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Contributors

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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

OF THE

RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

OF THE

SEDGEFIELD UNION,

For the Year ended

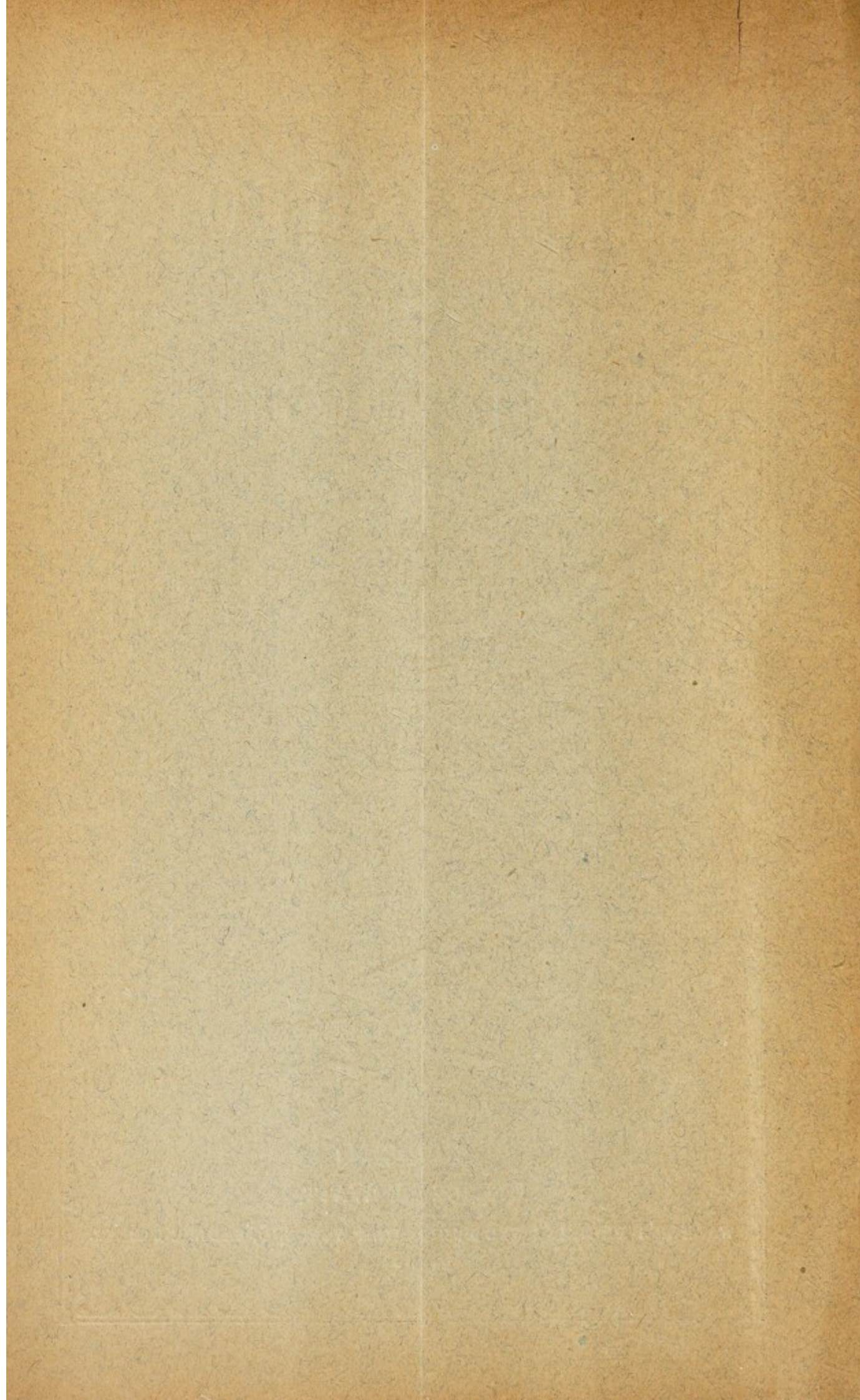
DECEMBER 31st, 1894.

DURHAM:

GEORGE M. WATT,

WALKER'S PRINTING AND PUBLISHING WORKS, 6, SADLER STREET.

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ANNUAL REPORT

THE
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL
OF THE
SEDFIELD UNION.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present my Annual Retrospect of the Health and Sanitary condition of the Sedfield Union Rural Sanitary District for the year ended December 31st, 1894.

The Mortality during the year, exclusive of the 156 deaths of inmates of the Durham County Lunatic Asylum, amounts to 326, of whom 192 were males and 134 females.

The Number of Births registered amount to 718, of whom 376 were males and 342 were females, and which, by a singular coincidence, approximates closely both as regards number and proportion of the sexes with the returns of last year.

The Population of the Sanitary District is estimated at 18,849, exclusive of inmates of the County Asylum, for the purpose of computing the statistics.

The Rate of Mortality is 17.0 per thousand, which is below the average.

The Birth Rate is 38.0 per thousand and also somewhat below the average of former years.

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The Infant Mortality still continues exceptionally high 122 deaths having occurred within the first year, the death rate being 169 per thousand births. The causes which have contributed to this great mortality are impaired viability from premature birth 21, difficult and protracted labour 22, Convulsions 23, Marasmus 18, Meningitis 8, Gastric and Intestinal Disorders 4, Diseases of Respiratory Organs 9, Imperfect Developement 2, Zymotic Diseases 13, whilst 2 were not certified. One inquest was held and a verdict of "Death from natural causes" recorded.

Longevity is fully up to the average, 50 persons having attained the age of 70 years and upwards, or 2.6 per thousand, of whom 38 were septuagenarians, 8 octogenarians, and 2 nonagenarians.

The Zymotic Class of Diseases has been the cause of 40 deaths or 2.1 per thousand.

The number of Notifications of the eleven diseases included in the Schedule of the Notification Act of 1889 amount to 231, of this number 71 were Scarlatina, 22 Diphtheria, 53 Typhoid or Enteric Fever, 34 Continued Fever, 1 Pueperal Fever, and 50 Erysipelas, whilst 9 deaths resulted, viz:—Diphtheria 1, Typhoid Fever 6, and Erysipelas 2. About 180 visits were made, instructions given and disinfectants supplied where needed, and the usual measures taken for the removal of such insanitary conditions as were found to exist.

In addition to the above 16 deaths resulted from Measles 13 from Whooping Cough, and 3 from Diarrhœa. These diseases not being included in the Schedule of diseases to which the Act applies, not even an approximate idea can be formed of the number of cases which occurred within the Sanitary District.

Scarlatina prevailed sporadically during the year, the disease was however of an exceedingly mild type as is indicated by the fact that out of the 71 cases notified no death resulted.

Diphtheria of a mild type occurred during the months of February, March, April, August, and September, the cases being confined to West Cornforth, where the disease originated, and the immediate neighbourhood. A great number of Privies and Ashpits were found to be ill-constructed; the floors not being formed of any impermeable material or even paved to prevent soakage, or provided with any covering to prevent the admission of rain water, the consequence was that the ground was saturated with filth, and the effluvia given off was more offensive when the Ashpits were empty than when they were full. Pressure was brought to bear on the owners and the necessary alterations are being proceeded with.

Enteric or Typhoid Fever prevailed during the year in the more densely populated parts of the Sanitary District, 30 cases occurring at Trimdon and Trimdon Grange Collieries, 1 at Garmondsway, 4 at Coxhoe, 2 at Cornforth Lane, 1 at Cornforth Moor, 6 at West Cornforth, and 2 at Bishop Middleham. One case also occurred at the Sedgefield Station "Weigh House." The continued prevalence of this disease at the Trimdon Collieries can only be attributed to the over-crowded dwellings and insanitary surroundings, as the water supply, which is obtained from the colliery, is abundant in quantity and of excellent quality.

One case occurred at Garmondsway the cause of which was not ascertained. The cases at West Cornforth, Cornforth Lane, and Coxhoe, where the water supply is obtained from the Wear-dale and Shildon Water Co.'s mains were probably imported and propagated by overcrowding and want of care in the disposal of the excreta. One case occurred at Hope House Farm, Bishop Middleham, the water supply of which was obtained from a pump which was ascertained to be much contaminated, the source of pollution being direct from imperfect construction and by percolation of liquid from the cesspool connected with the

stables and byres, &c. The case at the Sedgefield Station Weigh House was imported from Leeds.

Continued Fever is a term applied more particularly to a class than to a specific disease, and is here intended to include those cases which, although presenting symptoms of a typhoid character, are not sufficiently developed to admit of their being classed as Typhoid Fever. Of the 34 cases notified, 31 occurred at Trimdon and Trimdon Grange Collieries, 1 at Old Trimdon, and 2 at West Cornforth, from which no death resulted.

Parotitis or "Mumps."—A violent outbreak of which occurred in Sedgefield. On the 2nd April it was ascertained that out of a total 213 pupils, 89 were unable to attend school from this cause, it was therefore deemed desirable to close the schools until the disease had abated.

The total number of cases was not ascertained but it is believed that few escaped.

Whooping Cough was imported into Sedgefield by a troop of strolling players in the latter part of June. The disease spread rapidly and Measles unfortunately co-existed, which, together with the pulmonary complications which supervened, rendered the disease exceedingly fatal to children of tender years, particularly when debilitated by previous constitutional cachexia. It was found to be necessary to close the schools at Sedgefield, Fishburn, Mordon, and Bradbury, in consequence of the outbreak.

The disease also prevailed generally throughout the district.

Measles was imported from Stillington into Sedgefield. My efforts to isolate the first case having failed, owing to indiscreet visiting on the part of friends and neighbours, the disease rapidly extended which rendered it necessary to close the

schools. An outbreak of this disease occurred at West Cornforth, in the beginning of November, which soon attained alarming proportions. It was found that out of a total of 712 pupils there were 262 absentees, the average number of absentees being 84. I therefore granted an order to close the schools for three weeks, which order it was found necessary to extend for a further period.

Phthisis Pulmonalis is somewhat below the average, 25 deaths having occurred during the year from this cause, and the death rate is 1.3 per thousand.

Diseases of the Organs of Respiration are also below the average, 40 deaths having resulted from this class of diseases, the death rate being 2.1 per thousand.

The General Sanitation of the District has been attended to so far as the limited powers exercised by us as a Rural Authority, enables us to proceed. The Sewerage Works of the Authority have been regularly attended to, as regards flushing of sewers and the cleansing of all subsiding and filtering tanks and outlets, &c., whilst house drainage has been much improved.

Sewer extensions amounting to 850 yards have been laid down during the year, viz., in the Trimdon Township, 500 yards of 6, 9, and 12 inch; Cornforth, 250 yards of 6, 9, and 18 inch; and at Bishopton, 70 yards of 9 inch pipes. Drainage works have been contracted for at Fishburn and are now in course of execution.

The Water Supply of the District has received a due share of attention, and all pumps belonging to the Sanitary Authority maintained in an efficient condition and the supply satisfactory, as regards quality and quantity. A scheme of water supply has been arranged for Old Trimdon which will shortly be carried into effect.

Common Lodging Houses have been periodically inspected and found to be satisfactorily maintained. The average number of lodgers is 196, or 10,102 per annum.

The number of persons sheltered in the Casual Wards of the Workhouse, during the year, amount to 5,339, against 4,429 in 1893, which shows and enormous increase in the number of the homeless and destitute; the average of the four previous years being 2,792.

Cow Sheds and Dairies have been regularly inspected and found to be kept in a satisfactory manner. There are now 105 persons upon the register.

Building Operations during the year include 15 new houses erected in the Trimdon Township, 6 in Cornforth, 2 in Chilton, and 7 in Sedgefield. The 39 houses in the waggon way rows, at Trimdon Colliery, which have recently undergone reconstruction, are now completed, whilst the upper and lower middle rows which consisted of 72 back to back houses are now converted into 36 double houses, communication having been made between each pair. They are all more or less dilapidated and ill-lighted and need reconstruction.

Nuisances arising from the Accumulation of House Refuse rendered it necessary to serve 175 statutory notices, whilst 5,000 nuisances have been abated; six lots of bedding and three houses were disinfected, Scavenging continues to be a source of trouble, both as regards streets and the cleansing of Ashpits and Privies, owing to the limited powers we possess as a Rural Authority, and I would again urge the Council to acquire Urban powers to enable us to deal with these matters more efficiently in the more densely populated villages within the District.

I may mention that the Mainsforth Rows, Chilton Lane, still continue in the same deplorable condition, as on the issue of my last Annual Report.

The Infectious Diseases Hospital question still remains in abeyance, and which will probably receive the early attention of the District Council, when it is hoped that the difficulties in which it is involved will be surmounted.

I may mention that great confusion arises from the difficulty of identifying the residences of persons notified under the Infectious Diseases Notification Act, owing to the want of some definite system of naming streets and the numbering of houses, which at present is done in an arbitrary and misleading fashion. It is to be trusted that this will be dealt with by the Parish Councils throughout the District.

I must again express my thanks to the Medical men practising in the District, for their co-operation and assistance, and to Mr. Snowdon, your Inspector of Nuisances, for his unremitting attention and valuable services whenever required.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

G. R. SHERATON,

Medical Officer of Health.

Sedgefield, January 19th, 1895.



