VARIOUS

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HYGEIA: A MODEL CITY OF HEALTH

A remarkable attempt has been made to bring into one focus numerous suggestions put forth, within the last few years by social improvers and sanitary reformers. These suggestions, as our readers are aware, take a very wide range. Matters relating to water-supply, drainage, disposal of refuse, lighting, ventilation, dry foundations and dry walls to houses, stoves and fireplaces, cookery and kitchen arrangements, washing and drying appliances, cleanliness of person and of garments, cleanliness of rooms and of bedding, special arrangements for unwholesome but necessary trades and employments, provision for the sick that may not be perilous to other persons, moderation in diet and regimen, avoidance of vicious indulgences – all these

and many other subjects have engaged the attention of thoughtful persons in a marked degree; and it can be indisputably shewn that the annual death-rate is lowered in districts where improvements in such matters have been extensively adopted. Mr Edwin Chadwick, perhaps the chief worker in this laudable direction, is so confident in the eventual success of such endeavours, that he announces the possibility of building a city that shall have any assignable death-rate or annual mortality, from a maximum of fifty or more in a thousand to a minimum of five or less in a thousand. Dr B. W. Richardson, a physician and physiologist of eminence, has taken hold of Mr Chadwick's idea, and sketched the plan of a city that shall shew the lowest rate of mortality. No such city – we need hardly say – exists, and he has neither the time nor the means to build one; but his purpose is to shew that it *can* be done, whenever public opinion is ripe for it.

Dr Richardson, in an Address to the Social Science Association, afterwards published in a separate form, speaks of his *Hygeia* or City of Health in the present tense, as if it already existed. This is done for vividness of description and brevity of language, and will be understood by the reader in the proper sense.

Hygeia, then, is a city for a hundred thousand inhabitants. (The main principles could be worked out in a much smaller community, but in a less complete form.) It has twenty thousand houses on an area of four thousand acres of ground: apparently rather densely populated, but not too much so when good sanitary

arrangements are adopted. There are no very lofty houses. In busy thoroughfares, where shops are required, there are three stories or floors over the shops; and some of the best streets in private or 'west-end' neighbourhoods have four stories in all; but in others the general number is three. Underground living-rooms and kitchens there are none; instead of these, every house is built upon arches of brickwork, which form channels of ingress for fresh air, and of egress for all that is required to be got rid of. Running along beneath each main street is a railway for the transport of heavy commodities. All the streets are wide enough to admit plenty of cheerful sunlight and fresh air, and rows of trees are planted between the foot-ways and carriage-ways; the carriage-ways are paved with wood set in asphalt, and the foot-ways with stone pavements ten feet wide. Tramways are not permitted, as they cut up the roadway; omnibuses above ground and railways below will suffice instead.

All the interspaces between the backs of the houses are laid out as gardens. Churches, hospitals, theatres, banks, lecture-rooms, and other public or large buildings, follow the same alignment as the houses in the streets, but all detached; and every one flanked by a garden-space, however narrow.

There is no occasion for those unsightly concomitants of London sanitation, scavengers' carts. The accumulation of mud and dirt in the streets is washed away every day through side-openings into subways, and is with the sewage conveyed to a destination apart from the city; there are neither gratings nor

open drains; and there are no 'gutter children,' because there are no gutters for children to paddle and dabble in, and because we may hope that, eventually, 'young Arabs' will disappear from our towns.

There being no rooms or offices whatever below the level of the street, how, it may be asked, are the domestic arrangements carried on? The kitchens and offices are at the top of the house instead of the bottom. Plenty of light and ventilation are thus obtained; while hot odours, being lighter than common air, pass away without contaminating the living and sleeping apartments. All the larger houses are provided with lifts, up which provisions and stores can be conveyed. As there is a constant service of water, available to the highest story of every house, the kitchen boiler may be kept constantly filled; hot water from the boiler can be distributed by conducting pipes to the lower rooms, as well as cold water from the tank or cistern – an inestimable advantage, especially in bed-rooms. Every floor or story has a sink for waste water, whereby the carrying of the uncomfortable slop-pail up and down stairs is rendered unnecessary. The scullery, adjoining the kitchen, has an opening to the dust-shaft; and so have the several floors or stories, every opening being provided with a sliding-door or shutter. The dust-bin, into which the shaft descends, is under the basement of the house. The roof of the house is nearly flat, paved with asphalt or tiles; it serves either as a pleasant little garden or as a drying-ground for clothes – the wherewithal for a laundry being provided in connection with the

scullery.

The houses are built of a kind of brick which has the following sanitary advantages – glazed, so as to be impermeable to water and moisture; perforated, so as to admit of circulation of fresh air through the very substance of the walls; glazed in different colours for the interior of the rooms, thereby dispensing with the necessity for paint, paper-hanging, or whitewash, and affording scope for tasteful design in the selection and arrangement of the tints; smooth and hard, so as to be easily cleaned by washing; and some of them flattened into tiles for more convenient use as ceilings. Sea-sand is excluded from the mortar employed, on account of its tendency to imbibe and exude moisture. The chimneys, arranged on a plan prepared by Mr Spencer Wells, are all connected with central shafts; the smoke, drawn into these shafts, is passed through a gas-furnace to destroy the free carbon, and finally discharged colourless into the open air. 'At the expense of a small smoke-rate, the city is free from raised chimneys and the intolerable nuisance of smoke.' On the landing of the middle or second stories is a bath-room, supplied with hot and cold water from the kitchen above. The houses being built on arched subways, great facilities exist for the admission of gas and water into the several domiciles, and for the exit of sewage and refuse. All pipes are laid along the subways, and up thence into the houses; and workmen have easy access to these subways for the adjustment and repair of the several pipes. Abundance of water is at hand for flushing the sewers, which are laid along

the floor of the subways. All the domestic offices of every kind being within the four walls of the house itself, there are none of these unsightly outhouses which so much disfigure most of our towns, and so greatly lessen the available garden-space.

In the living-rooms an oak margin of floor about two feet wide extends round the room; this is kept bright and clean by the old-fashioned beeswax and turpentine, the centre only of the floor being carpeted or otherwise covered. In the bed-rooms twelve hundred cubic feet of space is allowed for each sleeper; and all unnecessary articles of furniture, bedding, and dress are excluded – the use of a bedroom as a lumber-room being a fertile source of weakened health to the inmates. The lift already spoken of, for conveying provisions and stores to the upper story of the house, is a simple affair: a shaft runs up in the party-wall between two houses, and in this a basket-lift is raised by a rope; while side-openings connect this lift with the middle story or stories. The living-rooms have the open cheerful fireplace which English folks so much prefer to the closed stoves of many continental countries; but at the back of the fire-grate is an air-box communicating by a passage with the open air, and by another opening with the room; the heated iron box draws in fresh air from without, and diffuses it in the upper part of the room – on a plan similar to that devised by Captain Galton.

Walking through the streets, what kind of aspect does Hygeia present? There is an absence of places for the sale of spirituous liquors. Whether by permissive bills or by temperance pledges,

this kind of abstinence is so far enforced; and a drunkard would be forced out of the city by the frown of public opinion. Another moral restraint which, however, is one extremely difficult to impose – we will mention in Dr Richardson's own language, as it evidently expresses his opinion as a physician: 'As smoking and drinking go largely together – as the two practices were, indeed, original exchanges of social degradations between the civilised man and the savage (the savage getting very much the worst of the bargain) – so do the practices largely disappear together. Pipe and glass, cigar and sherry-cobbler, like the Siamese twins who could only live connected, have both died out in our model city. Tobacco, by far the most innocent partner of the firm, lived, as it perhaps deserved to do, a little the longest; but it passed away, and the tobacconist's counter, like the dram counter, has disappeared.'

The streets have plenty of life and movement in them, but a minimum of rattling jarring noises, owing to the heavy traffic being conducted through the underground railways. Most of the principal factories are at a short distance from the city; as are also large clusters of workrooms let out singly. A workman can have a workroom on payment of a moderate weekly rent; in it he can work as many hours as he pleases, but must not make it his home. Each block is under the charge of a superintendent, and under the supervision of a sanitary inspector. The artisan goes away from his home to work, like the lawyer, the merchant, or the banker. There might appear to be some waste of time in this

arrangement; but it is more than compensated, in the opinion of the citizens of Hygeia, by comparative immunity from disease: 'It has,' says Dr Richardson, 'been found in our towns generally, that men and women who are engaged in industrial callings, such as tailoring, shoe-making, dressmaking, lace-making, and the like, work at their own homes among their children. That this is a common cause of disease is well understood. I have myself seen the half-made riding-habit that was ultimately to clothe some wealthy damsel rejoicing in her morning ride, act as the coverlet of a poor tailor's child stricken with malignant scarlet fever. These things must be, in the ordinary course of events under our present bad system. In the model system we have in our mind's eye, these dangers are met by the simple provision of workmen's offices or workrooms.'

Public laundries are a feature in Hygeia. If the washing of a small family is done at home, the housewife knows with what she has to deal; but when 'the washing is put out,' the linen of the family may, for aught she knows, have been mixed before, during, or after the process of washing with the linen from the bed or the body of some sufferer from a contagious malady. Some of the most fatal outbreaks of disease are known to have been communicated in this manner. To avoid these evils, public laundries are established in the outskirts of Hygeia, each with an extensive drying-ground, and all under sanitary inspection.

There is no one gigantic hospital, nor any hospital for special diseases – with perhaps one or two exceptions. Numerous small

hospitals are distributed equidistant throughout the city; each constructed according to the most approved and efficient plan, and surrounded by its own open grounds. One of these would suffice for about five thousand inhabitants. The current system of large hospitals is abandoned, as being equivalent to 'warehousing diseases on the largest possible scale;' while special hospitals are deemed unnecessary – 'as if the different organs could walk out of the body and present themselves for separate treatment.' Each hospital has an ambulance ready to be sent out to bring any injured persons to the institution; the ambulance drives straight into the hospital, where a bed of the same height on silent wheels receives the patient, and conveys him or her to a ward. The staff is so appointed that every medical man in the city has in turn the advantage of hospital practice; whereby the best medical and surgical skill is fairly equalised through the whole community.

Homes for little children are abundant. In these the destitute young are carefully treated by intelligent nurses; so that mothers, following their daily callings, are enabled to leave their children under efficient care.

In a city so organised, it is believed that insanity would be very small in amount, and that a few small special establishments would suffice for its treatment. For the same reason huge buildings as workhouses for the destitute would be neither desirable nor necessary; small well-managed establishments, with useful work for all who are not really incapacitated, will be better both for the unfortunates themselves and for the

ratepayers of the city. Ablution-baths, swimming-baths, playgrounds, gymnasia, public libraries, public schools, fine-art schools, and lecture-halls, are good and plentiful in Hygeia.

At a distance from the city are the water and gas works, and the sewage-pumping works. The water, drained from a river unpolluted by sewage, is filtered, and conveyed to the houses through iron (not lead) pipes. The sewage, brought from the city partly by its own flow and partly by pumping apparatus, is conveyed away to well-drained sewage-farms at a distance, where it is utilised as a fertiliser. Scavengers traverse the streets in early morning, and remove all refuse from roads, pavements, yards, and stables in covered vans to the sewage-farm. The public slaughter-houses, at some distance from the city, are under the control of inspectors, who examine all animals before being killed for food; and painless slaughtering, which is now known to be practicable, is adopted. The city cemetery is artificially made of fine carboniferous earth, on which vegetation springs up quickly. The dead, either in shrouds or in baskets or cradles of wicker-work, are placed in the earth, and vegetation soon covers them; and anything in the nature of a monumental slab or inscribed stone is placed in a spacious covered hall built for the purpose. The burial system is thus a compromise between the old graveyard usages to which England has been accustomed for a thousand years or more, and the very un-English process of cremation which has a few advocates among us.

Such is Hygeia, the imaginary City of Health. Dr Richardson

states his reasons for thinking that mortality would lessen to eight per thousand per annum in the first generation, in a community thus domiciled and organised; and afterwards lessen to five per thousand. He says, to the audience he addressed: 'Do not, I pray you, wake up as from a mere dream. The details of the city exist; they have been worked out by the pioneers of sanitary science; I am but as a draughtsman who has drawn out a plan, which you in your wisdom can modify, improve, perfect.' Whether by speculative landowners, architects, and builders, or by social reformers who have no interested or professional motives, a scheme has been brought forward for a City of Health to be called *Hygeopolis*, somewhere on the Sussex coast; but it is only in the rough, without any detail of 'ways and means.' We fear that the whole project is little better than a dream. It is certain that a city such as Dr Richardson portrays in imagination could not be established without a revolution in our social habits; that a species of communism would supplant a good deal of individual enterprise; and that the local rates, however imposed and however collected, would be enormously heavy. Nevertheless, many of the suggestions are admirable, and could be singly worked out in most of our existing towns.

THE LAST OF THE HADDONS

CHAPTER III. – FLITTING

On opening the envelope sent to me by Mr Wentworth, I found a five-pound note, and a few words to the effect that Mr Farrar desired to do what was usual in the way of paying all expenses incidental to the journey and so forth, which might be incurred by the lady who accepted the engagement.

How can words express my appreciation of the good fortune which had come to me? I sat thinking over it in deep thankfulness; realising its blessedness in the sudden renewal of faith, and hope, and trust which it had brought to my fainting spirit. Then I presently recollected what had to be done, and went down-stairs and tapped at the door of the back-parlour, which was my land-lady's sitting-room.

I occupied one room at the top of the house at the modest rental of five shillings a week, slipping in and out on sufferance, as it were; and I had hitherto seen very little of Mrs Sowler, sending down my week's rent and receiving the receipt by the small maid Becky. Becky had not yet arrived at the dignity of waiting upon the first or second floor lodgers; being only a drudge to the other servants, of whom I had seen as little as of their mistress. Indeed I had no right to expect much in the way

of attendance for the sum I paid. Such small services as I had received from Becky had been for the most part rendered from goodwill, and so to speak surreptitiously, as was the little I had been able to do for her. There was a sort of freemasonry between us. We had been some little comfort to each other in a quiet way, and without injury to any one else; it being understood that complaining or ill speaking was undignified, and beneath people who knew how to endure. We simply helped each other to make the best of the position we found ourselves in.

Mrs Sowler, who had been a ladies' maid, had married the butler in the family she lived with, and they had invested their joint savings in furnishing a lodging-house. She was a very great personage in the eyes of Becky, who had great reverence for elegance of attire, and considered it quite natural to be 'a bit set up, when you were dressed better than your neighbours.'

From the little I had seen of Mrs Sowler I judged her to be sufficiently 'set up;' but that in no way offended me.

Obeying a request to enter, I opened the door and walked in. Mrs Sowler had half-risen from her seat; but at sight of me she sank languidly back again.

'Oh, it's you, Miss – Miss' —

'Haddon,' I smilingly suggested, taking a seat unbidden. 'I have come to pay my next week's rent, and to say that I am going away, and shall not require my room after to-morrow morning, Mrs Sowler.'

'Going away!' she repeated, in a somewhat raised voice. 'I am

sure you've had nothing to complain of here. Very few houses such as this let rooms at five shillings a week, with a member of parliament on the first floor, and a – Why, it's worth five shillings to any one who wants to be thought respectable, to have letters addressed here! Not that it makes any difference. A paltry five shillings a week is not of much consequence to me, of course; and if you are not satisfied, you are quite welcome to go as soon as' —

'But I am, and always have been satisfied, Mrs Sowler. I can assure you I have quite appreciated the advantage of having a respectable shelter at so small a cost. It is not that' —

'Then what is it? I think I have a right to ask that much?' said Mrs Sowler, looking as though there was no exaggeration in certain rumours which had reached me to the effect that the partings with her lodgers were not always got through in the most amicable way. 'If Becky has been saucy' —

'No, indeed: she has' – I was going to say, 'been extremely good to me;' but reflected in time that Becky's goodness to me might not impress her mistress so favourably as it did me, so quietly added – 'done quite as much for me as I had any right to expect, Mrs Sowler. I am leaving simply because I have succeeded in obtaining a situation.'

'A situation! O indeed!' ejaculated Mrs Sowler, sinking languidly back into her seat again; graciously adding: 'Well, you have conducted yourself in a quiet respectable way since you have been here, and I hope you will do well.'

'Thank you, Mrs Sowler;' putting down the money for the week's rent as I spoke.

'*Good*-evening; I will send a receipt up by one of the servants. And if Becky can be of any assistance in cording your boxes or what not, I have no objection.'

'I am much obliged. Good-evening, Mrs Sowler.'

Having thus taken leave of my landlady, I informed Becky – who had returned with her purchases, still in a state of wonderment at my extravagance – of my intended departure.

'I thought there was something the matter!' she ejaculated, sitting down on the edge of my small bedstead and gazing forlornly at me, as the tears began to make for themselves a channel down the poor grimed cheeks.

'I have found a home, Becky,' I said gently.

'I know I ought to be glad, for you could never have bore going on much longer like this; but I can't be just yet. O Miss Haddon, dear, it isn't your mending my stockings and things; please don't think it's because of that.'

'I do not think it, Becky. I am sure you care for me as much as I do for you, and we will both try to prove our friendship by sparing each other as much as possible at parting.'

'You will soon find other people – lots.'

'I shall find no one who will make me forget an old friend.'

'O miss, how can I be your friend?'

'You have been my only one here, Becky. But we will now put away sentiment, and try to make the most of the afternoon. You

are to be my company.'

'Me!'

'Yes. Go down to Mrs Sowler; give my compliments to her, and say I shall be much obliged if she will kindly allow you to spend the rest of the day with me.'

'No good,' returned Becky, with a very decided shake of the head.

'Tell Mrs Sowler that I have a dress and a few other things to spare which we might easily alter to fit you,' I replied, feeling that that was the best way of appealing to Mrs Sowler's feelings. Becky had been taken from the miserable home of a drunken mother out of charity, as she was very frequently reminded, and was not as yet considered to have any claim to wages; depending upon such odds and ends in the way of clothes as fortune might bring her.

She was quick enough to see that I had hit upon the best means of inducing her mistress to consent; and at once went down to make the request. It was graciously granted; and Becky presently returned with the front of her hair well greased, and her face red and shining from hasty friction with soap and water and a rough towel, which was as much preparation for being company as she had it in her power to make.

I had some little difficulty at first to induce her to share my feast. She resolutely turned her eyes away from the cake. 'I'm not hungry, thank you, miss.'

But I soon succeeded in proving to her that I should enjoy it

a great deal more with her assistance, and that much would have to be wasted without. 'Think of having to throw plumcake away, you know, Becky' – plumcake being an acknowledged weakness of Becky's. Her scruples once overcome, Becky and I feasted in good earnest, enjoying our strong tea and all the rest of it in the most convivial manner. She at first tried hard not to laugh at my little jests, with, I fancy, the notion that laughter was not proper for the occasion. But I soon had her stuffing her handkerchief into her mouth, and burying her head in the bed, to prevent the sound reaching the other lodgers, in the old fashion. Such very small jokes did for Becky, and I was not going to have my first tea-party made flat and dismal. Afterwards we passed a pleasant evening patching and contriving.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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