



FIFTH ENGLISH PROBLEM

Dr. Richardson says: In the present day the grand problem before the nation is the reconstruction of the habitations of the people in cities, towns, and villages. There is at present a fair knowledge that construction as it progresses is imperfect, and that the results of new construction are, as a rule, bad. No man is quite satisfied with his domicile. This house is too dark that is sufficiently lighted in so far as windows go, but is badly arranged in regard to its windows. This is too close, that is too draughty, this is damp, that is dry but intensely cold. This has an abundant water supply but no bathroom, that has a bathroom but a deficient supply of water, this has good drainage but no effective traps, that has bad drainage, trap it as you will, this has no soft-water cistern, that has one, but the water in it soon decomposes, is always of greenish color and is really of little use, this has no hot-water supply, that has, but the supply is constantly out of order. These are the complaints which the physician daily hears of, and for which up to the present time he has been able, in the general confusion which prevails, to provide few remedies. It is as though all people were becoming alive to the necessities and the requirements of a healthy habitation, but that the knowledge was creeping in by instalments and at irregular intervals, so that no perfect system of a uniform kind can be obtained.

For my part I have never yet seen a single model private habitation, nor an approach to a series of such habitations. Real advancements lie entirely in the future. First we shall have model houses and a small model town, then, as the general intelligence advances, there will be radical imitative reforms, which will progress with unusual rapidity. With the full impulse that will come from a more perfect appreciation of sanitary requirements most of our English villages will have to be reconstructed altogether, pulled down, stick and stone, except the church and such antiquities as deserve to be specially retained, replanned into streets and gardens, restrained and rebuilt in accordance with a perfect system of construction. By these means much ground, now useless, will be saved, much money foolishly expended in maintaining badly planned highways will be saved, many plans for giving happiness and recreation to the people will be secured, and health will be improved up to its natural standard. These advantages will show such a singular economy resulting from the wholesale system of improvement, that the economical argument alone, on behalf of that system, will carry the day. Even that persistent village nuisance and source of fever, the farmyard, will undergo the necessary radical changes, to the pecuniary advantage of the farmer, as well as to the advantage of the health of his neighbors.

BRIGHT WALLS FOR DARK DAYS.

It is a kindly and beautiful thoughtfulness which has led a London physician (Dr. Lawrence Hamilton, of Gloucester Terrace, Hyde Park,) to invite co-operation in the attempt to provide some bright and pleasant decoration of the walls of the hospitals of the metropolis. Dr. Hamilton thinks, as we have often thought, that clean and wholesome-looking as the wards of all our hospitals are, the eyes of patients must often be weary upon the vast area of whitewashed wall by which their range of vision is generally limited. Light, cleanliness, and fresh air are, no doubt, primary conditions of recovery from sickness, but every watcher by the bedside knows how much a thousand trifles may each contribute to this end. The sound of a gentle voice, the touch of a tender hand, the fragrance of a newly-gathered flower, and the sight of objects of interest and beauty—all have a helpful if not a directly healing influence. So through each avenue of sense the ministry of mercy may come, and the languor of disease be often chased away. Dr. Hamilton wishes to ornament the bare walls of the hospital with such objects as are usually found in the homes of people of refinement and taste. He wishes to introduce pictures, statues, drapery, bric-a-brac, china, old armor, antique furniture &c into the hospital ward, to gladden the patients who spend so many weary days and nights there. Dr. Hamilton has offered a hundred guineas towards the realization of his proposal, and he intends to fit up two rooms, one decorated, the other undecorated, in some public building in London, so that the public may have an illustration of the nature and value of his scheme. Perhaps the scheme goes rather too far, we are disposed to think it does. Old armor certainly does not seem to us a very cheering object for contemplation, from a sick bed, of all places.

The rude outline of the human form which armor presents might be very likely to affect unfavorably the sick man's wandering fancy. In the dim twilight, or when the faint lamp-light struggled with the midnight darkness, what ghastly forms might startle the half-sleeping patient, or intrude upon the sufferer's dreams, if "old armor" were there to fling its shadow and to arrest the perplexed gaze? And a good deal of bric-a-brac, too, might be very much in the way, and would, moreover, look to the untrained eye like so much heterogeneous rubbish. But details might easily be corrected in the proposal to which we refer, and a good working committee, such as Dr. Hamilton asks for, would be likely very soon to hit upon right methods, and might thus carry out a very useful work.

Our hospital walls are not all absolutely bare, however. Sometimes we have seen them hung with Scripture passages, hymns, and well executed prints, and again and again have patients spoken to us thankfully of the pleasure and consolation which some apposite verse of Scripture on the wall before them has afforded in hours of weakness and of pain. It is in this direction especially that we should like to know that Dr. Hamilton's scheme was developed. The incomparable language of the Bible has often a very special influence over the mind, imagination, and heart of the sick one. It is like a whispering voice of love and tenderness to the weak man, or woman, or little child, the exquisite tones of which are appreciated when, as in illness, the soul is for a little while shut up in silence and in loneliness. Illuminated texts may be made very pleasant to look upon, and, let it be noted, for sick-rooms they should always be very legible. Hymns, too, that have soul and music in them, when hung before the sufferer's bed, are like notes from the harps of God's angels. And pictures—a beautiful face or form, a glimpse of quiet landscape, a scene from the inexhaustible abundance of natural beauty, such as the true artist seeks and finds—these become to the sick like companions and friends. Art has its ministry of consolation,—it may be made a channel of direct instruction and an immediate instrument of blessing; therefore its help may well be sought for the comfort and elevation of the poor, both in their own homes and in the refuges provided by public charity for them when they are ill.—*Sunday Magazine.*

**SLOW POISONING.**—The *International Review* says: A brochure from the pen of Dr. Paul Moreau, of Tours, has recently been published in Paris, upon the subject of the disorders consequent upon the slow intoxication caused by the inhalation of the oxide of carbon. An extract quoted in *Les Mondes* gives a brief summary of the facts observed by the author, shows very clearly that the common opinion as to the deleterious action of the gas, and the dangerous effects produced by it, are not exaggerated. The author asserts that the slow action of the gas upon the system produces a series of intellectual disorders which pursue a course peculiar to themselves and characteristic. These affections, manifested almost exclusively by females, are marked in the great majority of cases by entire absence of hereditary predisposition, and are characterized by vertigo, a sense of being dazed or dazzled (*éblouissement*), oppression, syncope, hallucinations of sight and hearing, delirious fancies, by indecision which overwhelms all thought like a wave, and by painful uncertainty or intellectual confusion, ending in delirium. If not too long standing, and the cause of them is removed or avoided, the dangerous symptoms yield to proper remedies, and health is restored. On the contrary, continuance in the unfavorable condition is followed by rapid and incurable dementia. Cooks are spoken of as especially exposed to these disorders, which is not to be wondered at, considering the frequent use of charcoal-furnaces unprovided with flues in French kitchens, and the neglect of ventilation. Though consequences so grave as those described are rarely to be observed in this country, there is no doubt that much evil results from the escape of the noxious gas from the hot-air furnaces employed for heating houses, either from want of proper care about preventing leakage, or from allowing the cast-iron body of the furnace to become red-hot, in which condition it permits the oxide of carbon to pass through it and thus to be mingled with the air supplied to the rooms.

**SANITARY ARCHITECTURE.**—Dr. Richardson has come a little nearer to the level of ordinary life since he startled the world by his picture of a city of health. The kind of house which he recommended to the members of the London Institution the other night is not beyond the reach of any one who is about to build a dwelling for himself, and has strength of mind enough not to be turned from his purpose by the objections which builders are sure to raise in the first instance. Dr. Richardson mentions four essential points in which a house constructed on his plan would differ from ordinary houses. In the first place, there would be no rooms underground. The basement would be simply an arched subway with a free current of air passing through it, thus prevent-

ing any damp from ascending into the upper stories, and affording an opportunity of warming the air admitted into the house. Secondly, the kitchen, instead of being in the basement, would be at the top of the house, by which means all smell of cooking would be kept out of the living rooms, and the conveyance of hot water to the bedrooms would be made much easier. Next, the staircase, instead of being in the centre of the house, would be in a distinct shaft at the back. There would be a door on each floor communicating with the staircase and lavatories, and similar apartments would be placed in the shaft so that they would be out of the house and yet accessible from each floor. Lastly the roof would be level, paved with asphalt, and covered with glass. In this way a garden would be obtained on the top of every house, sheltered from the weather and protected from frost by the warmth of the kitchen beneath. There is no doubt that Dr. Richardson's picture is an exceedingly attractive one, and there seems to be no reason, beyond the difficulty of getting new ideas accepted within any reasonable time, why it should not at once be subjected to the test of experiment.—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

**HOW TO ACT WHEN A DRESS IS IN FLAMES.**—It may not be inappropriate to give a few hints as to the best method of extinguishing the flames, when a woman's or child's dress has unfortunately caught fire. If the sufferer has presence of mind enough to throw herself on the ground and roll over and over again until the by-standers can envelop her in some thick and non-inflammable covering, her chances of escape from serious injury will be much increased; but, unfortunately, the terror of the moment ordinarily overcomes every other feeling, and the sufferer rushes into the open air—the very worst thing she could do. The first thing for a by-stander to do is to provide himself with some non-inflammable article with which to envelop the patient, and a coat or cloak—or, better, a table cloth or druggot—will answer the purpose. Throwing this around the sufferer, he should, if possible, lay her on the ground and then rapidly cover over and heat out all the fire, keeping on the covering until every spark is extinguished. To attempt to extinguish fire by water is useless, unless the whole body of flame can be put out at one blow; and for one lightly-clad female to attempt to succor another when other persons are at hand is simply to imperil two lives instead of one. In the case of a house on fire, it is to be remembered that death is more frequently the result of suffocation from smoke than from contact with flame, and every effort should be made to reach the open air by crawling along the floor (where there is usually breathing space) so as to reach a window, or if necessary, by enveloping the head in a thick shawl to exclude the smoke while making a rush along a passage or down a staircase.—*From "Domestic Surgery," in "Casell's Household Guide" for March.*

**FLYING MACHINES.**—Slowly investigators are developing facts as to the principles of flight. M. Tatin of Paris has so far succeeded in his silk-winged models as very nearly to approximate to the wing-motion of a pigeon. He uses compressed air as a motive power. It is decided that long narrow wings are best, and the latest model will lift a load equalling its own weight. M. Tatin believes that he will even reach a formula which will show definitely how many foot-pounds per second are necessary to fly a given weight.

The latest, and perhaps the most curious invention ever heard of, is that of a talking machine. One was shown by the inventor at the Grand Hotel in Paris, a little while ago. The machine made a speech to his attentive and admiring audience, in these words—"I was born in America. I can speak all languages, and am very pleased to see you. I thank you for this visit." We hear that the invention has taken thirty years to produce, and is composed of a table with pedals, an organ bellows, and a key-board. The middle of the instrument represents the human lungs, larynx, glottis, and tongue. It is curious to imagine to what purpose such an apparatus could be put. Perhaps it will find its way into the streets of our great towns, acting as a vocal advertisement to the passer-by, or may be placed on the platforms of our important railway stations to call out the names of the places, for the benefit of those passengers who complain so bitterly of the unintelligible tones of the railway officials.—*Casell's Magazine.*

Sunshine is scarce in London, as every one knows who has had occasion to spend any time there. According to the report of the Astronomer-Royal, who has undertaken to register the hours of sunshine in comparison with the number of hours the sun was above the horizon during the week beginning Feb. 11th and ending the 17th, the sun was above the horizon 69.3 hours, but he only shone on London 9.3 hours, on four days not at all, on Sunday, 5.3 hours, Friday 31 hours, and Sunday half-an-hour.

—The *Scientific American* says that "It may

be possible for a man to be hungry and amiable at the same time, but it is not safe for any wife to presume upon so unlikely an occurrence habitually. Every wife should ponder this very true physiological statement. Don't ask your husband perplexing questions or bother him with household complaints, or even your own personal troubles, just before breakfast or dinner. In general, it is of very little use. Manage as well as you can, even though it chances that you are hungry as well as perplexed. After a comfortable meal things will look brighter all around.

—Milk, dried in cakes thoroughly and then ground to a fine powder and mingled in suitable proportions with farinaceous substances such as oatmeal, is among the latest of European preparations for use on long voyages. The powdered milk is said to keep, if properly protected from moist air, almost indefinitely. Various dishes in which it forms an ingredient are spoken of as very palatable.

—Chloroform has been lately found to act with great rapidity in extinguishing the flame of the vapor of petroleum. Combustible gases, mixed with chloroform vapor are found to immediately lose their explosive properties, and even their combustibility.

—Instruments made from obsidian, or volcanic glass, similar to those used by the ancient Mexicans, have been found in the Tokai-Hegyalya mountains in Hungary, Isle of Bodrog, Central Italy, and the Lipari Isles.

DOMESTIC.

**CREAM CAKES.**—One cupful of cream, one cupful of sugar, one egg, one tea-spoonful of saleratus, one tea-spoonful of salt. Stir in flour until the batter is as thick as in making pancakes.

**STEWED BEEF.** Cut from a cold roast of beef as much as will be sufficient for your family, in nice, moderately thick slices, fat and lean mixed together. Slice into small bits a carrot, a whole cucumber pickle, and two or three Irish potatoes, with a tea-spoonful of all-spice powdered or whole. Add a large lump of butter—say, a table-spoonful a little water, and thicken, not too much, with a little brown flour, and stew until very tender. Send to table hot, and under cover.

**BAKED RICE.** Boil a tea-cupful of rice, or half a pint, as directed above. Place it in the bottom of a baking dish, mixing with it a lump of butter the size of an egg, a tea-spoonful of salt, a well beaten egg, and a tea-cupful of milk, or enough to make the dish conveniently full. Set the dish in the stove, and let it bake until nicely browned. Add a tea-spoonful of salt in boiling the rice. As a vegetable this forms sometimes an acceptable change from the ordinary way of preparing rice.

**RED BEANS STEWED.** Take a pint of red beans and two quarts of water. Soak them overnight. Next morning put them on in two quarts of fresh water as soon as your breakfast fire is made. When they are perfectly soft, break them a little, without throwing off the water in which they have been boiled. Add two table-spoonfuls of butter, season with pepper and salt, parsley, thyme, and a little onion. The onion must be washed clean, and wrung in a cloth. After the beans are seasoned and are soft and mashed, take the stew-pan off the fire, and set it in the corner to simmer until dinner-time.

**SUNDAY DINNER QUICKLY PREPARED.** I've had it on my mind for several weeks to write you something about Sunday dinners. You know when there is a family of five or six persons, more or less, and all want to go to the morning service, and stay to Sunday-school, their appetites are pretty well sharpened by the time they get home, especially if there is a ride of two or three miles. I have experimented in various ways that we may have our dinner as soon as possible after getting home, or each one begins to help himself, which causes much confusion and spoils the meal. I find that by leaving the tea-kettle on the stove, and filled, with a little fire, the water is in a condition to boil quickly, and mush is soon prepared. In cold weather nothing is better than oyster soup, which requires but a few minutes cooking. A good meal is quickly prepared by having a chicken made ready overnight by dressing and stuffing, and then it is ready to put into the oven when the family sit down to breakfast. It requires little care, and is nicely browned by church-time, and keeps warm in the oven until wanted for dinner. I find it a great help to have potatoes ready to warm over. Often meat is boiled or roasted on Saturday, which relishes well cold. A rice pudding, made without eggs, and left in the oven, is nice with sugar and cream. It is easy by taking thought, especially a day or two before, to provide that Sunday shall be not only to the family, but to the help a "day of rest."—*American Agriculturist.*