# VII

# BOOK REVIEWS

PREVENTION OF VENEREAL DISEASE. Third Edition. By Marie Carmichael Stopes, D.Sc. 62 pages. Putnam & Co. Ltd. London. 1939. Price 2*s.* 6*d.*

IN a preface to the recently published third edition of her book "Prevention of Venereal Diseases," following on the first and second editions entitled "The Truth about Venereal Disease," Dr. Marie Stopes lays great emphasis upon the end results of syphilis and gonorrhœa, and sets out to impress these facts upon the general public, for whom the book is intended.

In the opening chapters is given a clear account of the manner in which these diseases are contracted. Dr. Stopes rightly claims that the control of these has been hampered by the fact that public opinion in this country has always regarded venereal disease as unmentionable. Then follows a fairly accurate description of the gross manifestations of cerebrospinal and congenital syphilis. The fact that these characteristics have been described in exceptionally highly coloured language with the object of giving a picture of the more distressing symptoms, is in keeping with the expressed object of the book. With regard to the remarks about gonorrhœa, the reader will not be so appreciative, and will question at least two facts in the following statement: "It mercifully sterilises women after the first child, so they are spared the horror of bringing to birth foully abnormal children."

In short, the methods by which Dr. Stopes sets out to achieve her object are, firstly by giving terrifying examples of the effects of these diseases, secondly, by stressing that infectious contact is immoral under any conditions, and thirdly—a more controversial point—the advocacy of the use of disinfectants immediately after exposure to infection.

Suggestions for the use of calomel ointment are ideal but somewhat impractical, and on the other hand, advice for "washing, scouring, and disinfecting" the parts is dangerous. The suggestion that potassium permanganate should be carried habitually as a prophylactic would seem to encourage the impulse for casual intercourse.

This book is, on the whole, an earnest attempt to make the people of this country more conscious of the existence of venereal disease, but fails to emphasise that these diseases are curable, and would plant utter despair in those who are already infected.

M. B.

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METHODS OF REHABILITATION OF ADULT PROSTITUTES. *League of Nations Publications, 1939, IV. 4. 157 pages. Geo. Allen & Unwin Ltd. Price 3s. 6d.*

Experience shows that the problem of prostitution tends to acquire particular importance in time of war, not only for the countries directly

involved but also for other countries. Under these circumstances, the volume just published by the League of Nations Secretariat is worthy of special attention. It is the third and concluding volume of a study on measures of rehabilitation of prostitutes undertaken by the League, but nevertheless constitutes an entirely independent study and can be read without reference to the other two volumes: " Prostitutes, their Early Lives " (Ser. L.O.N.P., 1938, IV. 11) and " Social Services and Venereal Disease " (Ser. L.O.N.P., 1938, IV. 1).

An endeavour is made in this volume to shed light on the controversial question of possibilities of reclaiming prostitutes for re-entry into the normal life of the community. It shows how facilities for assistance are made known by authorities, voluntary organisations, hospitals, etc., what type of institutional training is available and what methods are employed therein, and what assistance (official or voluntary) in other forms is available to adult prostitutes.

The chapter on institutional training is of special interest as it gives a valuable account of the different approaches made by the various types of institutions, religious and lay, to this problem. Special attention is paid to the Catholic institution of the Good Shepherd, to the Bethany institutions, with their unique features, to the methods employed by the Salvation Army and to the interesting work done by the Abri Dauphinois at Grenoble. Much discussed problems like the relation of age to the possibilities of rehabilitation, the types of work for which prostitutes should be trained, the difficulties and possibilities of re-entry into normal life, are examined, the chief obstacles to the rehabilitation of prostitutes are explained, and different views on the possibilities of successful rehabilitation are expressed.

The volume is also worthy of study inasmuch as it contains the conclusions and recommendations on rehabilitation arrived at by the Advisory Committee on Social Questions of the League after a thorough examination of the various aspects of this question. The Committee came to the conclusion that, if certain principles are applied and certain psychological factors sufficiently taken into account, rehabilitation of adult prostitutes is, within certain limits, feasible and successful.

The volume should also be useful as a book of reference not only for those directly concerned with the question of rehabilitation, but for all persons engaged in social work who have to deal with or are interested in the very complex question of prostitution in general.

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SYPHILIS and Its Accomplices in Mischief: Society, the State and the Physician. By George M. Katsainos, M.D. Privately printed at Athens. Pp. 676 with 11 Appendices. Price 5 Dollars.

ONCE upon a time there took place upon the North Inch at Perth a review of one of the battalions of the Black Watch. Intensely interested in watching the spectacle was an old Scotswoman whose son was on parade, a private in that famous regiment. After the usual preliminaries, the battalion was formed-up, each company in line, and with pipes skirling and kilts bravely swinging, the troops marched past the saluting-base. The old lady, with an eagle and admiring eye upon her offspring in the ranks, suddenly clutched her neighbour and cried: " Ma God! They're a' oot o' step but oor Jock! "

This monograph by Dr. Katsainos proclaims at great length and with no uncertain voice that he alone is in step and that the rest of the antisyphilitic battalion—Society, the State and the Physician—are making an unholy mess of the review. The book must either be discussed at some length or be consigned to the wastepaper basket. I am constrained to do the former for several reasons. The principal one is that, as will appear later, many journals have, point blank, refused to consider the work in their pages ; and because of this, Dr. Katsainos considers that he has a grievance—that he has not been given a square deal. Again, there are several opinions expressed in the book which have a distinctly topical interest.

The author apparently practises his profession in Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.A., where, judging by his own words and the evidence of the eleven appendices, he and his writings have been received with a welcome comparable to that which might be accorded to Adolf Hitler were he to take a stroll down Whitechapel Road in the East End of London. An example of his personal reception is recorded by the author on page 82 :

" When I first came here, seeing that my means would not allow me to attend the paying courses, I determined to apply to the Director of the Dermatological Out-patient Department of the Massachusetts General Hospital . . . and ask him to admit me to a student's privileges there. One day in 1911, I called upon him at his office, and was admitted as a patient to his waiting room. When ushered into his presence, I beheld a tiny man standing before me and looking at me fixedly, then drawing himself up and wheeling about in military form, and beginning to look out of the window with his back towards me :

" ' I came, Sir, as a colleague,' I said, ' to ask you to admit me into your service.'

" ' No,' came the answer.

" ' At least,' I rejoined, ' will you not permit me to follow your clinical rounds and see patients, and thus renew my medical knowledge ? '

" ' No, I said,' was his reply.

" I could imagine that the Czar of all the Russias would have behaved more decently towards a peasant whom he had found trying on the imperial crown, than did Dr. —— to a colleague, a citizen of the same state, and indeed a citizen-elect—a well-known member of the same medical society as himself, with whom he had conversed that very morning . . ."

The eleven appendices consist of a series of photostat reproductions of letters from the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal, the Library of the Mayo Clinic, and the Library of Harvard University Medical School, unanimously refusing to review his book entitled " Marriage and Syphilis "—which is embodied in the present volume—refusing to accept any advertisement for it, and refusing to add it to their bookshelves.

I do not propose to pronounce any judgment upon the reception accorded to Dr. Katsainos at the Massachusetts General Hospital because I have neither heard nor read the Director of the Dermatological Department's version of that encounter. I must say, however, that after carefully reading " Marriage and Syphilis " I am in full agreement with the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal and with the Librarians of the Mayo Clinic and of Harvard University Medical School.

Dr. Katsainos has no use whatever for women in medicine. He says (page 609) :

" Woman as an imitator is generally capable of producing good work, but as a physician she is surely bankrupt, and therefore she ought to be forbidden to enter the medical profession. She seems unable to comprehend, absorb and assimilate all that is required for the understanding of syphilis, and for this reason she often allows her suffering sisters to enter upon untimely marriages, and thereby becomes, though unintentionally and unconsciously, the cause of incalculable disasters. I even venture to say here that syphilis and woman, either as a patient or as a practitioner, is the most dangerous combination one can imagine."

He seems, also, to be distinctly anticlerical as witness the statement on page 17 :

" From both points of view, the priest is inviolate, because the Taboo has made him sacred, and the raven is not to be eaten, because the priest has laid a ban upon him (although both priest and raven, black externally and internally, do not differ from each other, both being birds of prey, and consequently insatiable creatures)."

The following quotation is somewhat topical :

" At this juncture, the world-war broke out. A nation as old as Man, an aboriginal and unmixed race, if we may believe Tacitus, a race endowed by nature with those qualities which make for industry, inventiveness, productiveness and consequently for progress and science, was slowly but surely conquering the universe. Its peaceful conquests in every sphere called forth the envy, later the hatred, of its neighbours, who set out to check this progressive advance by preparing to war against it, under pretext that it was plotting war against them.

" This race, whose superiority in every sphere will remain legendary, taken unawares and unprepared, unable to face enemies so numerous, went on with the war to the best of its ability, although betrayed by the Italians, its allies. But its enemies, seeing themselves forced to continue the struggle, substituted guile for force, and thus the Fourteen Points of Wilson, like the Trojan Horse, conquered Germany. The Armistice is proclaimed, during which Germany wastes away, famished.

" During this war every form of wasteful extravagance, debauchery, excess and licentiousness had free rein and ran riot. Bacchus and Venus vied with each other in the whirl of contest, in the arena of passions. Soldiers and citizens alike swaggered about everywhere, and women put by all modesty and restraint in the pursuit of pleasure. From end to end the whole land was one Dionysiac festival, one Saturnalian orgy. The illegitimate children were gathered in by the state, while pregnant women resorted to abortion, to forestall parentage.

" Society organized dances, dinners, entertainments and games for the young men serving under the flags, irrespective of race, country or continent, while the women, like flies around a corpse, followed these men, even to the trenches, so that they should not lack anything. The abundant flow of gold, the ease with which employment was to be found, rendered all alike, careless, caring only for the present day. Tomorrow and the future were forgotten. In such surroundings the tree of adultery began again to flourish and to bear the fruit of syphilis and gonorrhœa. The state of the whole world since 1914 can be compared with nothing but that of Rome under the Empire. . . . If we should attempt to look human society squarely in the face we should see that it is but a gross and vulgar tissue of falsehood, a bog of hypocrisy and mutual deceit, an arena of all the passions having no centre and no boundaries."

Even more topical—though what it has to do with syphilis is obscure—is the following (page 33) :

" Guilty, no doubt, was German superiority, a superiority in every sphere, in education, in art, in industry, in commerce, in navigation, and in the ' resultant ' of all prosperity. In 1914 the prevailing universal stagnation revolted against German progress ; love of ease rebelled against industriousness, and the fear that German superiority might prevail, bound all the rest together, not in a noble rivalry, how best to imitate and surpass this greatness, but how to overthrow it. In order to persuade the nations to march against German progress, it was necessary that they should be deceived and persuaded that Germany (already a conqueror) was planning the conquest by arms, of those she had already conquered and made tributary by her learning. They were to be persuaded that German militarism was threatening to annex countries which Germany, since she had already annexed them commercially and was exploiting them financially, did not need to hold them by force of arms.

" The army, for Germany was, as has been proved, a weapon of defence and not of attack. Hemmed in, as she was, by iron bars and not independent geographically, she built ships. Her navy was the shell in which the mollusc —the country—protected herself against external injury ; her mercantile marine was the means by which the unproductive fatherland drew its subsistence from abroad. But all this, which forms part of the assets of every other nation were made ground for calumny in the case of Germany. The perfection she had attained in every line, her general competence and superiority, became a thorn in her neighbours' eyes. During the five years that the war lasted, we read and heard every extravagance, every falsehood, every inconsistency, from those in authority in every country. And as the bulk of the nation naturally believe all that proceeds from the powers that be, as true and officially proven, these official falsehoods were taken as Gospel truth, and all united as one body against Germany. . . . They proceeded to blockade Germany by land and sea. . . . They expected to see Germany forced to some desperate measure, to raise or neutralize the blockade. And when German science produced a new and effective weapon, the submarine, the quiver of poisoned arrows was opened and the new engine of war was denounced as inhuman. That the submarine was not a weapon of attack but one of defence, that it was not active but passively opposing and that it was introduced into the war to raise the blockade, and by means of reprisals to convince the enemy that blockade is a two-edged sword, equally dangerous for the innocent and the guilty. This the enemies of Germany knew very well, but they kept silent or misrepresented it. Finally the Germans were conquered by deceit and surrendered unconditionally. . . ."

And so it goes on and on through eighty-five pages constituting the Preface. At very frequent intervals Dr. Katsainos seasons his fare with much classical lore, dragging in references to the poets, philosophers and sculptors of ancient Greece, to the historians of Rome and to the Fathers of the primitive Church. And to what end ? I, alas, cannot provide the answer. I have made these long quotations from the preface to Dr. Katsainos's book so that readers of this review may be able to decide for themselves what value is to be placed upon his opinions. It is a well-established practice in Courts of Law to test the credibility of witnesses in various ways, and in this fashion I have attempted to do so with respect to Dr. Katsainos.

Spirochæta pallida, spironema pallida, treponema pallidum, leucocytozoon syphilidis—none of these meet with the approval of Dr.

Katsainos. He has invented the name "*Syphilidogonus*" for the causal organism of syphilis.

In discussing the possibility of eradicating syphilis and gonorrhœa from the community, Dr. Katsainos says (page 153):

"... What is in a measure attainable is that their ravages should be restrained, and this can be done if the state, by legalizing and enobling prostitution and popularizing the illuminating teachings of medical hygiene, will teach the citizens first how to protect themselves properly from these diseases, and next, how to treat themselves if once afflicted by them."

The descriptions Dr. Katsainos gives of the various lesions of syphilis are frequently inaccurate. For example (page 160) he states that the female labia are often seen to be covered with ulcerated papules and that "such ulcerated papules ... are called condylomata." The fact is that ulceration is rare.

Dr. Katsainos's criticism of Vernes and the test associated with his name, makes startling but amusing reading—amusing, no doubt, also to Vernes. It goes thus (page 477):

"When a Frenchman is volatile, a liar, or coarse, these qualities cannot be rivalled anywhere else.

"Thus we see a young Frenchman, of no inconsiderable standing in his own country, and exerting great influence and weight, the Director of the Prophylactic Institute of Paris, Arthur Vernes, coming up now to deny and overturn all that the French School since 1527 built up with toil and pain and through baths of blood sweat. The works of Béthencourt, of Fernel, of Ricord, of Fournier have been confuted and brought to naught by the 'Syphilidometric Atlas' of Vernes. Let us not forget, however, that Atlas was a burden-bearer, according to Æschylus in 'Promethus'; 'Atlas who in the west stands like a pillar upbearing Heaven and Earth, a burden not easily grasped.'

"Thus also the Syphilidometric Atlas of the famous Vernes carries the burden of the folly, the ignorance and the superficiality of its author. The classical illiteracy of this French Academician, his prosaism, and his ignorance are mirrored in that work. Whereas every self-respecting physician who studies lues, considers the works of Fournier as sacred writings, this modern Frenchman appears to be entirely ignorant of them. And it is sad that even old warriors of the French School of Fournier and his pupils, the silver-shielded knights of the glorious medical epoch of their country, have turned their backs upon the illustrious teacher of the whole civilized world, and betraying the patient's bedside, have adopted the laboratory and the culture-tube.

"Vernes, mixing human serum with that of swine, and his 'granulifère' of 9% saline solution with the addition of perethynol or pulverized heart of horses, claims to be able to say with astounding precision, first, whether the subject is or is not luetic; secondly, at what stage of the malady he is; and thirdly, whether his cure is complete or not. ... But Vernes writes: 'What the thermometer is in fever, my Syphilidometric Atlas is in syphilis'!!! Can it be that one who asserts and writes and believes such things is in his right mind?

"Fortunately these wise ideas of Vernes have never passed beyond the confines of France, nor are they destined ever to do so. They will die—as they are already dead—of marasmus in France for lack of disciples and imitators. If Anzias Turenne's 'Syphilisation' had prevailed, it would have done less harm than Vernes's syphilidometry. What four centuries, millions of victims, and myriads of physicians have been unable thus far to

solve, Vernes has solved now by a few drops of hogs' blood mixed with human serum, and with the aid of 118 pages, containing more diagrams than letters of the alphabet, which, however, bring in 35 franks to their author."

Great stuff that, my Masters !—reminiscent of the old days of the *Edinburgh Review*. But how different is the virulence of Dr. Katsainos from the calm, scientific and judicial remarks of Eagle in " The Laboratory Diagnosis of Syphilis " (London, Kimpton, 1937) :

" The early attempts to modify the conditions of the reaction so as to make it an adequately sensitive and specific test for the presence of reagin were unsuccessful ; and not until the development of the Sachs-Georgi, Meinicke and Vernes reactions did the flocculation phenomenon become of diagnostic importance " (page 181).

and

" Yet another example of the advantage of considering the flocculation tests as composites of individual technical factors rather than as distinct entities may be briefly mentioned : the Vernes reaction. In only one point does this test differ materially from other flocculation reactions, and that is in the determination of the degree of turbidity by exact photometric measurement, which supposedly eliminates all guesswork in the reading and grading of results. . . . The particular change in technic embodied in the Vernes reaction introduces an unnecessary complicating factor of little or no value " (page 208).

During several weeks spent in having, and in convalescing from, influenza and German measles, I have conscientiously read this book from cover to cover. Although it has not succeeded in shedding any light upon the dark places of my mind in respect of syphilis, it is undoubtedly a self-revealing document so far as its author is concerned. It has also provided some amusement.

Anyone wishing to increase his knowledge of syphilis would be very ill-advised to expend the sum of five dollars upon this jungle of personal grievances, fluent vituperation, political opinions and ancient Greek mythology.

E. T. B.