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Contributors

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Scott

Sanitary Report

of the
Parish of Coldingham.
For the Year 1894.

Gentlemen,

I am presenting this my Fourth Annual Report of the Public Health of the Parish of Coldingham I am happy to be able to give the most favourable report which has hitherto been recorded of the health of the district.

The total deaths in our district during 1894 have been 29, 12 Males, and 17 Females, which are equal in a population of 3,016 to a death rate per thousand of 9.6 which I believe to be a very low annual death rate even for a rural Sanitary Authority.

7 of these deaths occurred in children under 5 years of age, and 22 above that age, equal to a death rate per thousand of population under 5 years of age of 2.3, and above 5 years of age of 7.2.

The total births during 1894 have been 61, 25 being Males, and 36 Females, which are equal to a birth rate per thousand ^{living} of 20.2.

The Births and Deaths have occurred during the various months of the year 1894 thus:—

Month,	Births,			Deaths,		
	Males,	Females	Total,	Males,	Females,	Total,
January	3	4	7	1	1	2
February	2	2	4	0	2	2
March	3	6	9	2	1	3
April	3	2	5	2	3	5
May	0	2	2	0	1	1
June	3	2	5	0	0	0
July	1	6	7	0	1	1
August	3	0	3	1	4	5
September	1	4	5	0	1	1
October	3	4	7	1	2	3
November	3	3	6	3	0	3
December	0	1	1	0	1	1
The Total during Year	25	36	61	12	17	29

The total number of deaths due to Zymotic diseases during 1894 was 4. Three of these deaths resulted from Diphtheria and in children under 10 years of age, An Adult died from Typhoid fever at Auchencrow. The insanitary conditions to which these causes of deaths were due have been fully attended to and rectified and it is anticipated that no such outbreaks shall take place in the same localities in the future.

Having thus during the year summarized the Sanitary condition of the Parish I will now enter somewhat more into details and submit to you my monthly Meteorological and Sanitary Notes.

January.

This proved the most unhealthy month of the year and meteorologically the most variable. It set in with a mild Spring like day with very light North-west winds. The 2nd very cold North-east winds with 20 degrees of frost. The 3rd slight fall of Snow and continuation of frost, 14th cold North-east winds, frost and snow, the cold approaching that of an arctic winter several degrees below zero being registered. There was a continuance of cold frosty weather with Easterly and North-easterly winds till the 10th of the month, and during this period a large amount of sickness prevailed, consisting principally of Influenza complicated with Pulmonary affections, Bronchitis, Pneumonia, and Broncho-Pneumonia. Most of the cases of Influenza existed in the Grantshouse district, while the Pulmonary diseases were more confined to the seaward parts of the parish. Several of the cases were very severe but there were no deaths during this visitation. On the 5th of the month Four cases of Scarlet fever were reported at St. Abbs. The School at St. Abbs which had just been reopened the previous day had again to be closed in consequence of this fresh outbreak of Scarlet fever. Infection in these cases was clearly traced to hasty secret visits paid

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paid to the house of George Abbotts whose son was just recovering from an attack of the fever, and this was the only well defined case in the village of St. Abbs at the time. In two of the four cases the disease was so mild that no Medical attendant was called in till other members of the households were seized with the disease in a more severe form, and in one of the cases the girl continued to go about during the greater part of the period of desquamation without any bad effects resulting, and that too during the prevalence of bitterly cold South-west winds. From the 13th to the end of the month strong South-westerly winds at times strengthening into gales continued to blow with little intermission, and simultaneously an epidemic Catarrh, Influenza, Bronchitis, and Pneumonia prevailed throughout the parish.

February set in with crisp frosty seasonable weather with a considerable fall of snow towards evening. The West-south-west winds continued practically during the whole of the month. On the 6th a westerly gale continued without intermission during the day. It abated somewhat towards evening but gathered strength again and blew with fitful vehemence during the night. On the night of the 10th the wind increased in intensity to a perfect hurricane. A fisherman of 85 years of age remarked to me that during his entire experience of upwards of 70 years of a seafaring life he never remembered winds to have continued blowing so persistently and for such a lengthened period from one direction. Notwithstanding the prevalence of strong winds and variable weather the temperature throughout the month was much above the average, and the general health of the community contrasts very favourably with that of former years. With the exception of one case of a mild form of Croup at St. Abbs, very mild cases of Scarlet fever at Lemington, Reston, Reston-brackhead, and Coveyheugh, there is really nothing of any interest from a Medical point of view to report. Towards the end of the month there were several cases of Tonsillitis with white yellow spots attended with a high temperature which led me to fear Diphtheria in a mild form, but as the febrile

febrile symptoms only continued for 24 hours I considered it was not of a specific character but due merely to seasonal influences.

March.

March 1st Received a complaint in regard to the uncleanness of a boy at Hearelawside and attending Renton School. Visited parents at Hearelawside and gave directions to keep boy from school, and instructed Mr. Mac Rae Sanitary Inspector as to the carrying out of measures for the cleaning of the boy, clothes and house. On the second I wrote Mr. Dand that if no further cases of Scarlet fever were reported he was to open his school on Monday the 5th inst. The first week of the month there was mild, genial, Spring weather with strong winds varying from South-west to North-east. During the month a larger number of patients consulted me for various forms of skin affections than I ever remember to have seen during the same period. Most of these cases were due to exposure to cold and damp. Towards the middle and end of the month cases of Scarlet fever were reported at Reston and Hillend. During the month six cases of simulated Scarlet fever came under my notice. The children were seized with sudden attacks of sickness and vomiting, with slight fever, and an eruption so closely resembling that of Scarlet fever that I was on my first visit in doubt as to the nature of the affection. In 12 hours the children after a little simple medicine were quite well and presented no trace of eruption. Four of the cases were kept under observation for four weeks and as none of them manifested any of the sequelae or after consequences invariably following upon true cases of Scarlet fever, I had no hesitation in concluding that the symptoms were due to some temporary functional derangement or gastric conditions.

April.

April set in with beautiful, clear, dry summer weather. The 2nd and 3rd were wet and foggy and much colder.

Dry 3

Dry weather with cold Easterly winds prevailed till the middle of the month. The sickness during this month was largely confined to the village of St. Abbs. Early in the month a case of Measles preceded by very severe head symptoms was followed by two cases of Diphtheria of a peculiarly malignant type, and both terminated fatally. This outbreak of Diphtheria was not due to tainted water or infected milk, but was clearly traced to Sewer gas emanating from a very foul drain. The cases which occurred this month and during the month of May were confined to one locality in the village of St. Abbs, viz. Murrayfield, where the drain, which was at the back of the row of houses, was discovered to be choked and in a very foul condition. The children who were seized had been in the habit - more so than their companions - of playing around the drain mouth, and had thus inhaled a large quantity of the Sewer poison. I wrote Mr. Usher in regard to this state of matters and he immediately gave instructions for the thorough cleaning out, trapping and ventilation of the drain. A larger drain pipe has been laid, provision made for periodical flushing, and a sufficient descent so as to secure an uninterrupted flow, will, I believe, have sufficiently remedied this one blot on the otherwise very satisfactory system of drainage at St. Abbs.

May.

A large amount of sickness, but of a mild type occurred during the greater part of this month consisting principally of laryngeal and pulmonary affections in consequence of the cold variable weather which prevailed with strong Easterly and North-easterly winds. A case of Diphtheria was notified at St. Abbs in the family of Hugh Dickson, Murrayfield, and a fresh outbreak of Scarlet fever in Reston and in the immediate neighbourhood. I wrote Mr. Sand directing him to close his School forthwith until further notice. Up to this date (1st January 1895), no further cases have been notified and it is to be hoped that we have at length seen the last of this Epidemic or rather sporadic visitation of Scarlet fever which first appeared in the parish.

parish at Pressmains in the month of December 1892, and has in the most inexplicable manner continued to crop up at irregular intervals in different centres of the parish. The following gave I think the distinguishing characteristics of this visitation, First, Extremely mild type of disease. So mild were the great majority of the cases that I believe many cases of undoubted Scarlet fever escaped detection altogether and this in my opinion explained the second peculiarity of this visitation, its long continuance. Cases of Scarlet fever in this very mild form were not recognised as such by the parents and the usual precautions were therefore not used, and those thus affected became unintentionally independent centres for spreading the disease. Third, Its Sporadic character, Although the disease was spread over a wide area and continued hanging about the district for nearly two years it at no period assumed an epidemic form. Only in one instance were there two households seized with the form at the one centre and in most instances only one member of a family was affected by it. Fourth, It has not yet been very satisfactorily ascertained how the fever poison was originally introduced. Fifth, Much no doubt was effected by the immediate closure of the Schools to limit the spread of the fever. Sixth, Safety I think demands that an isolation period of six or seven weeks should in every instance of Scarlet fever be insisted on, and in no case should this be shortened, On the 31st of the month I wrote Mr. Dand authorising him to open his School at Roster on Monday the 14th June.

June.

Till the 15th of the month the weather of June was very changeable, wet and cold with North-easterly and North-westerly winds and a considerable rainfall. The amount of sickness was during this period above the average for this month, Bright sunshine and warm summer weather

7.
weather may be said generally to have characterised the latter half of the month and little sickness prevailed. The Epidemic of Small Pox in Edinburgh and Leith caused a very large number of Adults to seek revaccination. During the month I vaccinated upwards of fifty individuals and in every instance good vaccine vesicles formed. In one case a woman of 70 years of age and who had passed through a rather severe attack of Small-pox within eight years had a perfect vaccine vesicle, and the constitutional symptoms were so severe as to require confinement to bed for three days.

July,

With the exception of a few days towards the end, the month of July was wet and changeable but the health of the district was notwithstanding very good throughout. On the 7th a case of continued fever (Enteric) was notified at Auchencrow, and on the 16th another case of the same disease was reported also at Auchencrow and in an adjoining house. It is worthy of mention that the first case occurred in the same house as that in which the man Waterston was attacked with the same fever in the month of November last, and it becomes a question, whether infection had continued about the house since that time. Infection in the second case was clearly traced to direct communication by the washing of some articles of body clothing worn by the first seized. The first case was a mild form of the disease, but the second was much more severe and after a months illness terminated fatally from an abdominal complication. With the view of ascertaining if the drinking water was free from suspicion a sample was sent to D^r A. P. Aitken for analysis.

August,

August 1st Received from Sanitary Inspector a copy of D^r Aitken's report of the Chemical Analysis which I transcribe:-
"Chemical Laboratory, 8 Clyde Street, Edinburgh, 30th July 1894
"Analysis of Sample of Water from Spring at Auchencrow
"drawn 26th curr^o

"Parts per 100,000,

"Solids dissolved

29.0

"Chlorine 3

"Chlorine	2.4
"Free Ammonia	.0033
"Albuminoid Ammonia	.0066
"Nitric Acid	1.80

"Removable by boiling,
 "Hardness, Not so removable.

"This is a water which bears the mark of having received
 "pollution which may have continued for a long time, and there
 "may be some impurity entering it. The amount of present
 "pollution is not greater than may exist in waters that
 "are safe to drink, but the nature and source of the pollu-
 "tion require investigation and until these are found safe
 "I would regard the water with much suspicion. It has not
 "the composition of Spring water and if it is derived from
 "a Spring there need be no doubt that the Spring is polluted

(Signed) "A. P. Aitken,"

I arranged with Mr. McRae to visit Buchencrow on
 the 3rd inst. and examine into the sanitary condition of the
 surroundings, and water supply. After very carefully
 going over the grounds and ascertaining the source from
 which the well which afforded the drinking water for the
 inmates of the houses seized with fever was supplied, and
 collecting other evidence, we fully satisfied ourselves that
 the well in question could not be polluted at its source,
 as this was situated in an adjoining field which had
 been in pasture for a great number of years and was
 quite removed from any cause of contamination. The
 Well however was an open one and situated close by
 the public road, and we thought it advisable to have it
 enclosed and covered, in order to prevent it being used
 by tramps or others as a lavatory or such like purpose.
 These instructions have been very thoroughly carried out
 and all in my opinion has thus been done which is
 required by the circumstances of the case.

September,

September. The first week was characterised by cold unsettled weather, Till the 5th of the month the temperature was almost that of winter and this sudden fall in the Thermometer was followed by an unusual number of cases of Bronchitis and inflammation of the Lungs and febrile seizures due to chills. From the 9th to the 27th there was beautiful clear, mild weather, and very little sickness. Harvest operations got well advanced.

October, A case of Diphtheria imported from Newcastle occurred in the village of Goldingham. The case was a very severe one but the child recovered. A case of Measles also contracted at Newcastle in which the incubation period was very distinctly ascertained also occurred in the village. Although the weather of October was cold and wet with high Northerly winds the health continued very good.

November. There were several cases of Measles in the village of Goldingham during the month. Rules of strict isolation were enforced and the disease was confined to two households. I am of opinion that Measles and also Whooping-Cough ought to be included in the Infectious diseases Act, as regardless parents are apt to set at defiance our instructions and restrictions as they are very well aware that we are unable to enforce them by law. The weather during the entire month was exceptionally mild - so mild that several birds nests were found in the immediate neighbourhood with eggs. There were very cases of sickness.

December. December set in with beautiful autumn-like weather and throughout the month the temperature was unusually high and only on six days during the entire month did the thermometer fall to freezing point. Strong winds from the South-west and North-west continued to blow during the greater part of the month. A gale of unusual severity set in on the night of the 21st and continued during the 22nd. Previous to and during the continuance of the gale or rather hurricane the barometer registered 27.90 the lowest point reached for the last 10 years. The gale has proved itself to be one of the most furious and destructive recorded at this 3

this season of the year for many a day and with a sky and temperature more suggestive of the beginning of May than of the end of December. The year closed with cold boisterous frosty weather with occasional showers of Snow. Slight Catarrhal affections confined to children and a number of cases of Tonsillitis in Adults constitute the main causes of sickness, and due to seasonal influences during the month, Chronic ailments generally were sensibly relieved.

Middenstead in
Coldingham,

The Middenstead situated in the centre of the village of Coldingham and belonging to Mr. John Wood, Coach-Proprietor has at intervals been the cause of complaint and has perhaps not been so punctually attended to as it ought to have been. There can be little doubt that both as regards the amenity and Sanitary condition of the village it is extremely desirable that this dunghcap, which cannot but prove a nuisance to those in more immediate proximity, should, if possible, be removed to the outskirts.

Bakeries, Dairy's,
and Cowsheds,

The Bakeries, Dairy's and Cowsheds in the Parish continue in the same satisfactory condition as heretofore.

Parochial Lodging
House,

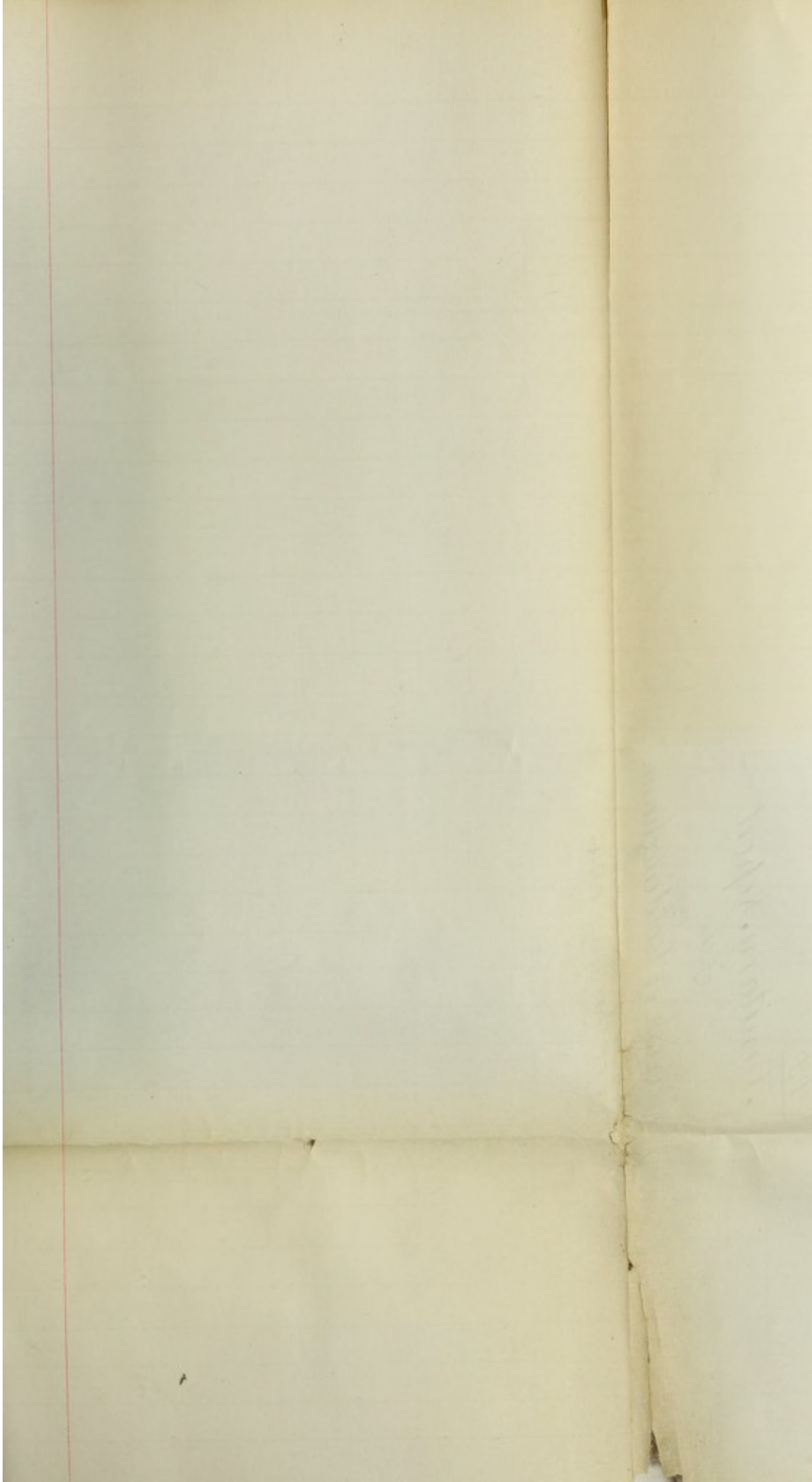
The Parochial Lodginghouse is under the same efficient management, is well equipped, kept very clean, and the interests and comfort of the inmates well attended to.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

Medical Officer of Health,
For the Parish of Coldingham.

Coldingham, Z
January 1895. Z



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Sanitary Report

of the

Parish of Goldingham.

For the Year 1894.

James N. B. Dougall, M.D.

Medical Officer of Health.

Goldingham.



