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Darlington (England). County Borough Council.

**Publication/Creation**

1905

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*Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the  
Borough of Darlington for the year ending 31st  
December, 1905.*

To the Chairman and Members of the  
Health and Sanitary Committee,  
Gentlemen,

At the beginning of another year I have pleasure in submitting to you my report on the work carried on by you during the year that has just come to an end. I think you will see that steady progress has been made in improving the conditions that make for health among the community, and that comparatively the sanitary condition of the town is good. Of course a good deal remains to be done before we attain perfection, and we cannot expect old and obsolete systems to be changed as by the wand of an enchanter, yet, as I have said, fair progress has been made in the right direction.

#### AREA OF THE BOROUGH

The acreage remains pretty much the same as in former years, viz., 3,928 acres. The extending of the Borough boundary is a question that will soon be ripe for discussion, as there is a large population just outside the northern boundary of the town, with streets and houses and drainage, which may be injurious to our health conditions if not properly laid out and inspected. Aggregations of population on the boundaries of a town are always more or less a standing menace to the health of the district, owing to the distance at which the sanitary officers responsible for this surveillance reside, and the time lost owing to this cause in dealing with cases of infection.

#### POPULATION.

It is difficult to determine the increase of population during the year, though it would amount naturally to about 800 if the difference between births and deaths were computed. It will probably be somewhat more than this, and I think we shall not be overstating it, if we put it at 48,500 for statistical calculations. There are not many working men's cottages empty, but there are a good many houses empty of the class above these commanding a rent of £20 to £35 a year, and it is evident that enough has been done in providing for this class of tenant for some time to come.

#### VITAL STATISTICS.

During the year the births of 728 males and 749 females were registered, a total of 1,477, which is a decrease of two on the preceding year. This is not what one would have expected, as with an increase of population it would have been natural to expect an increase of births, but from some cause or causes the birth-rate does not increase with the increase of population. In 1882 when



the population was certainly 10,000 less than it is at the present time, there was one birth more registered than there was during 1905. Estimating the population at 48,500 for the middle of the year we get a birth-rate of 30·4 per annum, or 4 per thousand below the county average.

#### DEATH-RATE.

The total deaths registered in the Borough, and of those who died in prison, industrial school or asylum belonging to the Borough was 365 males and 355 females, making a total of 720. There were 11 deaths in institutions in the town, such as hospital and workhouse of inmates, who had been admitted from the district outside the municipal boundary, and consequently the nett figures are 709, which give a death-rate of 14·5 for the year, or 2·8 below the county average.

#### ZYMOTIC DEATH-RATE.

During the year there were 79 deaths due to the following causes :— Measles, scarlatina, diphtheria, croup, enteric and continued fever, diarrhoea, enteritis, puerperal fever, and erysipelas. It is doubtful whether such diseases as influenza, phthisis, cancer, and other septic diseases, and other tubercular diseases should be reckoned among the zymotic roll, and I have not included them in my computation. If these were to be included the zymotic mortality rate would mount up to a very formidable total, something like 4·2 per thousand, and excluding these the zymotic death-rate for the year is 1·63 from the first-mentioned causes. The following statement gives the numbers from each cause in detail. Measles was epidemic during the first six months, and accounted for 11 deaths chiefly in children under five years of age, and gives a mortality rate from this cause of 0·22. Scarlatina was epidemic during the whole year, but was not very fatal, only three deaths occurring during the year, which gives a death-rate from scarlatina of 0·06. Diphtheria and membranous croup were also prevalent during the whole year, but the mortality from these causes was not excessive, viz., 11—and all in children under five years of age. The death-rate from these causes was 0·22. Enteric fever was prevalent during the last six months, and caused eight deaths, or a rate of 0·16. Diarrhoea was not quite so fatal as usual, and only caused 13 deaths, or a death-rate of 0·27. Enteritis was in evidence in the months of August, September, and October, and caused 20 deaths, or a rate of 0·41. The rate from phthisis was 0·97, from other tubercular diseases 0·49, and from diseases of the respiratory organs 2·61.

#### INFANTILE MORTALITY.

During the year the general death-rate has been low, and the deaths among infants have been correspondingly few, viz., 179, which is 20 less than in the previous year, and 74 less than in 1903. This is one of the most gratifying signs in our vital statistics, because it is important if our birth-rate is declining



that there should be less waste by death among those that are born to compensate for the deficiency of births. The infantile death-rate during the year has been 121 per thousand births, compared with 134 in the previous year. It is difficult to account for the fluctuations in the infant mortality rate, as its ranges are very wide. During the last ten years I see it has ranged from 185 per thousand births in 1903 to 119 in 1902. So we see that the year with the lowest rate is followed the very next year by the highest rate. I am sure the practical instruction that could be given by properly educated lady health visitors in house to house visits among the homes of the working classes if they devoted themselves to instruct the inexperienced mothers on the feeding, clothing and sanitary surroundings of their young children would do more than anything else to minimise the enormous waste of young life which goes on at present.

#### NOTIFICATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

During the year two cases of smallpox were imported into the town by members of theatrical companies who had contracted the disease, one probably in Wakefield and the other in Stowmarket. The one arose in February, and the other in April. Both cases were at once admitted to the Smallpox Hospital and isolated, all the contacts revaccinated, and the rooms disinfected, and the bedding either disinfected or burnt. In neither case was there any spread of the disease. There were 137 cases of scarlatina notified, or 57 more than in the preceding year, and 111 cases of diphtheria, or 29 fewer than in 1904. There were 50 cases of enteric fever reported, or 26 fewer than in the preceding year, and 29 cases of erysipelas, an increase of 4 on 1904. Altogether there were 344 cases notified of all the infectious diseases, or 3 more than in the preceding year.

#### INFECTIOUS HOSPITAL.

As reported above just two cases of smallpox were treated during the year, and as both were imported cases, and no one contracted the disease, the Smallpox Hospital was only open for about three months of the year.

The Fever Hospital was pretty well filled during the year, especially the Scarlatina and Diphtheria Wards. During some months the Scarlatina Wards were overcrowded, owing to an outbreak of the disease in an Orphanage, which contributed 10 or 11 cases almost in a batch. With this exception the accommodation was equal to the demand. During the year 265 cases were treated in the Hospital, and two in the Smallpox Hospital, making a total of 267. Of these 15 were admitted from the Rural Sanitary District, leaving 252 nett from the Borough. These figures give a per centage of cases admitted to all those notified of 73·2, but as cases of erysipelas are not admitted (or rarely so) the admissions were 80 per cent. of notification. There were 115 cases of scarlatina treated in the Hospital, with two deaths, or 1·8 per cent. Of the 99 cases of diphtheria treated in the Hospital only one died, or one per cent. No doubt the



serum treatment of diphtheria has lessened the mortality from this disease enormously, if one can only use it early in the attack, before the virus has multiplied in the blood of the patient. The case which died had been ill five days before admission, consequently it would have taken an enormous dose of the anti-toxin to counteract the multiplications of the toxins that had then been generated. It is of the utmost importance that the serum treatment of this disease should be begun with as little delay as possible. The 23 cases of diphtheria treated at their own homes are responsible for six deaths, or 26 per cent. I have no means of knowing whether the serum treatment was applied in these cases or not, but expect it would, at any rate in some of them, though probably not either sufficiently early, or if late in sufficient doses to be effective. Of the 44 cases of enteric fever treated seven died, or 15.9 per cent. There were seven cases at home, with one death, or the same mortality. Of the 11 cases of membranous croup four were tracheotomised, with two deaths and two recoveries.

#### BAKEHOUSES.

The bakehouses have all been regularly inspected, and in two cases informal notice was given to clean the floors and premises in one case, and in the other to underdraw the roof and limewash the walls, as well as thoroughly clean out the entire premises. These orders were complied with, and everything is in order. All the others complied with the bye-laws and are in order.

There is only one underground bakehouse in the town. This is well lighted and ventilated, and there was no difficulty in giving a certificate as to its suitability to be used as a bakehouse.

#### SLAUGHTER-HOUSES.

There was one slaughter-house licensed by the Committee in a new part of the town, in addition to those already in use. All were regularly inspected, and found in order. There was nothing which required to be put in order as all the places were clean, and the bye-laws complied with in each case.

#### COWSHEDS, DAIRIES, AND MILKSHOPS.

All the cowsheds have been regularly visited and inspected, and in every case have been found in good order. The dairies have also been clean and well ventilated, and the pails and floors found in good order. There was only one milk shop in Brunswick Street, which was in communication with the living room, and on notice being given of its unsuitability the trade was given up. All the others were clean and in good order.

#### PIGSTIES.

There are a number of pigsties in the North Ward on the West Bank of the River Skerne. An owner of one of these who breeds pigs here, was summoned for committing a nuisance, but the magistrates in their wisdom



refused to convict, and so the nuisance continues, and may become more intolerable owing to this victory over the Sanitary Authority, but if the magistrates when appealed to won't stop it there is little encouragement to try to make the district sanitary. There is no doubt that pigs cannot be kept near to houses, especially in the summer (these were said to be 90 feet away from the nearest house) without causing a disagreeable smell and a nuisance.

#### SCAVENGING.

The streets have been kept clean, and well watered, and the sweepings quickly removed. The ashpits have for the most part been often emptied, though in some cases not so frequently as is necessary to keep the atmosphere sweet, especially in summer. Some complaints have been made about the smells from the ashpit tips in the Haughton Road, and no doubt it must be offensive to the inhabitants of Gibson Terrace when a south wind is blowing. The only remedy for this is the providing of a refuse destructor, and placing it in some position where the fumes emitted from it will not reach the houses. During the year a number of new streets have been laid out, and had their drains connected with the sewers. The surface of others has been completed, and they have been taken over by the Committee to keep in repair. Also several back streets have been paved by scoria brick and drained, so that they are in splendid condition from a sanitary point of view.

#### WATER SUPPLY.

The water supply to the town is obtained from the same source (the River Tees) as before. A very large outlay has lately been expended on the Water Works during the past two or three years. Firstly: in the erection of a new engine house, and procuring a new and powerful pumping engine, which is capable of pumping over two and a half million gallons of water in the 24 hours. This engine alone could pump more than the required domestic supply for the town daily. Secondly: a large settling reservoir has been made, and two new filtering beds have been, or are being made, which will meet the demands of the town for many years. The water is subjected to constant periodical analyses by the County Analyst, Mr. W. F. K. Stock, so that anything injurious might be at once detected. During the year the supply has been abundant, and of good quality, as a domestic supply.

#### FACTORY AND WORKSHOPS.

A good deal more attention has been paid to the inspection and oversight of workshops than in previous years, and though we have no very bad cases of infringement of the bye-laws, still there are cases which require some alteration to render their condition healthy. I believe only one case of over-crowding in a workshop was reported during the year, and though this is not to be found to any extent, the operatives have such an objection to fresh air that very few of



them will tolerate open windows. As a consequence, when one enters one feels the need there is for more fresh air, but as long as they comply with the law, the workers will not themselves tolerate what they look upon as discomfort for their corporeal salvation. There were a few cases of want of proper cleanliness in some of the workshops, but upon notice being given these were put into order, so that no prosecutions were necessary. In some cases the sanitary arrangements were unsatisfactory, and in three or four there was not separate accommodation for the two sexes. There errors have been corrected, and the byelaws relating to factories and workshops in most respects very readily complied with and carried out.

#### FOOD AND DRUGS ACT.

A fair amount of attention has been given to the carrying out of the duties entailed on the Authority by this Act, and a considerable number of samples have been subjected to analysis. The greatest attention, of course, was bestowed on the milk, but in only one case was there supposed to be an addition of about four per cent. of water. The adulteration was so slight that no proceedings were taken, as it was expected that the caution administered would be sufficient to prevent a continuance of the practice. One sample of cassia was found to be adulterated with seven per cent. of sand, and the vendor prosecuted, and fined 20s. and costs. He has appealed against this decision, but whether he will prosecute his appeal or not remains to be seen. There were no seizures of meat or fish either in the market or the shops, but a quantity of mussels were seized in the market, and destroyed by the consent of the owner, and no further proceedings were taken.

#### HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES ACT.

During the year some houses situated in yards in Park Street were closed by my advice on the ground that they were damp, in confined, airless and sunless situations, and unventilated. It will not be possible to remedy these defects, and I regard these houses as permanently closed. In some other cases that I recommended closing, and which was ordered by the Sanitary Authority, the necessary repairs or alterations were done, and the order has been revoked.

#### ABATEMENT OF NUISANCES.

There has been a fair number of the old sunken ashpits converted either into waterclosets, or into small ashpit privies during the year. This is the sanitary reform which is most needed at the present time, and the abolition of these old capacious ashpits should be steadily prosecuted. During the year the usual nuisances have been abated such as overcrowding, and the sanitary defects of houses, dirty condition of yards or houses, stoppage of drains, defective traps, defective pavement of yards, keeping animals under unfit conditions, and such like.



During the year all the houses from which infectious diseases have been notified have been visited, isolation of the patients recommended (often with success), the houses and bedding disinfected, and the bedding in some cases destroyed, compensation being allowed. The most important sanitary improvements which are pressing for attention at the present time are the abolition of the old-fashioned sunken ashpits, the erection of a refuse destructor, and the appointment of two or more lady health visitors.

In conclusion, I may say that the condition of the town in a sanitary point of view is improving year by year. The crusade that has been carried on during the last few years against consumption, and the open air treatment of this disease, has led to the recognition of the necessity for better ventilation in the homes both of rich and poor. When the inhabitants of our towns get thoroughly imbued with the necessity of fresh unbreathed air to maintain health and vigour, the day is not far distant when consumption will become as extinct as typhus or leprosy. I have no doubt the compulsory notification of disease, and the investigation of the houses in which it occurs by the sanitary officers, combined with the directions which they would give to prevent the disease being communicated to other contacts of the infected one, followed by disinfection of the premises would materially assist in checking the spread of the disease. There are difficulties in the way of making it a notifiable disease, seeing that it is of a chronic nature, and runs often a long course of years, instead of being like other acute infectious diseases limited to a few weeks after which the patient recovers, and the infection is at end. In many cases of consumption several doctors are consulted at one time or another in the course of the malady, and consequently the same case might be reported again and again. This would make it an expensive disease, but the gain to the community would more than balance the expense, and it is worth a trial. Considering the number of parks and open spaces in Darlington, the town is well fitted to be the first to eradicate this disease. To accomplish this an open air gospel must be preached and practised, and in a few years we shall see a very great improvement in the physique of the population. Cleanliness and fresh air will be the best starting point for so-called physical culture.

My thanks are due to the Committee for following out my advice where it has been given on the various questions that have arisen, and to the Town Clerk for his guidance in legal points, and to the Borough Surveyor for information supplied by him, and last but not least to the Sanitary Inspector and his staff for the loyal and efficient manner in which they have carried out my instructions.

I am, gentlemen,

Yours obediently,

JAMES LAWRENCE, M.D., M.Ch.,

Medical Officer of Health.



VITAL STATISTICS OF WHOLE DISTRICT DURING 1904  
AND PREVIOUS YEARS.

YEAR.	Population estimated to Middle of each Year.	BIRTHS.		Total Deaths Registered in the District.				Total Deaths in Public Institutions in the District.	Deaths of Non-residents registered in Public Institutions in the District.	Deaths of Residents registered in Public Institutions beyond the District.	Nett Deaths at all Ages belonging to the District.	
		Number	Rate.*	Under 1 Year of Age.		At all Ages.					Number.	Rate.*
				Number	Rate per 1,000 Births registered	Number.	Rate.*					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1895.	41,000	1,193	31.4	201	168	636	15.5					
1896.	41,000	1,147	28	153	133	594	14.4		Not	Known		
1897.	41,500	1,191	28.3	148	124	600	14.6					
1898.	42,000	1,181	28.1	168	142	678	15.7			14		
1899.	43,000	1,227	28.5	189	154	680	15.9		7	11	682	15.8
1900.	43,500	1,324	30.4	197	148	763	17.4		15	9	757	17.3
1901.	44,500	1,322	29.7	215	162	710	15.8	94	15	9	704	15.7
1902.	46,000	1,382	30	165	119	691	15.1	97	16	10	692	15
1903.	46,500	1,364	29.3	253	185	856	18.4	92	24	8	832	17.8
1904.	47,500	1,449	30.5	199	137	806	16.9	94	11	9	806	16.9
Averages for years 1895-1904.	43,650	1,278	29.4	188	147	701	15.9	94	14.3	10	748	16.4
1905.	48,500	1,477	30.4	179	121	720	14.5	105	11	14	709	14.5

\* Rates in Columns 4, 8, and 13 calculated per 1,000 of estimated population

Population estimated to middle of 1905, 48,500.

Births in the year } Legitimate not known.  
                              } Illegitimate not known.

CASES OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE NOTIFIED DURING  
THE YEAR 1905.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE.	CASES NOTIFIED IN WHOLE DISTRICT.						
	At all ages.	Under 1	1 to 5	5 to 15	15 to 25	25 to 65	65 & upwds
Smallpox .. ..	2	..	..	..	..	2	..
Diphtheria .. ..	111	2	29	54	11	15	..
Membranous Croup ..	11	1	9	1	..	..	..
Erysipelas .. ..	29	1	3	..	..	12	13
Scarlet Fever .. ..	137	9	43	65	15	5	..
Enteric Fever .. ..	50	..	4	9	8	29	..
Continued Fever .. ..	1	..	..	1	..	..	..
Puerperal Fever .. ..	3	..	..	..	..	3	..
Totals .. ..	344	13	88	130	34	66	13



## CAUSES OF, AND AGES AT, DEATH DURING YEAR 1905.

CAUSES OF DEATH.	Deaths at the subjoined ages of "Residents" whether occurring in or beyond the district.							Total deaths of resi- dents or non-residents in public institutions.
	All ages.	Under one year.	1 and under 5.	5 and under 15.	15 and under 25.	25 and under 65.	65 and upwards.	
Measles .. .. .	11	5	5	1				1
Scarlet fever .. .. .	3		2	1				2
Diphtheria and membranous croup ..	7	1	6					1
Croup .. .. .	4		4					2
Fever, Enteric .. .. .	7		1	3	1	2		6
" Other Continued .. .. .	1				1			
Epidemic influenza .. .. .	10	1	1		1	5	2	
Diarrhœa .. .. .	13	8	4				1	
Enteritis .. .. .	20	18	2					
Puerperal fever .. .. .	1					1		
Erysipelas .. .. .	2	1					1	
Other septic diseases .. .. .	11	4	1	1	1	3	1	4
Phthisis (pulmonary tuberculosis) ..	47		1	3	13	29	1	3
Other tubercular diseases .. .. .	24	4	7	7	3	3		2
Cancer (malignant disease) .. .. .	35					24	11	6
Bronchitis .. .. .	66	18	7			12	29	8
Pneumonia .. .. .	19		4	1		12	2	2
Pleurisy .. .. .	5					3	2	
Other diseases of respiratory organs ..	37	14	14			7	2	2
Alcoholism (cirrhosis of liver) .. ..	3					3		
Venereal diseases .. .. .	3	3						
Premature birth .. .. .	28	28						1
Diseases and accidents of parturition ..	3					3		
Heart diseases .. .. .	81			4	8	40	29	9
Accidents .. .. .	16	1	4	2	1	4	14	7
Suicides .. .. .	8				1	5	2	
All other causes .. .. .	230	73	9	8	6	56	78	14
All causes .. .. .	695	179	72	31	36	212	165	70

INFANTILE MORTALITY DURING THE YEAR 1905.  
DEATHS FROM STATED CAUSES IN WEEKS AND MONTHS  
UNDER ONE YEAR OF AGE.

CAUSE OF DEATH.	Under 1 Week.	1-2 Weeks.	2-3 Weeks.	3-4 Weeks.	Total under 1 month.	1-2 Months.	2-3 Months.	3-4 Months.	4-5 Months.	5-6 Months.	6-7 Months.	7-8 Months.	8-9 Months.	9-10 Months.	10-11 Months.	11-12 Months.	Total Deaths under 1 Year
Measles.. ..	1	1										1	2		1		5
Diphtheria : Croup													1				1
Diarrhoea, all forms						2	1	2				1	1		1		8
Enteritis ( <i>not Tuberculous</i> )						1	2	2	2					3			10
Gastritis, Gastro-intestinal Catarrh						3	2	2	2								9
Premature Birth..	21	2	1	1	25	2	1										28
Congenital Defects		1	1			1	1					1					5
Injury at Birth ..	1				1												1
Atrophy, Debility, Marasmus		1	2	2	5	5	4	1	1	2							18
Tuberculous Meningitis															1		1
Tuberculous Peritonitis : Tabes Mesenterica								2				1					3
Other Tuberculous Diseases												1					1
Erysipelas									1								1
Syphilis												1		1		1	3
Meningitis ( <i>not Tuberculous</i> )													1		1		2
Convulsions ..	6	1	1		8	3	3	1	1						3	1	20
Bronchitis ..				3	3	1	2	4	3	1	1	2	3	1	1		22
Laryngitis ..						1					1				1		3
Broncho-Pneumonia							1		3			2	1	1		1	9
Other Causes ..	10	2	1	3	16				1	2	2	3	2	1			29

Deaths from all Causes at all Ages 709.



# FACTORIES, WORKSHOPS, LAUNDRIES, WORKPLACES AND HOMEWORK

## 1.—INSPECTION.

Premises.	Number of	
	Inspections	Written Notices
Factories— (Including Factory Laundries) ..	25	1
Workshops— (Including Workshop Laundries)..	189	10
Total .. .. .	214	11

## 2.—DEFECTS FOUND.

Particulars.	Number of Defects.	
	Fouud.	Remedied.
Nuisances under the Public Health Acts:—		
Want of Cleanliness .. .. .	18	18
Overcrowding .. .. .	1	1
*Sanitary Accommodation—insufficient .. ..	10	10
“ “ not separate for sexes	4	3
Total .. .. .	33	32

\* In one case the business is being transferred to other premises.