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### **Contributors**

Mackereth, Thomas.  
Royal College of Surgeons of England

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Wellcome Collection  
183 Euston Road  
London NW1 2BE UK  
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722  
E [library@wellcomecollection.org](mailto:library@wellcomecollection.org)  
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

# HEALTH



OR

THE ATMOSPHERES IN WHICH  
WE LIVE.

BY

REV. THOMAS MACKERETH

F.R.A.S., F.R.MET.S.

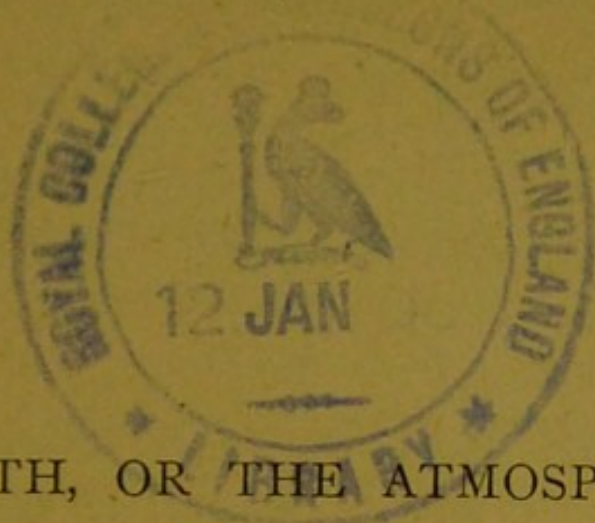


JAMES SPEIRS

36 BLOOMSBURY STREET, LONDON

1891





## HEALTH, OR THE ATMOSPHERES IN WHICH WE LIVE.

**W**E live in more than one atmosphere, as I hope to demonstrate ; but the one I shall first speak of is so expressive and representative of another that we will first say something about the representative one. This is the terrestrial atmosphere which surrounds the earth in every direction, and is impregnated with all kinds of effluvia that arise from the character of the ground immediately beneath it. This impregnation is no mere theory, for it is founded upon facts discovered by actual observation and investigation. The investigations and discovery have been made by Baldwin Latham, M. Inst. C.E., President of the Royal Meteorological Society ; and related in his presidential address delivered to the Society on "The Relation of Ground Water to Disease." He says : "Various climatic conditions affect disease ; and to get at the particular influence of any one condition it is necessary to differentiate between various causes. The variations in climatic condition are extremely diversified, and the study of their influence on disease should not extend over too great an area ; for it is only in typical years that their influence is widespread."

"In studying the effects of underground water on

disease, we must carefully eliminate those other agencies which are known to have an influence upon health." By those other agencies he means the varying states of the atmosphere arising from extremes of high and low temperatures, as well as from the abnormal and varying amounts of aerial humidity and dryness. "The pages of history show that when the ground waters of our own or other countries have arrived at a considerable degree of lowness, as evidenced by the failure of springs and the drying up of rivers, such periods have always been accompanied or followed by epidemic disease"—"ground water in itself, except under conditions where it is liable to pollution, has no material effect in producing or spreading disease. As a rule it is only in those places in which there has been a considerable amount of impurity stored up in the soil that diseases become manifest, and the most common mode by which diseases are disseminated is by means of the water supplies drawn from the ground or by the introduction of contaminated ground air into the habitations of the people. It will also be found that the periods of low and high water, mark those epochs when certain organic changes take place in the impurities stored in the earth, and which ultimately become the cause, and lead to the spread of disease."

"In fact, if you wish to get the true significance of the bearing of climatic influences on health, you must go into those districts which have been long occupied by man as residences, in which the ground has received from year to year considerable accessions of pollution." So much for human filth.

At this point I would introduce another important

matter. Now-a-days whenever an epidemic is about, medical men and others are on the alert to search for the "microbe" which is supposed to be the cause of the disease. Many kinds of "microbes" ~~are supposed to~~ have been found. The cry is "destroy the microbes and the disease which each kind generates will disappear." Doubtless, if the microbe is the cause, this will be so. But the question arises, what is the cause of the microbe? Grubs and insects are found in decayed cheese as well as in other decaying substances. Do the grubs and insects cause the decay, or does the decay cause the grubs and insects? Who will demonstrate which is the cause and which the consequence? Such a demonstrator is yet wanting. Can we find one? Swedenborg says: "I once observed in my garden, in the space of an ell, that almost all the dust was turned into very small insects, which on being stirred with a stick rose in clouds. That cadaverous and putrid matters concord with these noxious and useless animalcules, and that the two orders of things are homogeneous, is evident from experience. This may be manifestly seen from the ground of the cause, which is, that there are similar fetors and stenches in the hells where such animalcules also appear."—"Hence it is evident, that where there are stenches of the kind, there these noxious things are, because the two correspond." "The question now is whether such things arise out of eggs conveyed to the spot"—"or whether they originate out of the damp and stenches themselves." After relating much experience respecting the obvious origin of these animalcules, he says: "These experimental facts support those who say,

*\* This has been demonstrated*

that smells, foul effluvia, and exhalations themselves, breathed out of plants, earths, and ponds, furnish initiaments to such animalcules." "The fact that afterwards, when they have been produced, they are propagated either by eggs or offshoots, does not disprove their immediate generation."

What Swedenborg here calls "immediate generation" is not to be confounded with what some call "spontaneous generation." By spontaneous generation the school-men mean something produced from nothing. But Swedenborg means by "immediate generation" something produced from the things of the spiritual world acting upon corresponding states of material substances, thereby producing living effluvia and organizations without the intervention of germs begotten in a previous material organism. Swedenborg's demonstration of the matter is reasonable in every way. A living organism is produced in some occult way from effluvia, which science hitherto has been unable to unfold, and for the sufficient reason that it cannot, because it knows nothing either of what life is or how it originates. Grant Swedenborg the spiritual world or rather the World of Life, and he must be correct in his demonstrations of the origin of these animalcules, for they are rational, and give clear explanations of phenomena hitherto not unfolded; thus is he the demonstrator of a cause that natural science cannot possibly exhibit. We have only to couple this demonstration with the fact stated by the President of the Royal Meteorological Society to see something of the cause of what he states to be a fact in nature, or perhaps better called the perversion of nature, viz.: "If you wish to get the true significance

of the bearing of climatic influences on health, you must go into those districts which have been long occupied by man as residences, in which the ground has received from year to year considerable accessions of pollution." Clearly these are pollutions caused by man. And these pollutions will become, and indeed do become, the initiations of animalcules, or if you like the name better, of "microbes," created from the perverted life of the hells or of infernals in the spiritual world. Hence is traced the cause of all the physical disorder, disease, and physical misery of the world.

I would now call attention to other scientific work which is being done. Meteorology, which is hardly yet included amongst the sciences by men who attach no importance to what they cannot exactly weigh and measure by material instruments and means only, and that does not come within spherics and triangulation, this science, for there is reason to believe that it will, at no distant day, become one of the most important of the physical sciences, is fast opening up new avenues for investigation. Indeed, the president of the society could hardly have pursued the investigations already alluded to, if he had not been aided by what meteorology had helped him to. This science is now being pursued with extraordinary attention and vigour, not only in relation to atmospheric disturbances, but in relation to health and disease. Some twenty years ago, in consequence of a paper I read before the Manchester Philosophical Society, showing some important relations between disease and the states of the atmosphere, I was solicited by the Corporation of Salford to superintend the erection and

furnishing of a Meteorological Observatory in the centre of the town. This I undertook, and computed and reduced all the observations that were obtained without any fee whatever, and most important facts were elicited in confirmation of the theory I enunciated before the Philosophical Society. At the time of the erection of this observatory, the medical faculty generally laughed to scorn what was being done ; but their tone soon changed, and " Those who came to scoff remained to pray." Now I have the immeasurable satisfaction and reward of seeing these observatories erected in several towns, and from all of which most important facts relating to disease and the public health are elicited. The city of Manchester has just had erected under the superintendence of Dr. Tatham, the excellent officer of health to the city, an excellent and a thoroughly equipped observatory as an ancillary to aid him in the investigation of the physical causes of disease. There is no doubt that under his piercing intellect, many valuable facts will be brought to light.

Scientists and natural philosophers have the phrase called "ultimate causes," by which they mean to the New Churchman "first or primary causes." There are many reasons why we cannot always remove from the secondary causes of disease as from pent-up towns or disagreeable odours. But may it not be possible to put away the primary, or if you like, the scientific phrase, the "ultimate causes" of disease? No doubt our medical officers of health will do all they can to remove the secondary causes ; but if the primary causes continue rampant, they will find some channel through the filth

of man to raise up other secondary causes as their vicegerent.

It is not generally known that whilst we live in this world, we are, indeed, the inhabitants of two worlds, and breathe, however unconsciously, two atmospheres—a spiritual life, or living one, and a natural, material, and relatively dead one. Secondary causes of disease arise in the dead or material atmosphere, but the living cause of disease exists in the spiritual or living one. It is the living atmosphere that imparts its forces and active poisons to the natural or dead one, and so the blood and viscera of the body are poisoned by disease until it becomes fixed and even hereditary therein ; if it does not kill directly, it remains, and is more or less transmitted to offspring. Often, too often, in such cases, the sins of the parents are visited on the children. It must be so unless the activity of life is stopped, which would mean entire physical and mental destruction.

What, then, can be done to stop or weaken the original or primary cause of all disease ? We often wonder where our, as it were spontaneous, or uncalled-for, bad thoughts come from. “Oh!” say the churches, “from the devil.” They are quite ready also to say that our good spontaneous thoughts come from heaven, and it is quite right to say so ; and therefore it must be equally right to say that our bad thoughts come from wicked spirits, and so from hell. If we say they come from the devil, as an individual, we set up two omnipresent beings of directly opposite characters, God and the devil, which is contrary to the truth, and irrational.

Now, the fact is, whilst we are in this world we not

only breathe the atmosphere of the world in the state in which it is nearest to us, but we breathe in our souls and minds the atmosphere of the living or life world, and that atmosphere has two opposite and distinct characteristics. We breathe the terrestrial atmosphere, but we THINK the spiritual atmosphere ; for thinking is mental breathing. If we find our thoughts are immoral, unjust, filthy, and bad, judged by the Divine law of the decalogue, then we are breathing in our mind's lungs the infernal atmosphere, which is, relatively speaking, beneath the angelic or heavenly atmosphere. But if our thoughts be moral and just according to the Divine Law, then we are mentally breathing the atmosphere of angels and of heaven. The intellect, or the mental faculty of thought and understanding, constitutes the spiritual lungs of the mind or soul ; and the voluntary principle, or the faculty of desire or love, constitutes the heart of the mind or soul. Hence, when we say that "we love with all our heart," we mean that we love with all the power of our faculty of desire, or of the voluntary principle of the soul ; and not with the heart which pulsates the blood of the body.

Now, human spiritual liberty means the liberty of our voluntary principle. Whatever that principle freely desires, indicates its character and spiritual associations, as well as the real character of the man, whether we are able or not to realize our desires by open actions. In this world the body is too often forced, from worldly circumstances, to live where its absolute bodily requirements can be obtained. But this force often renders men helpless in the requirements for health ; hence

comes the importance of officers of health, to find and remove whatever is obnoxious to the public health ; but with regard to the removal of what is obnoxious to the health of the mind or the soul, the officer of its health is the voluntary principle guided and instructed by Divine Law and Order as expressed in the decalogue, and the commands and instructions of our Lord as given in the plain moral and spiritual teachings of His Holy Word. When obnoxious thoughts arise we have power, since the work of Redemption has been accomplished, to repel such thoughts and put them under our feet. Thus we can remove our minds and souls at any instant from such ground and company as our passing perverse thoughts indicate we are, for the moment, amongst. And so by prayer and elevation of mind to the Lord, we can pass immediately into a heavenly atmosphere and enjoy the thoughts of angelic beings.

Now, whatever our officers of health may do in the removal of the secondary causes of disease, every one can aid them most powerfully in an unseen way by repelling from their thoughts and desires those lusts of any kind that originate first in the perverse will of man, and afterwards, and now, in the universal abodes of wicked beings in the spiritual world. Here are the primary causes of all diseases. As these are removed from the wills and determinations of men, heavenly atmospheres can descend amongst them. And, just at this point, let it be said that no person in this world, whether good or bad, is free from attacks of the secondary causes of disease, only as they are able to keep themselves free from those causes. For the secondary causes, though inspired and fed by

living or spiritual causes, are themselves material, and so attack the physical or material being of man, no matter how far he, individually, may guard himself from primary or spiritual causes, or the direct influences of infernal spirits on his soul. But though his body may be attacked or even succumb to secondary or physical causes, he must never forget that spiritual disease is very much more and eternally destructive, as well as being the fountain whence flow, by correspondence, every physical disease whatever.

This subject opens up a very wide field for contemplation. It shows how spiritual and natural things should co-operate to bring about man's natural as well as his spiritual regeneration. It shows us that however much we may do to rid the world of the physical causes of disease, the soul or mind may yet dwell and indulge in the primary causes, and so perpetuate at the fountain the sources of the misery of mankind. It shows that mere prayer and praise or even physical labour will not remove either the primary or secondary causes of diseases. These may be the accessories for their removal, but unless men will voluntarily stop the flood of mental and physical suffering at its point of issue, the poison will continue to flow.

Alas! the religion of to-day rather seeks to set aside all law and voluntary effort against sin for some imaginary scheme of salvation in the world to come. But we may depend upon it that so long as the voice of law and order passes unheard, disease, misery, and suffering will continue to inflict their terrible pains and ravages. He misses altogether the real name and character of the

Saviour who misses His name of Logos. He is the Law made Flesh, that through and by the Law thus made manifest, He might bring the Living Law to us for our acceptance and salvation. His Law is The Life, and His Life is The Law. We are to dwell in Him that He may dwell in us, or we have no Faith in Him whatever our pretensions may be. So it is our duty to discover Law both Natural and Spiritual, and having found it, to live therein as we find it. Believing that He is in all Law, by living therein, we shall find Him there the Perfect Man for our perfection. Let the present state of mankind testify how far it is from true faith and trust in Christ. This state bears ample testimony to the state of the spiritual or living atmosphere in which most men delight to live. Nay, there can be no doubt that every pernicious wind that blows bears upon its wings the mental atmosphere of mankind. The hells, or infernal abodes, from which wicked men and women draw their inspiration, are as near to them as is their soul to their body.

But before concluding, let attention be drawn again to what has already been said about the inheritance of disease and its becoming hereditary. The main argument, as advanced, teaches that the hells, or the spiritual atmospheres of infernals, are the original source of all disease. It may be thought that spiritual or individual mental degeneracy itself would be the only or main cause of physical disease. For example, if a man whilst he lives in this world continues and so confirms his life contrary to the laws of the decalogue, his soul and mind will necessarily be spiritually diseased, and so be in spiritual communion with the infernals in their filthy condition.

It may be asked, therefore, why does not such a man's body always suffer from a disease corresponding with the state of his diseased or degenerate mind? There can be no doubt that a bad man's body is internally unsound, nay we have Swedenborg's authority that his blood is impure. And, further, there can be no doubt that the terrible physical diseases that broke out amongst men before our Lord's Advent largely originated in their own mental or spiritual degeneracy. And, doubtless, it would be so now but for a most important reason. The Work of Redemption brought spiritual and individual liberty to mankind. And this liberty could not be continued to the individual for his repentance and reformation of life so long as he lives in this world, unless some ground of the outmost and lowest ground of his nature, remained free in a more or less degree for his reception of the moral teachings of Divine Truth or of the Word of God. Since the Divine Work of Redemption has been accomplished, the Divine Providence preserves a remnant of our being from the contamination of a sinful soul in this outward or worldly part of our being, that every man may have to the latest time of his life in this world, the means, that is, The Divine Word from Jesus—the Word made flesh, and its Holy Spirit for his Reformation and Salvation. Thus it is that the most spiritually wicked can have the "Faith" that the apostle says "cometh by hearing." But this remnant and faith are not his till they become a part of his life.

From the Divine Providence then it happens that though man in his body may inherit and transmit physical disease, and in his soul or mind inherit and transmit spiritual disease to the lowest degree or "carnal mind"

of his spiritual nature, which disease and nature are entirely separate and distinct from what is physical in his being; yet the Divine Providence, by the marvellous Work of Redemption, has secured it that however wicked man may in this world become, he shall always have mental liberty and something of the means of Reformation and Salvation. Hence it is that the spiritual filth and disease that arise in his own mind from his spiritually degenerate nature are held in check as far as it is mercifully requisite from the destruction of his body and his soul. But that, on the other hand, men may have the free and rational responsibility of removing everything that brings physical disease, to all alike, primary causes of disease are only permitted to enter into external and physical conditions in such a general way as that the external ground of them, or their secondary cause, may be discovered by external human observation, and afterwards according to reason be removed.

But whether these secondary causes of disease are discovered and removed or not, they cannot affect or destroy a regenerate mind or soul, that is, one who shuns evils as sins against God. If the body die, the soul will still flourish in the beauty of holiness. At the same time every regenerating man will do all that he finds himself able to do in the removal of these horrible secondary causes of disease and death.

