

**HEALTH AND  
HUMAN PROGRESS**

# HEALTH AND HUMAN PROGRESS

AN ESSAY IN  
SOCIOLOGICAL MEDICINE

By

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PREFACE BY

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## PREFACE

by ÉDOUARD HERRIOT

HUMANITY takes a pride in its victories, it flatters itself that by means of instruments of wonderful precision and speed it has conquered space and time and reduced the elements to submission.

In the domain of morals, even pessimists do not deny the progress made since the time when the insane were chained in dungeons, and when, to discover the presence of fire-damp in a mine, a "penitent" (either an old man or a culprit wishing to atone for his sin!) was sent down the mine every morning with a torch. That was not more than two centuries ago.

At present, legislation assures for the worker a minimum of safety; youthful delinquents appear before courts which aim at reformation and adaptation to a healthy environment; education has become accessible to the masses.

To quote Professor Winslow:

If we had but the gift of second sight to transmute abstract figures in flesh and blood, so that as we walk along the street we could say "that man would be dead of typhoid fever, that woman would have succumbed to tuberculosis, that rosy infant would be in its coffin", then only should we have a faint conception of the meaning of the silent victories of public health.

They ought not, however, to disguise the magnitude of the task which will confront us as soon as we have the courage to face it. It is immense. Investigations dealing with American families classified according to the father's income, show that the infant mortality of the poorest classes trebles that of the well-to-do.

In England, in 1921, the mortality rate of illegitimate infants was double that of the legitimate. In France the legal distinction between legitimate and illegitimate children rejects the latter in

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sorrow and poverty. Abandoned mothers who do not gain admittance to the few existing maternity homes are reduced to deplorable conditions.

Unemployment at present claims millions of victims; in Roumania corn is burnt as fuel and in Brazil coffee is thrown into the sea, while entire populations in China and Central Europe are poverty-stricken and underfed.

In spite of science we are still unable to organise the production and distribution of wealth by mutual agreement among nations, to silence selfish interests and to make the general welfare our only care; this will be a matter for profound astonishment to the future historian.

By means of firmness and unfailing perseverance life can be prolonged, which is good, and health improved, which is better.

With this object in view Dr. Sand has drawn up a fine programme; to make progress serve us instead of enslave us, seems to me to sum up his reasoning and his wise deductions. "The machine," he says, "develops the intelligence and the moral force of him who uses it." It is quite true that the real meaning of life is only to be learnt in the rough and healthy discipline of work. Without this man does not realise his true dignity. To protect this, the social services of industry must be improved and rendered more effective.

After passing through the stage of "paternalism," when their chief object was the increase of output and profits, social services to-day promote co-operation between all concerned in business enterprises. To attain this object several measures are necessary; for example, to raise the age of child labour, to promote generalised vocational guidance, to use education and prevention rather than relief. The author exhorts us to suppress slums, to institute social centres and clubs, to organise leisure and create joy and beauty; he has concerned himself not only with the worker's health, but also with his feelings, and he endeavours to restore the supremacy of the human over the economic element.

In a fraternal spirit, he dwells upon the means to avoid suffering and ignorance, and to release spiritual forces. He invites to this task men of good will. May his appeal be heard!

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