

Facts about health worth recollecting.

Contributors

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MANCHESTER AND SALFORD SANITARY ASSOCIATION.

TRACT SERIES, No. 3.

FACTS ABOUT HEALTH WORTH RECOLLECTING.

I.—War is a fearful scourge; but much more fearful are fevers, cholera, and the other diseases which human care and prudence might very generally prevent. During the last war, there were, in *twenty-two years*, 19,796 men killed; but during 1848-49 there were, in *ONE YEAR* alone, 72,180 persons killed by "*cholera and epidemic diarrhœa*." In the *twenty-two years* of war, 79,700 men were wounded; but in the *one year* of cholera and diarrhœa, 144,860 persons were attacked.

II.—The ordinary number of deaths every year, from preventable diseases, is fearful to contemplate. The *annual average* of deaths caused by want of proper care in regard to the mode and place of living, is 115,000; and if there be added to these such others as a higher tone in the religious, moral, and intellectual character of the people would prevent, there cannot be fewer 126,000 lives unnecessarily destroyed in England and Wales, *every year*.

III.—The widowhood and orphanage caused by deaths from preventable diseases, are far greater than such as are caused by the fatal effects of war; the number of married adults who fall in pestilences, epidemics, &c., being greater than those who fall in war. In 1842, there were 27,000 cases of premature widowhood, and upwards of 100,000 orphans then chargeable to the poor rates, from preventable causes.

IV.—The total annual losses from preventable disease, from lost labour, by premature death, and excessive and premature sickness, and the expense of excessive numbers of funerals, are under-estimated at £2,000,000 annually.

V.—That cholera is preventable, if the diarrhœa, or looseness of the bowels, by which it is generally preceded, be duly and promptly attended to, is shown by facts like these:—

1. In 1848-49, in *Dumfries*, before the people were made aware, *by house to house visitation*, of the necessity of attending to the first symptoms of diarrhœa, 250 deaths occurred. After the visitation commenced, and the people were taught what they ought to do, the attacks and number of deaths greatly diminished; and in nine days, except a few solitary cases, the epidemic was at an end.

2. In *Paisley*, while the district of *Charleston* was freed from the pestilence in a few days, after an active system of visitation had been introduced, the disease continued in other districts, where the system was not introduced.
3. In *Manchester*, "within a few days after the visitation was in activity, the developed cholera almost entirely disappeared, and the influence of the epidemic was confined to the production of diarrhoea."
4. The Jews in *London* were comparatively free from attacks; which was attributed to the following causes:—they avoid over-crowding and drunkenness; they are particular in the food they eat; they generally observe the Sabbath; they are promptly relieved, in case of need, by their brethren, and so avoid extreme destitution; and, at the Passover, their houses are cleaned or lime-whited.

VI.—That many diseases may be prevented by due attention to the state of the dwellings, is shown by the following facts:—

1. In *Manchester* it was found in certain districts, that where cholera attacked classes of houses having above nine inhabitants each, one case in 100 of the population was fatal; where the number of inhabitants was seven, it was fatal in one case in 130; where the number was six, it was fatal in one case in 170; but where the number of inhabitants was about five, it was fatal only in one case in 500.
2. In a part of *Kensington* parish called the "Potteries," which is exceedingly defective in sanitary arrangements, out of a population of 1,263, there were, in 1853, *fifty-one* deaths; while in the "Metropolitan Buildings" (an improved class of dwellings for working people), which contain 1,343 persons—a larger number—there were only *ten* deaths.
3. In *London*, generally, the average deaths from typhus, and other forms of continued fever, in respect to deaths from other causes, are about twelve in every hundred; but there has been no case in the improved dwellings during the four years they have been opened; and during the prevalence of cholera in 1848-49, although it was fatal in many cases in the immediate neighbourhood, the improved dwellings were entirely free from its attacks.

VII.—The great sacrifice of infant life, from improper treatment, appears in the fact, that out of 10,385 deaths, at all ages, in *Manchester* and *Salford* (in 1846), 5,129 were of children under three years of age, or ONE HALF; and that infant life, now sacrificed, might be preserved by ordinary care, is shown by the fact that in the *Kensington Potteries*, where there were 384 children, forty-two died in 1853; but in the *Metropolitan Improved Buildings*, where there were 490 children—a larger number—only five deaths occurred.

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