softening, and ulceration of the surrounding structures†.

* Very sufficient means are now familiarly known for carrying off the grit and iron-dust of the grinder's shop, dust-flues; but, strange to say, the workmen themselves object very generally to use them! "they regard every precaution to prolong life with jealousy, as a means of increasing the supply of labour, and lowering wages; they are for 'a short life and a merry one,' and hence, even when the masters are at the expense of erecting the apparatus, these men refuse to use it, and even frequently kick it down, and break it under their feet." Second Report of Children's Employment Commission, Evidence, 582.—ENG. ED.

† The interesting researches of Dr. Baron on this subject

Conclusions from the bills of mortality, the documents hitherto relied on by statists and medical men for data, also require to be drawn with much foresight; medical science is not yet at such a point of perfection with the entire mass of practitioners and the public, as to make it quite certain that every disease which proves fatal is correctly named. Several diseases of very different nature are entered under the common title of consumption or decline; and it is always doubtful whether those that figure as disease of the chest, as chronic catarrh, as hæmoptysis, &c., were or were not proper tubercular phthisis.

Scrofula, a disease from which the youthful in especial suffer, may safely be said to be on the decrease rather than the increase; the circumstances which favour its production are certainly less influential than they were, and are likely to become every day less and less so. The better houses in which the mass of the community now dwell, the

deserve particular notice. It is easy, by shutting up animals in damp and dark places, and supplying them inadequately with indifferent food, to bring about tubercular depositions into many of the organs—the lungs, the liver, &c. These animals thus diseased, however, have only to be brought into good air, to have opportunity of taking exercise, and to be abundantly fed with good and nutritious food, in order to recover rapidly; the tubercular depositions which had taken place are removed, and perfect health is regained. A French physiologist further found that animals placed in circumstances known to produce tubercles, escaped if supplied with bread having a certain proportion of carbonate of iron mixed with it, &c.—ENG. ED.

greater attention to cleanliness, the regular and cheap supply of wholesome and easily digested food*, all conduce to render the disease less frequent than it used to be, and to restrict its ravages when it does make its appearance. A smaller proportion of amylaceous, and a larger allowance of animal food,

* Our excellent author does not live under the shadow of a corn and provision law, as we do in England, or he would write differently. It is not for the medical practitioner to meddle with party politics, but as he knows more of the poor than any one else, so is he better informed on the evils of destitution and the blessings of abundance than any other member of the body politic. He knows that disease follows want as the shadow follows the substance; and that health is no less inseparably connected with cheap, abundant, and wholesome food. He were therefore no true priest of Æsculapius who should fail upon every occasion that offered, to lift up his voice, and urge upon legislators the necessity of removing all restrictions upon commerce in articles of human sustenance. The soil of England is not now extensive enough to grow food for its inhabitants, whether in grain or in cattle; shall they continue to be half fed, and made obnoxious to disease, as they are under the present system of our corn and provision laws, or shall they be suffered to barter the products of their industry for the food they want, in the market of the world? These are the questions, and surely there is but one possible answer to them. It is as one of the guardians of the public health, not as a politician, that I speak here. It may seem matter of indifference to the layman whether a labourer shall have 12 or 14 ounces of hydrocarbonaceous matter in the shape of food each day for the supply of his corporeal wants; but the physiologist knows that the steam-engine will no more do the work represented by 14 lbs. of fuel with 12 lbs. than will the animal or human body do the work of 14 ounces of food with one drachm less than that quantity. The labour enforced with a single grain of food less than the effort requires, that grain is supplied by the living solids, and a drain of this kind continued, the solids shrink, become deranged or disorganized, and disease and death soon settle the question.—Eng. Ed.

warm clothing, a dry house, exercise in the open air, and the use of the tepid or cold bath according to the season, are all so many powerful means both of preventing and of curing scrofulous disease.

The older medical writers describe scrofula accurately, but their treatment was not always well directed; they were too much disposed to look upon the disease as an external and local evil, and to bring the enlarged glands which characterize it to suppuration. Among the multitude of anti-strumous medicines and means, superstitious observances and specific remedies, we have now come to the conclusion that the proper curative treatment of scrofula consists in dietetic and general hygienic measures; and it is certain that this conclusion will not be without excellent effects in times to come. Here, as elsewhere, it is science going hand in hand with civilization that can alone make known the true ways and means of living aright, and compel observance of them in the fitted and most proper manner, according to individual wants and peculiar circumstances.

Rickets is certainly a very old disease; the Arabian writers point to it under the name of the gibbosity or crookedness that occurs from fever*; it was farther observed, in the course of the sixteenth century, in Holland and Switzerland†; and was so admirably described by an English writer in the

* Serapion the elder, vide Sprengel, l. cit. v. ii. p. 381.
† Sprengel, ut sup. v. iv. p. 509.

succeeding century*, that it has retained the special title of "the English disease," in Germany, up to the present time. There can be no doubt of this disease having, like scrofula, become rarer than it used to be, and from the same causes†. Deformities of limb from rickets are comparatively rare, especially among the middle and upper classes; and if we observe establishments for the treatment of this class of diseases springing up every where, and the press teeming with treatises upon the subject, we are not therefore to imagine that they have in fact become more frequent than they were: the active competition among professional men, the vastly increased number of writers upon every topic, suffice to account for the greater attention which deformity excites, without supposing that it is of more frequent occurrence now than formerly. The treatment of this class of complaints has, indeed, but lately been rescued from the hands of ignorance and empiricism; evils that were once borne in silence are now proclaimed; men are no longer content with health—they desire, in addition, beauty and vigour.

At the very head of the list of sore evils which long afflicted, and still to some extent afflict, mankind, must be placed *syphilis*. Without entering, in this place, upon the question as to whether the

* Glisson, De Rachitide, Lugd. Batav. 1671.

† How frequent the disease still is, however, may be imagined from Riecke's statement (Contributions, &c. p. 44), that in Würtemburg alone there are 32,000 persons affected with deformity of the bones of the chest.

disease was known to the ancients*, and others of minor moment, this much may with assurance be said,—that, prevailing for a succession of ages with great severity, perhaps no disease that ever existed carried so many evils in its train, or spread so irresistibly and extensively over the surface of the habitable globe. The innocent as well as the guilty were its victims; the unconscious infant, the babe unborn, were not beyond the reach of its poison. All the means which earlier times essayed for its control proved fruitless, or seemed rather to add to the evil; a fateful calamity appeared to have over taken mankind, to have infected the sources of his being, and to threaten the very existence of the species. This disease has made good its footing in the world; it still exists among us; but how, or in what direction, have not the influences of civilization, and the discoveries of science, circumscribed its ravages, its power, its effects? In former times extremely dangerous, it is now, comparatively, a trifling malady. In the same measure as knowledge of the intimate essential relations of this disease to the forces of the organism, and to the virtues of medicine extended, have the morals of states and smaller communities increased: all circumstances, in a word, having conspired to circumscribe its attacks, and to render them inefficient when they occurred, it has now lost much of its importance both to the

* Upon this hypothesis, see Rosenbaum's History (in German); Halle, 1839, p. 451.

individual and the state. It is not to be denied, indeed, that the way up to this point has been traced with much suffering; the very remedy that was long held indispensable in the treatment, frequently did almost as signal mischief to the general health as the disease itself. But it has for some time been recognized that the injury done was rather from the abuse than the right use of the remedy; and then, that no specific means of cure whatsoever were requisite, that heroic remedies of every kind can be perfectly well dispensed with. It was first observed that the disease presented itself with a milder aspect in the warmer countries of the earth,—in Egypt for example*, and that there it frequenty yielded to the unaided powers of nature. In the north or colder climates, however, it was still thought that more active measures were requisite; but this presumption has also disappeared, and since practitioners discovered that the chief therapeutical indications were to be directed to the skin and mucous membranes, and that mercury was by no means indispensable, the disease itself has become not only more simple and more tractable, but the organism after its removal has been left more free from consequences of every kind.

The more intimate knowledge now possessed of the *syphiloidea*, the radesyge and spetalska of Norway, the sibbens of Scotland, the scarlievo of the

* Röser, loc. cit.

Adriatic shores, the morbus crimeus of the coasts of the Black Sea, the rose of the Asturias, the Aleppo pustule, the yaws of the West Indies, &c. excite doubts as to the relationship of many of these diseases with syphilis.

These insidious and strange diseases, once acknowledged so formidable, have for the major part been long brought under the rubric of ordinary affections, amenable to art, and to be familiarly and successfully dealt with by every village practitioner. The friend of humanity may, indeed, look forward with much confidence to their gradual decrease, and at no very distant period to their final extinction: the higher demands of morality, the growing attention to the general sanatory condition of communities, the better police that is extending over the world, backed by the ceaseless efforts of science to arrive at a knowledge of causes, and to overcome vicious customs and absurd prejudices, all give us assurance that these, among other ills, will one day become matters of historical record.

Even as these three, the most deadly and far-spread affections of humanity, can not only not be charged upon civilization as among the number of her offspring, but are much rather warred against with the whole of her energies, so is it with almost all other maladies, inasmuch as the representatives of civilization, science, art, and morals, still wage a more open or more covert but ceaseless warfare with every one of them. The time may come,—on

scientific and abstract grounds it ought to come,—when the great majority of mankind, escaping the host of evils in the shape of sickness that have still beset their path, may

> ——— "Live till like ripe fruit they drop
> Into their mother's lap, or are with ease
> Gathered, not harshly plucked, for death mature."

To set this matter in a clearer light, it will be instructive briefly to review some of the more remarkable forms from the several divisions of pathology.

The civilization of the ancients had attained so high a point, that we still contemplate with wonder and admiration the remains of their architecture and sculpture, the mighty works of their poets and historians, as monuments of a bygone more beautiful world than that which we now inhabit. All the appliances and arrangements of their public and private lives formed such a tissue of varied artistical and sensual enjoyment, that the reproach of over-refinement, which is frequently made against the present age, is probably unfounded.

But granting that in our world of to-day we want the simplicity and grandeur of thought that distinguished the ancients,—that we rather inherit their exaggerated desires, their affections, their passions, and have only associated these with the conceptions and exigencies of another order of things—it must still be allowed, that in reference to *nervous*

diseases—which, like the strings trembling after the chord struck by a powerful hand, remind us of the foregone excitement—no new form of derangement has been noted. On the contrary, when we recur to the narratives of antiquity, and contrast the pictures which they present with those we have now before our eyes, we see that the circle of nervous diseases has been narrowed rather than enlarged.

Even within the observation of the present race of medical men—a mere span in time, and scarcely to be named along with the historical epoch—one very dangerous form of nervous disease, *nostalgia*, or home sickness, has almost disappeared. How frequently, in days but recently gone by, did this painful and destructive longing seize upon our mountaineers and natives of sequestered hamlets, separated from their homes! and how rarely is the name of nostalgia now heard! The once isolated valley is now the seat of active traffic; its inhabitant is brought in contact with the rest of the world; the red man of the Indian woods now visits the Switzer on his mountains; the Switzer seeks out the red man under the shadow of the primæval forest; the rapid means of communication we now possess in our stage-coaches, our railroads, and our steam-ships, have put an end to the distressing sense of isolation, to the chill of loneliness, experienced by the stranger; letters from home reach their destination with magical rapidity and security; and the feeling that every passing thought can be fixed, and sent as it were upon the

wings of the wind, to the spot whither the heart tends, leaves no room for despair, scarcely for uneasy longing to enter.

Our modern facilities of travel do more than this: great evils are not alone worthy of consideration; *hypochondria* and *hysteria* are less frequent than they were, mainly, as it seems, through the taste for travelling: they are mostly soon put an end to by an excursion for a few weeks. Travelling is indeed a powerful remedial means in these forms of disease, as well, apparently, in virtue of the passive and more active exercise it implies, as of the new mode of life that is forced upon the invalid, of the necessary participation in foreign feelings, of the ceaseless afflux of new and amusing impressions which there is no avoiding,—all these soon force the sick man to forget himself; he feels new life infused into his heart through contact with the world around him.

In so far, also, as with little trouble, and less cost than formerly, that place of residence may now be selected which the requirements both of body and mind seemed to indicate, is life, in many instances, prolonged. The increase of vigour which the whole system, in some cases, experiences from a change of residence, or of climate, sometimes exceeds all calculation*.

* Rush, in his Natural History of Medicine among the Indians, estimated this influence very high. He says, "A Frenchman outlives an Englishman in England; a Hollander prolongs his life by removing to the Cape of Good Hope; a Portuguese gains fifteen or twenty years by removing to Brazil."—*Vide* his Medical Inquiries, Vol. I.

The more serious organic derangements that sometimes complicate hypochondriasis and hysteria, are now distinguished with much greater accuracy than heretofore; every respectable practitioner is acquainted with the mode of examining the abdominal organs by palping, percussion, &c.; and their true state ascertained, the needful medicines are prescribed with something like an assurance that they are well chosen; they are at all events recommended with a definite object in view.

Whoever should conclude that hypochondriasis and hysteria were rare diseases in former times, from the unfrequent mention made of them in the writings of our older authors, would err egregiously; the diseases are there described, but under other names—such as cholera sicca, inflatio lienis*, &c.

The disease called *St. Vitus's dance* is another form of nervous disease which undoubtedly existed in former times, but which is comprised under a common title in the account of other diseases. As this is a complaint which mostly occurs in those years when the body is acquiring its full development, and as the changes which the system undergoes in its progress to maturity are every year made more particularly an element in our medical studies, and further, as the physical education of youth is ever more

* Sprengel, op. cit. i. 488; ii. 292, ἀποπνιξις, ib. p. 53, morbus mirachialis s. mirachia, ib. p. 368, 396, 431. Under the rubric *Lethargy*, Morris, in his Observations on the Past and Present State of the City of London, 1751, includes the hypochondriac and hysteric passions.

and more anxiously considered, it seems that St. Vitus's dance must of necessity become rarer and rarer; indeed, fewer cases of the malady now come under medical care than formerly.

The *dancing mania* of the fourteenth century appears to have been an immediate effect of the dissolution of all ties, public and private, consequent upon the progress of the frightful epidemic known under the name of the black death. Multitudes were seized as by a pestilence, with a kind of infernal disposition to wander through the country in motley bands, and to dance till they fell down exhausted, being frequently attacked at the same time either with simulated or actual convulsions. Except those who, carried away by the spirit of imitation, joined these dancers, the bands appear to have been mostly composed of persons who lived upon public charity as long as it could be extorted; it was only, in fact, when the springs of charity had been exhausted, and the sense of decency began again to make itself heard, that these dancers were led back to the rational tranquillity of civil life. With a state of things such as now exists it is scarcely possible to conceive the recurrence of such an epidemic as this. And yet it must be confessed that something similar to it has lately been witnessed in the preaching mania of Smaeland, a province of Sweden; but how speedily was this strange commotion put an end to by the concurrence of all the reasonable heads in the district!*

* Some Account of the Crying Voices, or Preaching Disease,

Catalepsy, since its reality as a special form of disease has been questioned, instead of being now an object of nosology, is rather one of history*.

The peculiar convulsive disease known under the name of *morbus cerealis*, and occasionally, from its extraordinary symptoms, of the convulsive tragedy†, only shows itself, at this time, in districts where no measures are taken to prevent the development of ergot or spur-corn. The causes of the disease are now perfectly well known, and an improved system of agriculture, the grand feature of which consists in thorough draining, seems competent to prevent its occurrence. In wet seasons, when the bread flour is apt to be contaminated with the poisonous fungus that constitutes spur in wheat and rye, continental

in Smaeland, in the years 1842 and 1843, by an Eye-Witness. Leip. 1843.

Can this be an extension of the unknown-tongue-foolery, which we had in London some few years ago? It looks very much as if it were. The unknown tongues had of course some advocates and believers among us; but they were few in number, and as the reasonable heads here, as in Sweden, would not listen to the gibberish which the unknown tongues uttered, they soon ceased to wag. The grand mischief that they did was killing poor Edward Irving — the single-minded, the enthusiastic, the good, but alas, not the reasonable or strong-headed!—ENG. ED.

* Burserius, Institut. § 159, and Cullen, Nosol. Method., conceive it to have been deception, [a conclusion of these great men in which we acquire the greater confidence, seeing that, since their time, the subject of catalepsy is a favourite one with mesmerists, phreno-magnetizers, et hoc genus omne of compound dupes and impostors.—ENG. ED.]

† Vide Wedel, De Morbo Spasmodico-epidemico-maligno in Saxonia adhuc grassante, Jenæ, 1717.

governments usually caution the public against the mischief that is apt to accrue without proper care in separating the diseased from the sound grain.

Paralysis, especially of the lower extremities, is one of the diseases so commonly seen at the present day, that it were probably wrong to deny that it is not more frequent now than it used to be*. But as it seems very probable that political changes, and the worry, and excitement, and misfortunes to individuals, that are inseparable from them, added to the hardships of the military life during actual warfare, had a large share in the production of this kind of palsy†, so let us trust that continuing peace, and the security which is now felt by the industrious citizen, will restore the balance, or even put something into the opposite scale, and make paralytic affections rarer instead of more frequent than they were before.

Neuralgiæ, or painful nervous diseases, particularly tic douloureux and angina pectoris, have certainly

* Heberden, nearly half a century ago, remarked that paralysis and apoplexy had become more frequent since the beginning of the 18th century; and he is disposed to ascribe the increase to the prevailing use of hot drinks and spirituous liquors. In his Observations on the Increase and Decrease of Diseases, Lond. 1801, p. 37, he says, "gradually and constantly increasing, it is now above double what it was an hundred years ago." In my work on Paralysis of the Lower Extremities I also remark on the greater comparative frequency of this affection, and Baillie had already done the same thing before me. (Vide Medical Transactions, published by Royal College of Physicians, vol. vi.)

† Blane observed that paralytic affections were more frequent in hospital than in private practice.

been very frequently met with since the beginning of the present century; still, it is difficult to say anything positive as to their increase; we are not sure whether certain diseases which are described by writers our immediate predecessors under such titles as a "spasmodic convulsive affection of the lips" (Hoffman), as a "trismus dolorificus" (Sauvages), &c. were the same as the Fothergillian tic douloureux. The Arabian physicians frequently speak of "painful spasms of the face*," and one of them† recommends remedies or counter-irritation to be applied in the neighbourhood of the place of origin of the affected nerve. Many distinguished personages of antiquity appear to have died of angina pectoris, so that we have no authority for believing it to be commoner now than it was in former ages of the world‡.

Hydrophobia is on the whole a very rare disease; in many places it is known from hearsay only§; in others, again, it has undoubtedly its occasional victim‖. As all means have hitherto been found

* For instance, Rhazes, in Sprengel, l. c. ii. 397, 402; Avicenna, ib. 434; Albucasis, ib. 451.

† Musue, ii. in Sprengel, u. s. ii. 448.

‡ Among the number, Seneca (vide his 54th Epistle, and Sprengel, v. 602,) and the Emperor Alexius Comnenns I. (Sprengel, ii. 324.)

§ Heberden, writing after more than forty years' experience, says that he never had seen hydrophobia from the bite of a rabid animal (Commentaries, sub. voc.); and Stieglitz assures us, that during a practice of thirty-six years he had only *heard* of a single case of the disease.

‖ From Hoffmann's summary (Prussian Medical Journal for 1835, No. 45,) it appears that in Prussia 266 persons had died of hydrophobia in the course of six years; which is at the

unavailing against this disease when once established, there is the greater reason in every degree of precaution that can be taken against it. The prophylaxis of hydrophobia is of different kinds; that in which the bitten part is excised, is, however, the only one that experience suffers us to rely on as in any way effectual. Lap-dogs, and indeed house-dogs of all kinds, appear to be more subject to the disease than the animals that are kept for field sports; and this has led to police enactments in different countries calculated to repress the number of useless curs. In ancient Argos, during the dog-days, the festival kynophontis was celebrated by the public sacrifice of a number of dogs*. It were no impolitic measure to have recourse in these times to

rate of about three per million of the inhabitants. [The writer quoted, if I remember rightly, ascribes the relatively greater frequency of hydrophobia in the Prussian dominions than in other European states, to the number of wolves that still exist in the countries that form their eastern boundaries. A physician in fashionable practice, like Heberden, might live a century in London without seeing hydrophobia, and the disease present itself there several times nevertheless. Six months seldom pass without a case occurring in one or other of our great metropolitan hospitals. In the year 1842, I find, from the Registrar-General's Fifth Annual Report, that *four* persons died of this awful disease in the metropolis, the population being reckoned at 1,875,493.—Eng. Ed.]

* Müller, The Dorians, i. 346.

At Kertch, in the Crimea, there is a gipsy charged with the duty of clearing the streets of stray dogs. He draws a dead dog through the town, and all the animals who approach to look are put to death forthwith. He has 25 kopecks for every head he delivers to the authorities (Demidoff, Voyage dans la Russie, t. i., p. 552, Paris, 1840.)

some solemnity of the same kind when it seemed that the taste for dog-keeping was getting the better of the common-sense of the community, and of that consideration for the general safety which ought to be paramount.

Delirium tremens, or the drunkard's madness, must, of course, be viewed as a consequence of the modern art of distilling ardent spirits,—an article of which such destructive quantities may now be procured for so small a sum of money, that debasement and self-slaughter may fairly be said to be placed within reach of all. But the disease of drunkenness appears happily to have passed its acmé ; the general reprobation of the practice of indulging in intoxicating liquors, conviction of their degrading and destructive effects, and the consequent diminished consumption of these among the educated and wealthier classes, and even, (and that upon moral and religious grounds,) among the labouring orders of the community, all give us hope that the evil will be still farther diminished, if it do not seem very probable that it will never disappear entirely*.

* The northern nations of Europe have long had a standing reputation for drunkenness. The habit of indulgence is said to be on the decrease in Russia.

[In England, and particularly in Ireland, drunkenness has received a notable check through the labours of the modern apostle of temperance, the Rev. Mr. Mathew. Honour to the man who dedicates his life and his energies to a cause so holy as the inculcation of the innumerable blessings that flow from temperance ! In London, great numbers of the keepers of public-houses die of delirium tremens, and other immediate effects of the abuse of ardent spirits. I have attended many

The *tremors* and *paralyses* from which water-gilders, and other artisans who use quicksilver in their handicrafts, occasionally suffer, have lost much of their obstinacy since the powers of chalybeate medicines taken internally, and administered in the way of bath, were recognized. And then the late discoveries in electro-metallurgy, by which almost every article may be silvered and gilt in the most perfect and substantial manner by means of the galvanic battery, will unquestionably lead to the entire rejection of quicksilver in all operations of the kind.

The *painter's cholic*, or dry belly-ache, is another disease that vouches both for the progress of general knowledge and of medical science. It is much more rare than it was in former ages of the world; and it is also treated, when it occurs, with infinitely greater success than it used to be. The practice among the ancient Romans to boil the must of their grapes in leaden vessels, and then to add the syrup thus obtained to other wines, with a view to preserving them, was in all probability a principal cause of the severe attacks of cholic to which they appear to have been subject. In articles of domestic use tin has

to their end from this cause; and could point out several houses where the mistress has had three husbands within ten or twelve years: the husbands drink themselves to death, the widows are prizes for some frequenter of the house, who, once installed as landlord, follows the example of his predecessor, and is by and by laid side by side with him under the sod; when, of course, the widow is again free to choose another helpmate.—ENG. ED.]

now almost wholly superseded lead; in our white-lead manufactories many improvements have been introduced, by which the workmen are protected; and despite the quantity of this article employed by house-painters, they are now so well aware of its noxious effects, that they take care, by wearing gloves, and washing their hands particularly before they set themselves to their meals, that none of the article shall be swallowed; cases of lead poisoning are therefore even rare among them. Occasion has already been taken to state that if they do become affected, the treatment of the accident is so well understood, that its consequences are not greatly dreaded. A very great improvement in regard to this class of artizans would undoubtedly be the introduction of the *white zinc*, which has been much recommended, in lieu of the white lead, which has hitherto been regarded as the basis of almost every pigment.

Congestions of blood to various organs or systems of organs—to the head, chest, or abdomen, are commonly reckoned among the number of evils which our civilization induces, and that from over-work of the brain, from stooping, and other uneasy positions of the body, from labour carried on in confined atmospheres, from sluggishness of the bowels induced by sedentary occupations, from the use of considerable quantities of stimulating and highly nutritious food, without sufficient exercise, &c. In assenting to all this, we can still affirm

that diseases induced by these causes are not very formidable, and do not appear greatly to influence the average length of life of the community.

Hemorrhoids is probably the disease of a congestive kind which is most extensively produced by the series of causes indicated; but if the mucous membranes and blood-vessels of the alimentary canal are apt to be more seriously implicated in consequence of our social usages, than in the barbarous state, it is still quite certain that hemorrhoidal affections occur even there. Under any circumstances they are allowed frequently to act beneficially rather than otherwise, and to serve as abating states of repletion, which falling upon other organs might have more serious effects. Hemorrhoids are seldom fatal; and, indeed, when they are habitually troublesome, they can mostly be referred to some taste, such as the constant use of strong wines or ardent spirits, against which true civilization raises her voice as emphatically, as barbarism sanctions the indulgence*. Hemorrhoids have no ulterior influence; they produce no seeds which necessarily germinate and take root in the organism; it lies mostly in the option and within the power

* Hemorrhoidal complaints appear to be much rarer in South than in North Germany, in Southern than in Northern Europe generally; and this, apparently, in consequence of the much smaller consumption of ardent spirits in the former than in the latter. In Petersburg, Attenhoffer (Med. Topogr. of St. Petersburg, p. 222) informs us, that of four adult males, three will be found affected with piles.

of the individual to determine whether he shall continue to be troubled with the inconvenience, or get rid of it altogether.

Stone is one of the diseases that is certainly not so frequent now as it was in former times. The number of operations performed for its relief at the present time by all the surgeons extant, do not seem to equal those that were done by single celebrated lithotomists in bygone ages. Since the habit of tea-drinking has become general in Holland, stone, which a couple of centuries ago was an extremely common disease, has become a very rare one. Half or three quarters of a century ago stone used also to be exceedingly common in the city of Boston, United States; but the practice of consuming large quantities of punch at all social meetings in that intellectual city, having given place, as in Holland, to an innocent infusion of tea, stone is now a very rare disease. And, then, the treatment of this formidable distemper has certainly been much improved: chemistry has been unwearied in its efforts to find solvents for calculi of different kinds; and if all that we could wish has not yet been accomplished, still something has already been done, and it seems almost certain that much more will yet be effected. The discovery of the strong affinity of the earth lithium for uric acid has but just been made, and will certainly prove important. Further, patients are no longer subjected to an operation which necessarily brings their life into jeopardy, that they may be delivered of a

calculus no larger than a coffee or a kidney bean; concretions of this size are seized and reduced to fragments in their seat, almost without risk to the individual. Still farther, a procedure by means of gradual dilatation of the natural passages, and without the use of any instrument much more formidable than a lancet, has been revived, has been successfully instituted in several instances, and may come by and by to supersede the old operation of lithotomy*.

Scirrhus or *Cancer* is another of the diseases which has hitherto either defied all the resources of art, or against which only the most painful procedures, or distressing mutilations, have been held of any avail. The principle of equal pressure, suggested by the ingenuity of a gentleman who to consummate skill in his profession adds the accomplishments of a profound mechanical philosopher—Dr. Neil Arnott—promises to render recurrence to surgical operation unnecessary in the majority of cases. If it will not counteract the fault in the constitution upon which cancerous disease so commonly depends, neither, it is now admitted, does removal by means of the knife, of the particular part affected, exert any influence of the kind. By preserving the integuments entire, however, for a much longer period than could have been obtained under the old mode of treatment, this new plan of

* See the whole of this interesting subject discussed in a work entitled: On the Treatment of Stone by Means Medical and Mechanical, by R. Willis, M.D. 8vo. Lond. 1842.

dealing with scirrhous swellings will undoubtedly prolong life; and then, by soothing pain, which it does in the most remarkable manner, it renders the use of narcotic and poisonous drugs unnecessary, and so contributes in another way to the comfort and well-being, and general health, of the patient. One of the varieties of this formidable disease, the *chimney-sweeper's cancer*, will probably disappear with the cruel usage of employing children to sweep chimneys.

The class of *inflammatory irritations*, and of *proper inflammatory diseases*, probably presents the variety of character we witness, and meets us so frequently as it does, in consequence of our civilization having spread from the milder climates of Asia and the south of Europe towards the colder and more inclement north. The habits and usages of the land of our nativity are not readily laid aside; and it would even seem that the system habituated to one of the warmer climates of the earth, transported to a colder country, does not begin at once to feel its influences; it is familiarly known, for instance, that the natives of this country who have passed a considerable number of years in India, on returning home rarely feel the effects of the changeable climate of Great Britain for a year or so after their arrival. To look at the fashion of dress which obtains among our women, in the house especially, no reasonable being would ever imagine that we were dwelling in one of the most variable climates in the world, subject to the most strange and sudden alternations

of temperature—blown upon to-day by the warm breath of the south, to-morrow assailed by the sharp tooth of the north; surrounded by an atmosphere generally loaded with moisture, and covered by a sky which, for so many days in every year, denies us a sight of the genial sun; and where erysipelas, catarrhs, and rheumatisms, are so rife, scrofulas and consumptions so truly indigenous. Still, let us not overlook the truth, in our anxiety that things were better and more reasonably ordered than they are, that here, too, civilization, with her manifold means and appliances,—convenient clothing, commodious houses, regular exercise both of body and mind, by which either order of powers is strengthened,—steps in, and seems to bid defiance to mere climatic influences, and obviously accomplishes infinitely more than could be done by the rude son of nature, dwelling in ignorance and dull indifference: those countries that once constituted the outermost verge of the habitable globe are now centres of the arts and sciences that most ennoble man.

The disease which attracted so much attention some few years ago, under the title of *Egyptian ophthalmy*, is nothing more than a severe catarrhal inflammation of the eyes, in which the natural mucus becomes purulent and irritating, and, at the height of the disease, infectious. The ancients were familiar with this disease, and there is no reason to apprehend any thing from its spread, so long as its contagious character is duly kept in view.

Croup, which so lately was the terror of parents, which in its virulence and frequency was proclaimed a product of recent times,—one of the banes of our social condition,—an effect of the mode of bringing up our children, &c.—has already lost much of its serious character. The experience now possessed of the admirable power of emetics, used at an early period in this formidable disease, to control its progress, enables us to meet it without so much solicitude for the result as we used to feel, and no longer to look on it as one of the evil spirits evoked by the present times*.

Whether civilized communities are more subject to pure inflammations than uncivilized tribes, may fairly be questioned: persons who are well fed have been held more subject to inflammations than the indifferently nourished, because, as it is said, they are more plethoric and excitable; but this is very questionable. Persons in the high health which abundance of wholesome food implies, resist causes of disease that seize upon less robust and healthy individuals, and make them their victims†.

* The malignant or gangrenous inflamed throat, an old disease, but which was particularly rife about a couple of centuries ago (Sprengel, l. c. iv., p. 486), has become so rare, that it now scarcely presents itself, save occasionally, and as an exception to the rule, in connection with bad forms of scarlatina. This exudative inflammation of the throat is, however, certainly a very formidable disease when it occurs. The passage in Galen (De Locis Affectis, lib. i.) which has been supposed to refer to croup, is extremely obscure.

† Sir Gilbert Blane states that he observed our English

Febrile diseases, whether of an inflammatory or a nervous type, have lost much of their danger and deadly tendency, since their nature has been more carefully studied, and the circumstances that favour their production have been recognized, and either lessened in force or removed entirely. The treatment of this class of diseases is also much better understood than it used to be; the insufficiency of the old heroic or very active means of dealing with fever is now admitted; we no longer attempt to subdue the disease, but rather look to carrying the patient safely through the several phases of the malady; and in the majority of instances, under somewhat favourable circumstances, we reckon with confidence on seeing him by and by restored to his former strength and efficiency. The worst forms of fever, too, it must be allowed, are rarer than they used to be; some countries seem even to escape them entirely; in others, however, they prevail with unabated virulence. In the latter case the merit of circumscribing them is by so much the more. Egypt and India appear neither to engender typhus, nor to have any power of propagating its contagion*.

sailors to be more subject to inflammations in 1814 than formerly, and this because they were better kept and more healthy. [The passage to which Dr. Marx alludes (Dissert. p. 24) is evidently pure hypothesis. It is certain that diseases of every description have greatly diminished in the Navy. Long voyages through every variety of climate are now performed without the loss of a man. *Vide* a note on the point, under the head of *Scurvy*, in a subsequent page.—ENG. ED.]

* Sir J. M'Grigor, who accompanied the detachment of

Ireland, on the contrary, is periodically ravaged by the disease, and proves a very hot-bed for its production and propagation. But it is even here that we obtain a distinct view of what the zeal and devotion of the medical practitioner can accomplish, with very little encouragement from government, and even less from the sufferers themselves*.

It is difficult to say wherefore certain countries and seasons have suffered so much, others so little, from epidemic fever. Civilization very certainly has no part in the infliction; all her efforts are, on the contrary, directed to rendering what are presumed to be the causes of fever ineffectual. The ancients have scarcely left record of their experience in any save the malignant nervous forms of continued fever†.

British troops from India to Egypt during the occupation of the latter country by the French, observed no well-marked case of typhus in Egypt, and in India he never saw one. When the disease broke out in transports on the voyage out, and raged severely, still the disease did not reach India. When it was brought on shore it never spread. Sir James says: "A second case never appeared on shore; and, on inquiry, I found that no case had ever been known on the western side of the Peninsula, nor have I ever heard of its existence in the eastern."—*Medical Sketches*, p. 196.

* The Historic Sketch of the Causes, Progress, &c., of the Contagious Fever in Ireland, of W. Harty, M.D., Dublin, 1820, may be consulted for much excellent information on the points touched on in the text.

† Vide Ochs, Artis medicæ principes de curanda febre typhode, Lips. 1830; Wawruch, Antiquitates typhi contagiosi, Vindob. 1812; Marx, Origines Contagii, and Häser's Historic Pathological Inquiries (in German), Lips. 1839, Dr. W. Falconer drew a parallel betwixt the *νόσος καρδιακὸς*, the morbus cardiacus of the ancients, and the nervous fever of the moderns (Mems. of the Med. Society of London, Vol. vi.)

The Arabians were well acquainted with the adynamic or low typhus, and treated it with refrigerants*. But a long interval elapses before we find this form of disease mentioned again; and even in very recent times physicians have been found who maintained that it only made its appearance towards the close of the last century†.

The *petechial typhus*, accompanied with severe head symptoms, or typhomania, is now much rarer than it was in former ages‡. The sweating sickness, which occasioned such havoc in England in the course of the 15th and 16th centuries, has either long ago disappeared from the face of the earth, or has a character of mildness which makes it unregarded§.

* Sprengel, l. c. p. 367, 379, et 396.

† Rush, for instance, says (l. c. p. 85): "The nervous fever has become so familiar to us, that we look upon it as a natural disease. Sydenham, so faithful in his history of fevers, takes no notice of it. Dr. Cadwallader informed me that it made its appearance in this city (Philadelphia) about five and twenty years ago."

‡ Diseases appear to be ever the same, though greatly modified by the circumstances in which they appear. Some eight, ten, and twelve years ago, most of the cases of continued fever we encountered in the metropolis, and they were rife then, were accompanied with an eruption of petechiæ upon the breast. This fever has, in fact, preserved the same type almost up to the present time."—ENG. ED.

§ The epidemics of sweating miliary fever, which they have had in France upon more than one occasion of late years, were probably of the same nature as our old English sweating sickness; but they differed from it essentially in the small ratio of mortality. (Vide Rayer, Hist. de l'Epidemie de Suette Miliaire qu a regné, &c. 8vo. Paris, 1822.)—ENG. ED.

The remembrance of the Hungarian fever, which presented itself with the nervous putrid character, but accompanied with severe cramps of the stomach, and spread by contagion, is only preserved as matter of history*.

Plague, which, under the title of black death, spread like the destroying angel over the face of the inhabited earth in the middle of the 14th century, which in the 17th century committed such fearful ravages in many cities, particularly London† and Vienna, which, in the beginning of the 18th century, swept away nearly one-third of all the inhabitants of Brandenburg, and one-half of those of the city of Dantzic, and which even in these days keeps hovering upon the confines of our European civilization, ready to break in upon us, were opportunity afforded

* In Breslau more than 18,000 persons died of this fever in the year 1758. Süssmilch, l. c. vi. cap. 9. [Camp fevers, and beleaguered town fevers, attend upon every war, and are far more destructive than the swords and bullets of enemies. The mortality of the British Peninsular army is said to have been 36 per cent.; but of this number not one-half—not more than 15 or 16 per cent.—died from accidents in the field. In the war in Ceylon, under Gen. Brownrigg, when Candy was taken, the mortality amounted to 45 per cent. of the force employed; but not more than half a dozen men were killed by the enemy; fever, on the other hand, slew its hundreds: exposure in a battle of Waterloo is scarcely so hazardous to the common soldier as a year's quiet residence in the Island of Jamaica.—Eng. Ed.]

† In the year 1665, 70,594 persons are said to have died of plague; the year after this the great fire of London *happily* occurred, and since then that great city has known nothing of this pestilence. In 1679, Vienna was nearly depopulated by plague, and Augsburg lost one fifth of its inhabitants from the same cause in 1635.

it—plague, which has lost nothing of its destructive power, is fairly kept at bay by civilized man*. Whilst the nations to whom the Koran serves as a guide in faith and practice sit contentedly looking on at the almost ceaseless havoc which this scourge makes among them—see unmoved how the consuming fire, scarcely quenched, is again rekindled, and burns as vigorously as ever, fed by the old materials—regard it as decreed of unchangeable destiny that they and theirs, the nearest and dearest to them, should be carried off in crowds—in their infatuation as to consequences appropriate the goods and chattels of the deceased, and show themselves in the very garments which had been stripped from the victim of plague—and in their treatment of the destructive disease, pin their faith upon mummy, bezoar, amulets, and such other fanciful remedies—Christian nations, on the contrary, use every reasonable measure of precaution against the scourge; they hold no communication with the diseased—they are unwearied in their cleansings and purifications—and, by diet, and the means that scientific medicine indicates, do all that seems right and proper to escape; and this with such success that the enemy may fairly be said to be kept at bay. Whilst under our quarantine regulations every attention is paid to the comfort and well-being of travellers and navigators, the safety of the community, being still held the

* Vide Tully, History of the Plague, as it has lately appeared in Malta, Gozo, Corfu, &c. Lond. 1821.

paramount consideration, is never compromised. The most active traffic, both by land and sea, can thus be carried on almost without interruption; for a few days' or even weeks' demurrage is a very small price paid by individuals for the assurance both of their own safety and of that of the nation to which they belong*.

It would even seem as if the unwearied admonitions of more enlightened powers, and the influence of example, were to prevail at last with the Turks—that in the native land of pestilence the voice of fatalism was about to lose its sway, and the dictates of sense and foresight to be listened to, in the establishment of an efficient medical police. The hopes of all the friends of humanity, that the time

* Gosse, in his remarkable paper on the reform of quarantine regulations, (Biblioth. univers. de Genève, t. xlii. p. 46, et seq. 1842) endeavours to show that a quarantine of a fortnight in reference to plague, and one of six days in respect of yellow fever, are quite sufficient. He expects that the effect of civilization will be to circumscribe in a continually increasing degree the empire of contagious diseases. Leprosy, syphilis, small-pox, and plague, vouch for the beneficial influence of our social improvement; they are not now to be compared in point of intensity with what they were in former times. If any one asks, wherefore these diseases have shown a disposition to become more simple, and even to disappear, let him be answered in these words: Because of the influence of civilization and medical science, the progress of reason, and the healing art. A well-informed writer in the October number of Forbes' British and Foreign Quarterly Review, 1843, is of opinion that the period of incubation of the plague is ten, at the most fifteen days. It is by no means necessary to look on whole countries as infected because particular places of them are the seat of plague.

might come when these ignorant men should participate in the blessings of civilization by gaining immunity from plague, are certainly approaching fulfilment.*

Yellow fever is a disease which has several times invaded the continent of Europe, and upon the contagious or non-contagious nature of which the most opposite opinions have been entertained and published. The disease, however, is known to be endemical in countries where other forms of remittent and intermittent fever prevail, particularly the West India Islands. In healthy seasons the type of fever is there more simple, the disease is more mild; it presents the characters of simple intermittent or remittent fever, and yellowness of skin scarcely or never occurs: in unhealthy seasons, again, along with very general prevalence of the remittent form in every degree of aggravated severity, the yellow skin is met with frequently, and the disease becomes yellow fever, though it is but the old familiar malady. These bad forms of remittent fever are acknowledged never to extend beyond a certain elevation above the sea-line; this level passed, patients can be attended without the slighest risk

* M'Grigor, in his Sketches (p. 102), has these words:—May we not indulge a hope that as the intercourse of civilized Europe with the countries of which the plague is now the source, becomes more regular and intimate, we may be enabled to extend to them our discoveries and improvements, and so direct them to the means of divesting the plague of its terrors, and reducing the mortality from it to that from fever and the small-pox in Europe?

of infection; and even the nurses and hospital-sergeants, who live among the patients in the feverish districts, when the disease is at the height, are observed to be but rarely attacked by it; when they are, it is because they have been exposed beyond the bounds of the barrack or hospital to the general causes which engender the disease. It may be said confidently, that the most able, and, in reference to yellow fever, the most experienced medical officers of the British army, have expressed themselves almost unanimously against the contagiousness of the disease. As to the idea of its having had its source and origin in slave-ships, this is plainly untenable. Fevers of the worst kind, yellow fever in its most aggravated form, may and do occur there; but this is because of the circumstances in which the unhappy wretches are placed on board of slave ships: the atmosphere of the hell in which they are crowded is poison as deadly to the lungs as any the deadliest drug we wot of to the stomach*

* It is very sad to think of the fact, but there can be no doubt of its being true, that the attempts of the more civilized and humane nations of the earth to put an end to the slave-trade should have rendered it infinitely more destructive than it used to be, and, to all appearance, scarcely to have abated its activity. The scarcity of the *article* has caused its price to rise, and held out a temptation to the cupidity of man which seems irresistible. The slavers are now built and fitted solely with a view to speed, that they may escape the cruisers, and without the slightest regard to the stowage of the *cargo*. The effect of this is, that living human beings are packed precisely as if they were lifeless mummies, and apparently without the slightest suspicion that they require more than room to sit up

Intermittent fever or *ague*, of which it may be said, more truly than of any other disease, that it exerts its power in virtue of immemorial possession of the soil, is losing one domain after another. Although it lies not within the empire of our wishes to win the marsh and fen for the use of man, we can still greatly contract their extent by well-directed efforts and perseverance: we carry off stagnant waters by well-directed drains; turn aside the spring that floods the morass; and even shut out the sea from many a fertile acre seated below the level of its bed. In districts where rice and hemp are grown, it is found that much may be done to lessen the insalubrity of the culture, by planting trees, and keeping the ditches well scoured; just as, in reference to towns, attention to the sewerage, to filling up old and stinking ditches, to the supply of pure water and wholesome food, and to the construction of airy houses, seem competent to put an end to ague in all its shapes, even in localities where it had established a title to be held indigenous and truly endemical.

The history of the improvement of the soil supplies us with the most striking and interesting examples

or lie down in; the space between the floor upon which they are stretched, and the deck above them, is not more than two feet and a half, and, as is said, sometimes not more than eighteen inches; and there are no adequate means of ventilation provided. Venetian senators, Spanish inquisitors, North American Indians, never inflicted such tortures upon their enemies or opponents as are thus ruthlessly, but unintentionally, inflicted upon the crowds of naked savages in the slaving schooners of the present day.—ENG. ED.

in illustration of these statements*. The number of sick, and the ratio of mortality, have progressively become less and less; and spots that were formerly shunned as if they had been possessed by one of the worms or dragons of the old world of fable, may sometimes now be visited for their salubrity.

Dysentery used to be a disease extensively prevalent, and extremely fatal. It is one of the maladies, however, which is now actually of the rarest occurrence amongst us, and when a case does present itself it is rarely looked upon as dangerous†.

* Many of the most agreeable and even healthy parts of England were at no very remote period barren heaths and pestiferous marshes. [All the world knows how the fens of Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire have shrunk before the spirit of improvement; in innumerable districts where ague was once endemical, where young and old laid their account with an attack every spring and fall, the disease has not been seen in the course of the present generation; and in others, where it still lingers, it is less frequent than it was, and less obstinate. Many parts of Essex, and I presume it is the same with other districts, however, still hold great enmity with the constitution of strangers. It is very dangerous, for instance, for the Essex farmer to cross the Thames and seek his bride among the blooming maidens of Kent; if he does so, he is almost certainly a widower within a few years.—Eng. Ed.] Greece, reviving from the ashes of her former greatness, seems inclined to pursue the true path of improvement. "Since the marshes have been drained, the air of the Piræus appears to be as wholesome as that of Athens itself."—(Brandes' Intelligence from Greece, in German, Lips. 1842.)

† Forty years ago, Heberden could say that there is scarcely any fact deducible from the bills of mortality more worthy the attention of physicians than the gradual decline of the dysentery. From 1700 to 1710, the average annual mortality from this disease was 1,070, from 1750 to 1760 it was 110, from 1730 to 1800 it amounted to no more than 20.

This happy change is unquestionably due rather to the general improvement of the sanatory state of the community, than to the absence of any epidemical influence—unless, indeed, the presumed influence be regarded as synonymous with the neglect of every measure that conduces to the health of man—such as thorough drainage, wholesome food*, good water, and pure air,—which, indeed, is the right interpretation of the term.

The *Asiatic cholera*, this singular product of the climatic and national elements of India, fell upon the countries of Europe as a new disease. But even in its sudden outbreak and gradual disappearance we had evidence of the influence and importance of the more highly civilized condition of our citizen-life. It seemed that it was only when favoured by transient states of political disturbance, or hostility between neighbouring nations, that it became possible for this scourge to pass the bounds that were prescribed to it. The success of the pains which the governments of Germany took to keep off the evil in its approaches, will remain imperishably written in the history of its European progress, and afford ample proof of the importance of well-

* In the year 1835, dysentery prevailed in the circle of Könisberg to a great extent. In one village, of 26 who were attacked, one half only escaped alive. But this was a year of great scarcity, and it was found that the people to make their flour go further had mixed it largely with the pollen of the male catkin of the hazel bush.—Sanatory Report of the Med. College of Könisberg, 1837, (in German).

concerted and energetic measures of precaution against the extension of pestilence* ; for here, as elsewhere, it was found possible in numerous instances, by steadily enforcing the measures of medical police that had been determined on, particularly by isolating the sick, and carefully purifying the houses in which the disease had broken out, to nip the mischief in the bud*.

At the time of the cholera, both when the disease was imminent and when it had broken out, the

* See particularly Dr. W. Wagner's account of the progress of cholera in the Prussian states, from official sources. Berlin, 1832, (in German).

† In former times, probably, no question would have been raised as to the contagious nature of cholera. In these days nothing passes unquestioned ; so that the contagious or non-contagious nature of cholera was soon the subject of active discussion among medical men. My esteemed friend seems a non-contagionist : in England, and in France, the non-contagionists may be said to have put the contagionists fairly hors de combat ; not 1 in 20 was found at last with a word to say in favour of the contagiousness of cholera ; 19 in 20, on the contrary, were fully satisfied that the disease was not contagious. The disease, in fact, when at the height, showed itself in so many points simultaneously, that it was altogether impossible to explain its appearance upon the idea of contagion : to have attempted to do so would have been no less unreasonable than to have referred influenza or hay-fever to contagion. In the course of a very few days the whole of Paris was invaded : between sun-set one evening, and sun-rise next morning, the disease had begun and ended in several thousand instances—they that were alive and well the one day were lifeless corpses the next. In spite of the freedom and rapidity of our intercourse in England, many towns escaped entirely : in towns and districts where the disease presented itself, the majority of the cases were merely sporadic—half a dozen or more persons were seized and lost, the rest of the community remained unaffected.—Eng. Ed.

humanity and good sense of the community were awakened in a remarkable manner—the poor, the miserable, and the vicious, were all alike cared for; the inmost recesses of poverty, wretchedness, and filth, were penetrated, and such measures of lustration enforced as have had their influence upon the health of communities up to the present day: even as the snow-storm that perchance overwhelms the solitary wanderer is pregnant with vernal leaf, and summer blossom, and autumn fruit, and life and joy to all besides, so cholera may fairly be said to have done good rather than mischief in the European countries which it visited: if it have failed of the good which it ought to have done, it is only because men have neglected the salutary lesson they might have learned from its visit.

It is impossible to estimate at its full value the zeal and self-devotion of the members of the medical profession, in the course of this great epidemic visitation; they never in a single instance shrank from the responsible, and, as they were generally held, dangerous duties, which by common consent devolved upon them: backed by the civic authorities and the police, they shewed themselves conspicuously, as they ever are privately and unostentatiously, at the head of any movement that has the well-being and the improvement of mankind for its object. Truly and well did Tullius say, that "man never shewed more like the gods than in succouring his fellow man." But the medical pro-

fession has, if possible, still higher destinies; it is even less interesting to individuals than to communities; it, in fact, serves the statesman and philanthropist as their guide in every effort to improve the physical and moral condition of mankind. Investigating the causes of disease and inefficiency, of premature decay and death, it indicates the means of averting these, or making them ineffectual; and so, without ever recurring to medicine in the vulgar sense, it prolongs life, and adds to the sum of enjoyment during the tenure of existence. It is in this direction that the enlightened member of the medical profession has especial claims upon the consideration of the state; it is with such grand ends in view as the general health and efficiency, that the state should shew itself solicitous to secure the highest possible amount of acquirement in the body of its medical practitioners.

Sea scurvy might be taken as a kind of unquestionable evidence that it rests with the future practitioner to discover and rightly to use proper means, in order not only to disarm the sorest bodily infirmities of their power, but even to put an end to them entirely. The ravages of sea scurvy in the navies of former times were frightful; in the present day the disease is unknown in every well-appointed ship. The order of the Admiralty, that every vessel destined for sea during more than a certain very limited time, should be furnished with a quantity of

lemon juice*, has made it possible to send expeditions to the extreme north and south, and to maintain the companies through the rigours of a succession of arctic winters, without a single individual among them suffering from scurvy. The disease may be said literally to have disappeared from the British navy, in which every thing that science and foresight can do to secure the health and comfort of the crews is done. Even in the merchant service

* Blane informs us (op. cit. p. 4), that in the year 1796, (the first in which the general supply of lemon juice took place) the sickness, instead of decreasing gradually, fell *per saltum*. John Woodfall, who lived for a time in the town of Stade, towards the end of the 16th century, was the first who indicated the curative powers of lemon juice.—See his Surgion's Mate, Lond. 1617.

[After the ship's company have been a fortnight on salt provisions, a ration of lemon-juice, and an additional allowance of sugar, are served out to them; but the whole of the improvement that has taken place in the navy cannot be ascribed of the use of lemon-juice alone. In 1779, the proportion to deaths in the Royal Navy of Great Britain was 1 in 8 of the employed! in 1811, it had fallen to 1 in 32; but this was not yet the term it was destined to reach; from 1830 to 1836, it was actually no more than 1 in 72! and this with deaths from every cause—wounds, drownings, &c. taken into the reckoning; from actual disease the mortality was but 1 in 85! Well may Dr. Wilson, in his admirable "Reports on the Health of the Navy," (London, March 1840) say: "Of the many improvements that have taken place within the last fifty years in the physical and social condition of the people, none is to be compared with that effected in the health of seamen in the public service, because none approaches it in magnitude and importance." And I cannot help adding, that I fully concur with him when he adds: "for this striking and momentous change, humanity and the country are chiefly indebted to ABUNDANCE OF WHOLESOME NUTRITIOUS FOOD."—ENG. ED.]

scurvy is extremely rare; instances, however, do every now and then occur, in which, through sordid villainy, vessels are sent to sea inadequately found in wholesome provisions and needful medicines—to say nothing of their being without any medical man on board—and there, and under such circumstances, does the disease still break out. But these cases are no more than exceptions to the general rule. In the naval hospitals of England sea scurvy will be looked for in vain*; he who would learn what the disease was in former times, must go to books, or to countries where the lights and usages of civilized life have as yet but partially penetrated†.

* In my visit to England, in 1841, I myself inquired for the disease in vain, as I have said in my "Recollections of England," Brunswick, 1842.

[There is, nevertheless, every now and then an opportunity of seeing scurvy in the River Hospital Ship "Dreadnought." It would be wonderful, indeed, if out of the multitude of ships of all nations that crowd the Thames, some one did not occasionally put in tempest-tost, wind-bound, detained from her port long beyond the expected time, with her crew suffering from scurvy. The poorer class of merchant ships, however, are known often to be inadequately provided for the long voyages they have before them; and from what the medical officers of the Dreadnought occasionally see, as well as from what has transpired upon other occasions, it is not going too far to say, that some better measure of police than any that may perchance exist seems imperatively demanded in this direction.—Eng. Ed.]

† Two hundred years ago scurvy was among the most frequent diseases in London. Graunt, in his Observations upon the Bills of Mortality, speaks of it as among "the casualties that bear a constant proportion unto the whole number of burials." The disease has now disappeared. In Paris scurvy is also so rare a disease, that Andral says (Essai de Hématologie Pathologique, Paris, 1843):—"Les scorbuts bien caracté-

Leprosy was at once the most dreaded and dreadful disease of antiquity and the middle ages, when it seemed to have spared no rank or condition of society*. The disease appears to linger endemically at this time in one isolated corner of the coast of Norway†; from all the other countries of Europe it has vanished. In former ages thousands of leper-houses were found necessary to receive the multitudes who suffered from this disease in its most aggravated forms, and when it was held contagious‡;

risés sont si rares à Paris, que pendant long-temps j'en avais été reduit à une simple conjecture sur l'état du sang dans cette maladie." In Archangel, however, scurvy appears to be still endemical among the poorer classes (Richter, Topography of Archangel, p. 121, in German.)

[Lord Anson, and other navigators and writers on scurvy after him, indicated the cochlearia or scurvy grass, cabbage, and green vegetables generally, as the grand restoratives from scurvy. The *potato* has been lately pointed out as even more effectual, both in a prophylactic and restorative point of view. Probably the universal use of this excellent root is one of the main though unsuspected causes of the immunity we now enjoy both afloat and ashore from scurvy.—ENG. ED.]

* The Roman Emperors, Augustus and Tiberius, both bore traces of leprosy upon their persons (Vide Hensler on the Western or Greek Leprosy, in German, Hamburg, 1790, p. 245).

† See a brief but interesting notice of this disease, by M. Danielssen, of Bergen, in Comptes Rendus, No. 14, 1844, and Lond. Med. Gazette, June 7, 1844.—ENG. ED.

‡ In the 13th century, the number of leper-houses in Europe was estimated at about 20,000. (Vide Möhsen, Account of a Berlin Collection of Medals, vol. ii. p. 281, in German.)

[See also the interesting papers of Dr. Simpson, of Edinburgh, on Leprosy and Leper Hospitals in Scotland and England, published in the Edinburgh Med. and Surg. Journ. vol. lvi. p. 301, and vol. lvii. pp. 121 and 394. He gives the localities of upwards of 100 leper hospitals in these countries." —ENG. ED.]

when a case of Greek leprosy occurs in one of our hospitals now, all the world of medical men crowd to see it, probably for the first and last time in their lives* ; and then the subject of the disease is almost always a negro, or a man of mixed blood, and a native of some of the warmer countries of the earth. The extension of leprosy over Europe in the middle ages was ascribed to the return of the Crusaders to their homes, by whom the disease was generally believed to have been imported. If this were actually the case, it is certain that European civilization has cast out the evil again, and that, with the remarkable exception mentioned, the disease is now only encountered in lands where medical science stagnates, and where the indolence, the superstition, and the ignorance of the inhabitants, still consent to give it room to exist, and material to feed upon.

Small-pox.—It is doubtful whether this loathsome disease was known to the ancients or not ; for many centuries, in modern times, at all events, it was

* Riecke, in his Contributions (p. 22), says that in the course of twelve years nearly twenty cases of elephantiasis had been observed in the surgical clinical wards of Tübingen.

[If the diagnosis were well established in these cases, the above fact would indicate some local influence, in or near the town of Tübingen, favourable to the production of the disease. I have not seen mention of any thing of the same kind in connection with any other hospital, either in England or on the Continent. I have myself several times seen the Arabian elephantiasis, *Elephantiasis Arabica*, in London, both in hospital and in private practice ; but this is a very different disease from the Greek leprosy, *Eleph. Græca*.—ENG. ED.]

reckoned among the inevitable calamities of the human kind: since the discovery and general practice of vaccination, however, it has almost disappeared in many districts, and has diminished notably in its destructive powers in all.

Among all the benefits which humanity has received through man, no greater, or more important in its consequences, can be named, than this. Till Edward Jenner lived, one-twelfth of the human family used to be swept away by small-pox, and a much larger proportion was left bereft of sight, or shattered in constitution and hideously scarred, as evidence of its destructive power. Jenner's immortal discovery immediately, and as if by magic, set bounds to the pestilence. The number of cases, whether of genuine or of modified small-pox, which have appeared since Jenner's time, cannot be compared with the host that presented themselves previously. Even in the period when the influence of vaccination was less understood than it is at present—when, content with a single operation in the beginning of life, and this often imperfectly performed, every kind of reasonable and necessary precaution against contamination was neglected—the mortality from small-pox was still infinitely less than it used to be in former years*. In all those states which have taken the

* Even in Archangel, from 1821 to 1826 inclusive, no more than a couple of cases of small-pox were observed at the Marine Hospital; the number seen in the Civil Hospital, during the same time, was only six! (Vide Richter, op. cit. Table, p. 149.)

business of vaccination into their own hands, in which ample supplies of active virus are carefully provided, and where revaccination is encouraged in every possible way, small-pox may be confidently, and without any exaggeration, said no longer to exist as a formidable disease*. Vaccination is, indeed, a brilliant illustration of the advantages of civilization; it is one of the precious fruits that spring from human thought and inquiry; it is one of the costly prizes won by hearkening, with tutored ears, to the still, small, accents of nature, which escape the uncultivated sense entirely. The health and life of millions, without sacrifice at the shrine of pain, and without denial, are assured through its means. This great discovery sprung complete from the labours of Jenner, like Minerva in arms from the brain of Jove; and soon, like Pallas to instruct, did it set out, over the face of the habitable globe, on its God-like mission to save; nor did it once pause till it had penetrated to the helpless Indian under the shadow of the everlasting forest, and to the far Cathay! Thus does civilization, with her blessings,

* In Prussia, for instance, between 1820 and 1834, of one million of deaths, 8,191 were from small-pox, or 1 in 122 (Hoffmann, in Prussian Medical Gazette, 1835, No. 45.)

In England our admirable returns show us that small-pox was actually less destructive in 1841 than either measles, scarlatina, or hooping-cough. In this year, 14,161 persons died of scarlet fever and only 6,368 of small-pox.—ENG. ED.

come to influence the savage and the semi-barbarian: favourably impressed, through manifest advantages, he is prepared for the reception of the other less obvious, but not less momentous, privileges and immunities that follow in her train*.

Is it necessary to adduce other instances, in order to prove that civilization not only does not add to the numbers, or increase the severity of diseases,

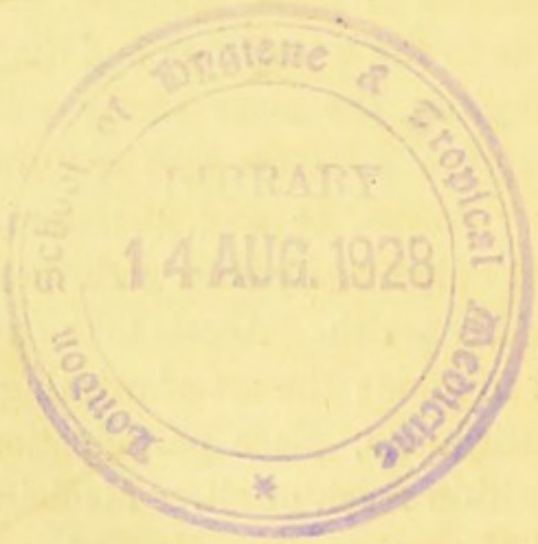
* There is extant a letter from the five nations (North American) to Jenner, in which the following beautiful passage occurs: "We shall not fail to teach our children to speak the name of Jenner, and to thank the Great Spirit for bestowing upon him so much wisdom and so much goodness." (Life of Jenner, by J. Baron, vol. ii. p. 103.) Halford, in his Discourse "On some of the Results of the Successful Practice of Physic," advocates the propriety of sending medical men, as missionaries, into uncivilized countries, knowing full well that the feeling of thankfulness for physical good was the surest passport to the understanding and the heart. It was Gabriel Boughton, the surgeon, who paved the way to the establishment of the East India Company, and who, by doing so, threw open the vast peninsula of Hindostan to the civilized world. The medical officers of the East India Company's Service have, in fact, been at all times a principal bond of union between the natives of India and the British (see Mill's History of British India, vol. i. p. 170.)

French missionaries had the honour of introducing lancets from England, charged with cowpock lymph, and a translation into the Chinese tongue, by Sir G. Staunton, of Jenner's pamphlet on vaccination, into Pekin, the capital of China; and Mr. John Barrow soon after wrote to Jenner to inform him that his work, in Chinese, had actually been published in Canton, and that the practice of vaccination had already made great progress (Baron's Life of Jenner, vol. ii. p. 85). "Thus," he remarks, "the English, at length, have established their claim on the gratitude of the Chinese."

but, on the contrary, that its invariable effect is to lessen their force, and frequently to vanquish them entirely? Surely it is not. Almost every one of the innumerable host of ills that assail mankind, when searched into in its causes and connections, gives us new assurance of this consolatory truth. In the same proportion as the arts and sciences, as morals and true refinement, advance and approach perfection, are the means multiplied by which human life is assured against enemies both from within and from without. True knowledge and true good always go hand in hand. In the old Grecian mythology light was held to be joy—to be bliss also; Phœbus Apollo, who illumined the world, was likewise the healer—to him was the pæan, the song at once of joy and thanksgiving, upraised. What antiquity, in mythic foreboding, announced, in the lapse of millenniums is made manifest. The more humanity attains to the knowledge and the evolution of all its capabilities, the more surely will the full harmony of corporeal existence also be unfolded. It may, with every reason, be said, therefore, that intelligence is not only synonymous with moral power, but also with bodily health. Access to the treasures of mind is denied to none; the art of printing, and our educational institutions, place participation in this highest good within reach of all. Medicine has not lagged behind the other evangiles of enlightened humanity; on the contrary, she has ever been

foremost in the race, where the object was to enlighten and to raise; and as her purpose has still been to root out disease, and to lessen its power—to help the sick and the suffering, to confirm the healthy and the strong—so has she also striven to make her truths common property, irrefragable evidences of civilization.

THE END.



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