

Report to the Committee on General Purposes of the hon. the Commissioners of Sewers of the City of London, on the practical means of applying the Act for preventing the adulteration of articles of food or drink in the City of London / by H. Letheby.

Contributors

Letheby, H. 1816-1876.

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REPORT

TO THE

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL PURPOSES OF THE HON. THE
COMMISSIONERS OF SEWERS OF THE CITY OF LONDON,

ON THE

PRACTICAL MEANS OF APPLYING THE ACT

FOR

PREVENTING THE ADULTERATION

OF

ARTICLES OF FOOD OR DRINK

IN THE

CITY OF LONDON.

BY

H. LETHEBY, M.B., M.A., &c.,

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH AND FOOD ANALYST FOR
THE CITY.

LONDON:

M. LOWNDS, PRINTER, 148 $\frac{1}{2}$, FENCHURCH STREET, CITY

1860.



Presented to the
 House of Commons
 by
REPORT
 of the
 COMMITTEE OF SENATORS OF THE CITY OF LONDON,
 appointed in 1854 to inquire into the
 state of the

of 1854

TRAFFIC IN THE
 CITY OF LONDON
 AND
 THE
 PREVENTING THE ADULTERATION

ARTICLES OF FOOD OR DRINK

CITY OF LONDON

H. LEBRY, M.P. M.A. &c.

PRINTED BY
 THE CITY OF LONDON

LONDON

PRINTED BY THE CITY OF LONDON

*At a Meeting of the Committee on General
Purposes of the Commissioners of
Sewers of the City of London, held
at the Guildhall, of the said City, on
Monday, November 26th, 1860 :—*

The Medical Officer of Health laid before the
Committee the annexed Report.

ORDERED—

That the same be printed.

JOSEPH DAW

Principal Clerk

AN ACT
FOR
PREVENTING THE ADULTERATION
OF
ARTICLES OF FOOD OR DRINK.

23RD & 24TH VICTORIA, CHAP. 84.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON GENERAL PURPOSES OF
THE HON. THE COMMISSIONERS OF SEWERS OF
THE CITY OF LONDON.

GENTLEMEN,

In accordance with your request
I have to submit to you my opinion of the best
means of putting the above named Act of Parlia-
ment into operation within the City.

The Act was passed on the 6th of August last,
and was framed for the purpose of checking the
practice of Adulterating Articles of Food and
Drink, in fraud of her Majesty's subjects, and to
the great hurt of their health.

Two classes of Adulterations are thus provided

for:—namely, those which are occasioned by the mixture of any ingredient or material injurious to the health of persons eating or drinking it; and secondly, those which are accomplished by the mere admixture of a substance not injurious to health, but in fraud of her Majesty's subjects. As examples of the first class of adulterations, I may mention the use of poisonous pigments for colouring confectionery; of red lead in Cayenne pepper, and curry powder; of chromate of lead in custard powders; and of the salts of copper in pickles and preserves. Of the second class, I may refer to the addition of inferior nutritive matters to bread, as potatoes and rice; the mixing of cheap farinas, as potatoe starch, the starch of curcuma, wheat, rice, bread-fruit, &c., to arrow-root; chicory and roasted corn to coffee; inferior roots, &c., to chicory; mustard husk and farina to pepper; flour to mustard; water to milk; oxide of iron to cocoa and chocolate, and the various facings or glazings of inferior tea. A third class of adulterations occupy an intermediate place; for while they are undoubtedly frauds, they are perhaps also injurious to health—as for example, the addition of alum or sulphate of copper to bread; sulphuric acid to vinegar; plaster of Paris and chalk to confectionery and mustard; the various sophistications of ale and porter; and the still more objectionable adulterations of wines and spirits.

All these, however, may be properly made the subjects of analytical inquiry, for they clearly come within compass of the Act.

According to the provisions of the Act, it is necessary that the different states of the investigation shall be conducted in a systematic manner.

1st. *In respect of the purchasing of the article.*—In all cases the purchaser of an article suspected to be adulterated, shall, directly he has purchased it, and before he removes it from the shop, give notice to the dealer, or the person serving him, that he intends to have the article analysed; so that the dealer may have the opportunity of accompanying the purchaser to the analyst, or of securing the article in such a manner as to prevent it from being tampered with. This will be necessary in order that proof may be furnished of the identity of the article examined.

2nd. *As regards the Analysis.*—Wherever an analyst is appointed, any purchaser of an article of Food or Drink, shall be entitled, on payment to the analyst of a sum not less than two shillings and sixpence, nor more than ten shillings and sixpence, to have the article analysed, and to receive from him a certificate of the result thereof. Considering however, that it is not easy or practicable to draw

up a scale of charges for the various kinds of investigations contemplated by the Act, and that the fee named will rarely cover the expenses of the analysis, it will, I think, be expedient to fix an uniform charge, intermediate in the scale, say five shillings, for each analysis. This will prevent a great deal of complexity, and will, at the same time, show that the object of the charge is not to cover the expenses of the inquiry, but rather to guard the dealer against unnecessary annoyance and groundless complaint. The poor, however, who are the chief sufferers from adulteration, will, I fear, be unable to pay the fee named; and, unless something be done to assist them in the matter, they will be shut out, most completely, from the benefits of the Act. I would suggest, therefore, that you give to the analyst a discretionary power to conduct such inquiries for the poor without fee. It is necessary, however, that a complaint should first come to him from a poor person, and the complainant should be entitled to leave with the analyst a sample of the suspected article, together with the name and address of the dealer; and if, in the judgment of the analyst, the matter is sufficiently serious to demand inquiry, he shall be at liberty to instruct the inspector to purchase a sample of the suspected article at the place named, and then to submit it to analysis free of charge. It is also a question for your consideration, whether you may

not, with great public advantage, authorize your Inspector of Meat and of Markets, to purchase samples of Food or Drink which he sees exposed for sale in the City, and which he suspects are adulterated. This duty comes very properly within the functions of his office; for in the 52nd clause of your Act of 1851—it is provided, that the Inspector of Meat and of Markets shall have power to seize, and dispose of any “unsound or unwholesome meat, fish, poultry, fruit, vegetables, or *other provisions unfit for the food of man,*” provided he sees such articles exposed or offered for sale within the City. He may, therefore, exercise this duty in the proper functions of his office, and, as I think, with great benefit to the public.

Lastly in respect of the certificate.—I place before you the form of certificate, which, with your sanction, I will use. It is constructed so as to indicate the object of the inquiry, and to express the result of the analysis. It also expresses the opinion of the analyst—whether the article is adulterated or not, and whether the article is so adulterated as to be injurious to health. These indeed are the several points to which the Act has directed attention; and in giving expression to them, it is necessary on the one hand to be very explicit, so as to expose fraud, and on the other not so emphatic as to furnish a puff for the rivalries of trade.

At the end of every Quarter it will be my duty to submit to you a tabular statement of the analytical work done during the Quarter; in which it will be necessary to specify the articles examined, and to mention the names and addresses of the persons from whom they were purchased. The result of the analysis in each case will also be stated, and the opinion whether the article was adulterated or not. The publication of this table in my Quarterly Report, will doubtless have a beneficial tendency.

If it be necessary to go further with the inquiry, it must be prosecuted by the purchasers of the adulterated articles, who will have to take the matter before the Justices, where the certificate of the analyst will be received as evidence.

I remain,

GENTLEMEN,

Your obedient Servant,

HY. LETHEBY

GUILDHALL,

Nov. 26th, 1860.

COMMISSIONERS OF SEWERS' OFFICE,
GUILDHALL.

*In the matter of an Act for preventing the Adul-
teration of Articles of Food or Drink.*

(23rd & 24th VICTORIA, Chap. 84.)

Date

I HEREBY CERTIFY *that, in pursuance of*
the above-named Act of Parliament, I have analysed
a sample of _____ *submitted to me*
for analysis on the _____ *day of*
by A. B. of _____ *; and I*
have found that it contains _____ *:*
from which I am of opinion that the same is adul-
terated, and is so adulterated as to be injurious to
the health of persons eating it.

(Signed)

FOOD ANALYST FOR THE
CITY OF LONDON.

COUNTY OF ... OFFICE
CLERK

In the County of ... State of ...
I hereby certify that in accordance with
the provisions of the ...
of the ...
I have found that it contains

the following ...
of the ...
and I

from which I am of opinion that the same is valid
and is so debited as to be referred to
the State of ...

WITNESSED MY HAND AND SEAL
(Seal)

THIS ...
18...



