

# A GUIDE TO HEALTH.

## Infection—How It Originates.

### CHAPTER II.

From the statements I make in the first few lines of this chapter, I may possibly be dubbed an alarmist. But no one can with fairness or justice be so styled, who not only calls attention to evils, but suggests a remedy for their removal. I do not hesitate to say, therefore, that in most, if not all of our towns and cities, we live in a very atmosphere of disease-producing germs. The air around us is pregnant with infectious particles; every breath we breathe is laden with them. Certainly there is that in the very blood and secretions of a healthy individual, which repels or destroys these particles. It is the weakly, or those below par, who most readily fall victims to contagious and other ailments of a kindred nature. For, as forest flies attack the dying deer, so do these germs attack the infirm in health.

Whence does the foul or poisonous air of our towns emanate? Unfortunately this is a question which admits of a very extended reply, and this my space forbids me to give. Happily, most of the sources from which infective particles float, may be purified by regular and methodical cleansing and disinfection. I should here remind the reader that constantly living in an atmosphere of impure air, deteriorates blood and tissue, independently of the danger of positive infection, as witness the sickly look of children who live in the back slums, as compared to the rosy-faced faces of those who live on healthful farms or by the sea-side.

In my last chapter I named a few of the sources, indoors, from which impure air may flow into our rooms. Many others will suggest themselves to the intelligent reader.

Next to be mentioned are hotels. The sanitary condition of few of these is anything like perfect. Carpets are seldom kept clean, nor curtains either; every footstep one takes may raise a cloud of dust. Visible perhaps, but quite sufficient to pollute the air. All kinds of people, in all states of health, come and go to and from inns and hotels. The spittoons are often sources of infection; so are urinals, chamber utensils placed in water-closets, and water-closets themselves.

Schools are notably foul-smelling. The multitude of different breaths in a public school-room, the insufficiency of ventilation, damp and reeking garments, and badly scoured floors and desks, all combine to prepare a very hot-bed for the propagation in myriads of any particular class of disease-germs which may be sown therein.

Nor are our churches much better. True they are only open one day in the week—more is the pity. But whereas a school may be shut up during an epidemic, people may rise from a sick bed and go directly to church. Here, too, the want of proper ventilation is sadly felt; and to this, overheating, uncleanness of floors, mats, hassocks and cushions, with a general prevalence of damp and mould, add their evil influences and tend to foster disease. Our theatres are only a shade more pure as a rule, and so are the better class of music-halls.

Slaughter houses have much to account for, and should be banished entirely from towns. But even these, by judicious disinfection, may be kept sweet and innocuous. The inconvenience it would often be to butchers to have to kill at a distance from their places of business, may be acknowledged, and there is something to be said as regards additional expense. On the other hand, it seems hard that the dwellers in the immediate neighborhood of slaughter-houses should be systematically poisoned. Hotels adjoining such places suffer also in pocket. As an example, in the very town—a sea-side watering-place—where I am now writing these lines, the principle hotel stands close to a killing-house, and it is impossible sometimes to open the back bed-room windows, without receiving a shock which is sufficient to banish the appetite of any ordinary individual for hours. This state of affairs is bad enough when there is no epidemic abroad; during the prevalence of any infectious malady it would be a hundred times worse. Butchers would do well to combine among themselves to see that the slaughter-houses of the town in which they reside are kept sweet and clean and regularly disinfected.

In few towns are the streets well looked after. If they are swept, vegetable refuse, faeces and impurities, etc., periodically removed, and the water-carts sent round, the councils think they have done enough. But how often do we not find vile odours springing up through gratings, and poisoning the air for many yards around. Without doubt the streets and lanes of our towns ought to be not only watered, but watered with water in which some such wholesome disinfectant, as Crude "Sanitas" Fluid, has been mixed. By this means, not only would the streets themselves be kept pure, but purer air would find its way into the houses, and to some extent the street drains would be purified. This would be killing three beautiful birds with one stone.

The sanitary authorities in London and other towns do not half perform their duties when they neglect the regular disinfection of hackney cabs, omnibuses and hansoms. The spread of disease, from these sources alone, must result in a death-bill which in the course of one year must be simply appalling.

Railway companies are very far from guiltless in the matter of spreading infection, and their carriages carry it far and near, from Land's End to Thurso. Cattle-trucks the law compels them to disinfect, or at least to lime-wash. A prize bull is therefore exposed to danger from foot and mouth disease, than my lord-his-master is from diphtheria.

To the pure air of heaven, that blows so freely over this island of ours, may be attributed the farmer's immunity from frequent outbreaks of illness in his family. The sanitary arrangements of farms are notoriously incomplete. Indeed, in most places, there are no sanitary arrangements at all. The dwelling houses are usually built close to the stables and byres, and the bed-rooms receive a due proportion of the odours that arise therefrom. Here is a huge, open privy, cleaned out when choke full; here a huge, green pond, in which dirty ducks swim and evolve awful smells from the fecid, black water; here are pig-

Dr. Koch's cure for consumption went up like a rocket and came down like a stick; but Putnam's Emulsion still shines with undimmed lustre as the best remedy for wasting diseases.

geries, hotbeds of double-distilled disease, and yonder are the dunghills. And from farms like these we get our milk and butter; and to farms like these is often traced an outbreak of typhoid fever. Yet a little care and periodic disinfection and cleanliness would alter all this, and save many a precious life.

And now that I have mentioned typhoid fever, I may say a word or two about its origin; for it may be quoted as a typical disease illustrative of the dangers which cleanliness and disinfection might remove. To begin with, typhoid fever is not contagious. Let me quote a few sentences from a recent writer, whose style is simple and telling:—

"It, then, typhoid fever is not contagious, how does it originate? We know it is not given off by marshes as ague is. At one time it was thought to be due to the decomposition of animal substances, and the term pythogenic fever, signifying derived from putrefaction, was accordingly proposed for it. But it is now well known that it is not every decomposing matter that will produce typhoid—it must consist of human excrement. And even this is not the whole truth, for the excrement must be derived from a person suffering from typhoid fever. Fresh typhoid excrement is probably harmless, but even the minutest portion of a decomposing typhoid stool will, if taken into the system, rapidly set up the disease. But how, it may be asked, could even the minutest portion of a decomposing typhoid stool get into our bodies? Who would swallow it? The idea is abhorrent. It is generally introduced into the system through the media of the water, or breathed in with the air. In the country the privy is often built very close to the well. Both are near the house and near to each other. No particular precautions are taken to prevent the contents of the privy from soaking into the ground, and they, in course of time, drain into the well. Nothing very much, however, comes of it; this bad water may cause diarrhoea, or may make people ill, but it won't give them typhoid. Let, however, a single typhoid stool be emptied into the privy and the mischief is done. The typhoid poison soaks into the earth, gradually develops there, and after a time manages to get washed into the well. Then typhoid breaks out in the house, more typhoid stools are thrown into the privy, more people drink the water and get the disease, and there is a regular epidemic. Perhaps some wise man comes along, points out the mischief, the well is shut up, and the epidemic is stamped out."

In 1873, an epidemic of typhoid fever, in which over 200 people were attacked, broke out in London. It was clearly proved that this was due to the excrement of a man who had died of typhoid fever on one of the milk farms.

For an interesting account of infectious and contagious diseases and a description of the germs theory, I must refer the interested reader to a book written by Mr. C. T. Kingzett, F. I. C., F. C. S., and published by Messrs. Baillière, Tindall & Cox. It is entitled "Nature's Hygiene," and, from beginning to end, is more captivating than a novel—certainly more useful.

Some who read this chapter may say, "Well, after all, epidemics—such as typhoid, cholera, small pox, etc.—are rare; I am content to take my chance, and will not trouble my head much about either the laws of hygiene or disinfection either."

"But," I reply, "living in an atmosphere of uncleanness, and being careless of abatement in the true sense of the word, renders the body weak and feeble, and more liable to attacks of ailments of every kind, quite apart from those dependent on bacteria or germs. And the mind of one in poor health is feeble also, and on the whole his happiness is but small, and so are his chances of long life."

The invention of the Hotchkiss magazine rifle, now the standard rifle of the United States navy, occurred under circumstances known until now to only a few of the Hotchkiss company. The gun was invented by the late B. B. Hotchkiss in 1877. In that year Mr. Hotchkiss was en route from Vienna to Bucharest. While on the train he fell into conversation with a Roumanian officer who had very pronounced views in favor of a magazine rifle.

At that time, it should be remembered, there was no such thing as a magazine rifle in reality, at least not a military rifle. Military men simply had ideas and prophesied as to the future. The Roumanian officer argued the necessity for a magazine gun in a most forcible manner, and only discontinued his remarks when the train stopped at a station for dinner. Instead of rising, Mr. Hotchkiss complained of having no appetite, and requested of the Roumanian that he do him the honour of escorting Mrs. Hotchkiss to dinner. No sooner had the Roumanian left the car than Mr. Hotchkiss seized a newspaper lying on the seat, and in less than thirty minutes drew in detail the design of the present Hotchkiss magazine rifle. The paper, a copy of the Paris Figaro, is now in the office of the Hotchkiss company in Paris, and on its margin are the complete detail drawings.

Under the drawings is written: "This is a magazine rifle. Make it at once. B. B. H." Mr. Hotchkiss mailed the newspaper to the Paris works from the same station, as the wrapper still shows, and before the Roumanian and his wife had finished eating joined them at the table.

In three months the rifle was put to test and won against all rivals. In designing the piece the details on the margin of the Figaro were rigidly adhered to.—*New York Times.*

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# MEN AND WOMEN TALKED ABOUT.

Jules Verne published his first novel when he was 35 years old. Since then he has written an average of two books a year.

Queen Victoria is much interested in stockraising and sold her yearlings this season for 345 guineas—a reduction from last year, when they brought her 715 guineas. She received for a colt the highest price, £400.

The name of Casabianca has won another title to renown as being the family name of the artist who has recently completed a successful portrait of Queen Victoria. Miss Casabianca had previously painted a picture of Lord Salisbury for the Constitutional club.

Ben Butler never forgets a face or a name, and in his office he has an alphabetical list containing the name of every person with whom he has or has had any business dealings. The name of every person who calls upon him at his office is entered, together with such information as he may from time to time obtain in regard to him.

Empress Eugenie has taken up the children of the late Prince Napoleon as a part solace for the great grief and loneliness which fill her life. The children of the Prince Napoleon claim her affection, first, because her son made Prince Victor his heir, and second, because her bereavements have made it necessary for her to seek consolation somewhere.

Sarah Bernhardt's real name is Sarah Rastine. She is a Jewess, of French and Dutch parentage, and was born in Paris, Oct. 22, 1844. Her first stage appearance was in 1864 at the Theatre Francaise. The play was not a success. She next appeared with success at the Gymnase and Porte St. Martin theatres and made her first marked hit at the Odeon in 1867.

The king of Siam has something like three hundred wives and eighty-seven children, though the exact figures have never been given to his subjects. He was a father at the age of 12, and he is now thirty-eight; so that if he lives a few years longer he will be able to answer the title of "Father of his Country." He is quite a good fellow, being very kind to his three hundred wives and fond of a reasonable number of his children.

Kink Thantai, of Annam, is one of the youngest monarchs in the world. He is ten years of age, very precocious, and fully conscious of his position. He is solemn and thoughtful, disdains childish sports, and spends all his time in the seclusion of his palace studying, conversing with aged counsellors and poring over books and manuscripts. He is learning Chinese and French, and shows remarkable aptitude in the acquisition of foreign tongues.

Young Mrs. Oscar Wilde is said to be a great contrast to her husband. She is very quiet, while he is rather loud; she is inclined to be commonplace, while he is brilliant in conversation. He has laid aside the aesthetic and eccentric dress since he became stout, and is now clothed like the ordinary nineteenth century Englishman. His mother, Lady Wilde—who is also known by her pen-name of Speranza—shows no signs of advancing age. She is a wonderfully accomplished old lady, speaking seven languages fluently. She is an enthusiastic advocate of the Irish cause.

The Countess Tolstoi, who is an accomplished and beautiful woman, is unusually fond of any society, but to please her eccentric husband she bravely denies herself social pleasures and acts as private secretary to the novelist. She makes many typewritten copies of those of his works whose publication in Russia is prohibited, and these are sent through the mail to their numerous friends. They have nine children. The eldest is a girl of eighteen, who attempts to carry out her father's ideas by denying herself all indulgences, buying the cheapest of clothing, and imitating as far as possible the manners of the early christians.

Before Lord Randolph Churchill was paragoned into a reputation as the prince of good fellows, he was generally regarded as something more than a spitfire. It was not nice of him, for example, to christen Lord Idlesleigh "the goat." His nicknaming of Mr. Smith and Lord Cross as "Marshall and Snelgrove" would have been in better taste if he had sprung from a social level nearer to theirs. Mr. Herbert Vivian, in his autobiography, has told us—*ex relatione* Lord Randolph himself—that he has addressed the words "You're a d—d fool!" to Sir William Harcourt across the floor of the house, the speaker pretending not to hear. In the session of 1881, Mr. Gladstone was irritated into comparing his lordship to one of those domestic insects whose bite is not felt, the contrast being with the flea, whose bite is generally felt at once, especially if it is of the lodging-house variety.

Henrik Ibsen is a Norwegian of peasant origin. He was born at Skien, a town lying to the south of Christiania, on the 20th March, 1828. This year, on the anniversary of his natal day, Skien was *en fete*—indeed there was a great festival. A dramatic prologue was recited by Froken Sophie Reimers, a charming actress from Christiania, who afterwards crowned Ibsen's bust with a laurel wreath amidst great applause. All Scandinavia is discussing Ibsen; but Scandinavia is divided. One half go as far as to say he is Shakespeare's rival, and that he is fulfilling a great mission in showing the hollow mockery of society. The other half shake their heads, and while allowing that he is the fashion and a great penman, declare he is a misguided man and a most harmful writer. Anyway, whatever side is taken, discussions warm, and it promises to become necessary to repeat the same caution as became imperative in the case of the *Doll's House*. A small note was then sent out with invitations requesting the guest "not to mention Ibsen or his *Doll's House* during the evening, and a notice to the same effect was posted in the hall. If this is popularity, Ibsen has indeed gained popularity. He declares, however, he does not write for popularity, but "to make people use their reasoning faculties." He has certainly succeeded in provoking sharper arguments than any other living man. Many of his works are very dramatic; but many of them contain the coarseness of the middle ages *en habit de soir*.

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