

## DESCRIPTIVE ESSAYS.

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### THE AIR WE LIVE IN.

IN the winter of 1837, fever was unusually severe in Spitalfields, and alarm being thereby excited of a return of the cholera, the Poor-Law Commissioners deemed it their duty to send thither Dr. Arnott, Dr. S. Smith, and Dr. Kay, to inquire as to the *removable causes of disease*; and these experienced physicians, in their Report, dated May 12, 1838, having declared the chief causes to be bad drainage and bad ventilation, the Commissioners, without loss of time, represented to Lord John Russell "the urgent necessity of applying to the Legislature for immediate measures for the removal of those constantly acting causes of destitution and death. *"All delays,"* they said, *"must be attended with extensive misery; in a large proportion of cases the labouring classes, though aware of the surrounding causes of evil, have few or no means of avoiding them, and little or no choice of their dwellings."* But although much was said and done for the Hill Coolies and the Blacks, no notice whatever was