

and its primitive customs of 1838 to 1842, is almost free from those and similar diseases.*

The writer of this article a few years back considered the water-carriage system to be one of the triumphs of modern science. It has taken many facts and thoughts to show him its true character. The sewers of a great city are arteries of corruption infecting the busy family of men dwelling over them—making shorter their already short span of life and health, and bringing suffering and misery to the door of every inhabitant. The occupant of a city mansion would do well to plug up the outlets of his marble baths and wash basins, and seal up his water-closets if his object is health. Better the primitive inconveniences of our ancestors than the gilded death-traps of our modern cities.

As Mr. Simon, the medical officer to the Privy Council, in his 9th Report, truly says: "It is to be hoped that as the education of this country advances, this sort of thing will come to an end—that so much preventable death will not always be accepted as a fate—and that for a population to be thus poisoned by its own excrement will some day be deemed ignominious and intolerable." †

* Dr. Henry Littlejohn, Medical Officer of Health for the City of Edinburgh, makes the following statement:—

"The new town is inhabited by the better classes, and is pre-eminently a water-closet town. The old town consists for the most part of strongly built tenements, crowded with very poor people, and to this day they make use of pails for the reception of the excreta of those confined to the house—these pails are brought to the street daily, and emptied into carts provided by the authorities. From this state of things, the low morality of the population, the bad ventilation, the crowding together and the retention of the filth in the living rooms for the greater part of the day, it might naturally have been imagined that *typhoid* fever and *diphtheria* were endemic in the old town. This is not the case, however, for despite the surrounding circumstances *these diseases may practically be said to be unknown*.

"In the new and water-closetted town, however, the case is different—*typhoid* and *diphtheria* are never entirely absent, and are frequently endemic, and it has been noticed that the ravages of these diseases have been the greatest in the best houses."

† Dr. Fergus, in the opening address session, 1873-74, of the sanitary and social economy section of the Glasgow Philosophical Society, says:—

"But how are we to account for the slight increase in scarlet fever, the striking increase in the diarrhoeal groups, and the addition to the list of a most deadly zymotic previously almost unknown. What changes have been made in the habits of the people which could in any way lead to so sad a result after all the legislation and patriotic efforts to ameliorate the condition of the people and to lessen the enormous amount of preventable death. Certainly the only great change has been the mode by which we get rid of our excreta and refuse.

"If any one had hinted to me ten or a dozen years ago that our present system of water-carriage would prove a source of disease, I would have scouted the idea; and even when I began the study of this great question I had perfect faith in the system, and have only been driven from it step by step as new light gradually dawned on me, and the question was sifted to the bottom."