

The public sewers were vested in the local board, and they were to maintain, cleanse, and regulate the use of sewers. All houses re-built were required to be provided with drains approved by the surveyor, and before any new house was commenced the levels of the cellars or lowest floors, and the position and character of the drains and cesspools, was to be approved by the surveyor. The occupation of cellars as dwellings was prohibited. Water-closets or privies and ash-pits were to be provided to all houses and workshops. The local Board was also required to manage, repair, and clean the streets, and to provide for removal of refuse. They were to abate nuisances, regulate slaughter-houses, register and make by-laws to regulate common lodging-houses. The local authorities were empowered to provide public recreation grounds—to provide a water-supply, except where a water company would supply on reasonable terms. They were also to provide mortuaries; to obtain power to close burial-grounds which they considered to be unhealthy, and to open new ones. The local boards were empowered to make by-laws and impose penalties, subject to confirmation by the Secretary of State, and to levy rates, to mortgage the rates, and to borrow from the Public Works Loan Commission. The act also provides for sewers, wells, pumps, etc., to be made where desired by the inhabitants in parishes containing less than 2000 persons. The metropolis was exempted from the operation of this act.

The General Board of Health came into existence in 1848, just before the outbreak of cholera in the county, and it took measures at once to check the disease, and proclaimed the principles upon which the preventive and other measures for meeting the epidemic

were to be conducted. Among these measures probably the one which had the greatest effect in promoting subsequently a general feeling of the necessity for sanitary improvements, and which awoke in the nation the needs of moral improvement, was that requiring house-to-house visitation, and the cleansing of the houses and streets, and obtaining an adequate water-supply. This brought into notice the neglected condition of the various localities which the local authorities complacently ignored.

These house to house visitations prominently exposed the moral and material degradation, and the tendency to crime, engendered by the physical evils concentrated in these wretched dwellings.

It will not be out of place here to remark that Lord Shaftsbury was one of the first members of the General Board of Health and that to his untiring efforts, both in Parliament and out of it, much of the improved social condition of the people during the Queen's reign is undoubtedly due.

Further acts for regulating the public health were passed in 1858, 1861, and subsequent years; and all their provisions were embodied in a general Act in 1875, (i.e., during the premiership of D'Israeli, who had made the public health question a part of his "platform" during the election campaign of 1874). From the operation of this Act the metropolis was exempted.....

GENERAL RESULTS OF THE SANITARY LEGISLATION.

The main principle which guided public administration, both before and during the earlier years of the Queen's reign, may be said to have been that of non-interference, and of allowing free competition to prevail; although no doubt, some efforts had been previously