



HEALTH AND OCCUPATIONS.

BY A FELLOW OF THE FACULTY OF PHYSICIANS
AND SURGEONS.

The influence of education, habits, and occupations on health has not escaped the attention of social scientists and medical men. These progressive external forces, in conjunction with hereditary tendencies and circumstances of birth, serve to make up the composite character of man. In 1705 there was published in this country a translation of a book written in Latin by Professor Ramazzini, of Padua, bearing the title—"A Treatise of the Diseases of Tradesmen." Ramazzini, quoting Hippocrates, who says, "When you come to a sick person, it behoves you to ask what uneasiness he is under? what was the cause of it? how many days he has been ill? how his stomach is? and what food he eats?"—adds one interrogation more—"Of what trade is he?" Dr. Patissier, in France, and Dr. Hut, in Germany, have each contributed treatises on this important subject; while in this country the well-known work of the late Dr. Thackrah, of Leeds, and the annual reports of the Registrar-General, afford much valuable information on the same. Dr. B. W. Richardson, in *Good Words*, 1876, has been able to popularize this department of hygiene; and the object of the present writer, though "not with equal steps," is to elucidate a little further the co-relation of occupation and health.

Farmers occupy a high position as respects general health. Their houses are often commodious and airy; and at their calling they have the privilege of inhaling the purest of air, unless when either residing near to a marsh, or when uncleanly surroundings exist. While agreeing with Mr. Thackrah, that inflammation of the lungs, pleurisy, and other inflammations are, comparatively speaking, the diseases of agriculturists, I dissent from his statement that dyspeptic disorders are almost unknown in the country. I have seen three bad cases of dyspepsia among farmers, although it is fair to say that one of the sufferers had chewed tobacco to a great extent. The great foe of agriculturists is undoubtedly chill, arising from wet clothes, which they had not changed when done with the day's work.

Carters, carpenters, and joiners, and steady men among cattle dealers and butchers, all of whom do much of their work in the open air, live to a fair old age. Butchers given to dissipation die early. I knew two unfortunates of this class, one of whom succumbed to incurable indigestion, and the other to erysipelas.

Tailors, shoemakers, engravers, milliners, dressmakers, clerks, and all engaged at sedentary employments, which cramp the body and limit the expansion of the lungs, are subject to dyspeptic disorders and pulmonary disease. "We see," says Mr. Thackrah, "no plump and rosy tailors."

The condition of these men is made worse by bad workshops and irregular habits. A writer in the journal, the *Tailor and Cutter*, says, "It will thus be seen how a trade like ours where large numbers of men are packed into a small room containing a great number of gaslights, produces feeble, emaciated, sickly-looking men, who are very much dejected and exhausted as they steal home at night. The consequence is, that some of the more hardy spirits fly to the public-house for stimulants to dispel their lassitude, the result being that their potatoes soon reduce them to a state of stupidity and abasement."

Shoemakers work also in a cramped, bad posture. The digestion and circulation are so much impeded that the sallow countenance marks a shoemaker almost as much as a tailor.

Power-loom factory workers suffer from want of exercise, being confined almost to one position in gas-heated workrooms, and from dust finding its way into the bronchial tubes and lungs.

Letterpress compositors are likewise injured by want of exercise, by their working hours being often prolonged into the night, and by the handling of leaden type.

Painters and plumbers are often the reverse of rosy in appearance, and are said to be injured by the slow absorption of lead used in their employments. I have seen only one case of "Painter's Colic," the exciting cause of which is the absorption of lead.

Masons, especially hewers, as well as sculptors and marble cutters, though having frequently the benefit of constant fresh air, are subject to dust off the stones entering their lungs, and irritating and inflaming the same, often to their permanent injury. They drink less, however, than some tradesmen, and having

the choice of wearing the natural respirator, the beard, without the dirty sweating of iron-molding and mining, they may, with care, partially neutralize the special danger of their employment.

Corn-millers, on account of their inhalation of flour dust, and their employment indoors, are often pallid in the complexion, and far from robust in the lungs.

Bakers, owing to their exposure to high temperature and dust, and to their having to work often in dirty and ill-ventilated bake-houses, are also pale and comparatively unhealthy. The apprentices are often imperfectly clad, and run risk from chill and inflammation. I recently asked an intelligent baker if the heat and sweating in the bake-house disposed him to take (so-called) stimulant. His reply was, "I have not tasted strong drink for six months, and I have never been a better man in every respect."

Colliers enjoy fair health when they are young and able to cope with the disadvantages of their calling. Having been the medical attendant of some collieries for fifteen years, I have been surprised with the infrequency of the men needing medical attendance—apart from surgical accidents. They have, no doubt, a sallow complexion, owing to their exclusion from sunlight for a part of the day, and the slow progress of carbonaceous deposit in the lungs. Any old colliers, known to me, are troubled with shortness of breath and wheezing.

Iron-moulders are exposed to a great heat, but having the advantage of working in large open sheds, they, when temperate, enjoy average good health. The temptation to moulders, puddlers, and men in similar trades, to drink is very great; but I would remind them that cold tea or meal and water would do them much more good at their work than gallons of beer, which liquor tends only to intensify thirst.

Shopkeepers of all classes, though much confined to their places of business, are not subjected to severe labor; and if their shops be well ventilated, and well-arranged, and they lead temperate lives, the expectation of life to them is very fair. Dr. Richardson has pointed out that one-fourth more drapers die than grocers in a given time and proportion; and this he ascribes to the draper working in a closer atmosphere than the grocer, his shop door being often partially blocked up with rolls of cloth, and all his shelves stuffed with goods, which, when handled, give off fluff and dust, the inhalation of which is apt to irritate bronchial and dyspeptic disorders. Drapers should not crowd their goods together, but leave room for light and free currents of air.

The class, allied to shopkeepers, which gives the largest mortality in this country, is that of the publicans. Many among them are apt to "take a drop" along with their respectable customers, this constant tipping producing degenerations in the nervous system, the liver, the lungs, and the heart. The best health, at least among publicans who have insured their lives, belongs to the keepers of public-houses in the lowest districts, who affect a comparative social superiority, and therefore do not associate with those who frequent their shops. This curious fact is brought out in an interesting brochure by Mr. Stott, manager of the Scottish Amicable Life Assurance Society, on the "Mortality among Publicans and other persons engaged in the sale of intoxicating liquors," extending over half a century. In this publication, written by an impartial actuary, the excess of mortality among the publicans over the other insurers is exactly fifty per cent. The deaths commented upon were ascribed, in the medical certificates of death, to diseases chiefly of the digestive organs, such as stomach and liver, of the nervous system, and of the chest, including the heart. Out of 102 deaths only two were from old age. It may be considered that the best appearance that could be conscientiously made in the certificate of death would be made by the family medical attendant; on the other hand, the Scottish Amicable Society, like other insurance companies, where there is no suspicion of fraud, would be disposed to accept the "cause of death" without minute enquiry. In connection with this it may be permitted to remark that to accept of eleven deaths as resulting from "Disease of Brain" is more vague and unsatisfactory than the popularly named disease, "Dropsy," which Dr. J. G. Fleming, the chief medical officer of the society, judiciously allocates to three sources, viz., the heart, the liver, and the kidneys.

Mr. Stott's stubborn figures and facts, which could be corroborated by the observation and experience of every reflective physician, show clearly the unhealthy influence of the liquor traffic among the vendors themselves. Of the direful effects of drink among its consumers, more anon. The blighting trail of the serpent is over all the outlets of the traffic, poisoning more or less the streams of life.

The disease which absolutely kills is not to be guarded so much against as the disease which precedes it, and which, undermining

the constitution, renders it unable to battle with the subsequent disorder.—("Mortality Experience of Prudential Assurance Company.")

Literary men do not sufficiently attend to regular exercise in the open air, the consequences being dyspepsia and constipation. They suffer also from the irregularities in the periods of eating and sleeping, and from the excessive use of gaslight.

Barristers are at the top of the list for longevity. Many judges attain a healthy old age. Lawyers who neglect exercise are subject to sedentary diseases.

Medical practitioners, notwithstanding many drawbacks, such as disturbed sleep, irregularity of meals, and exposure to inclement weather, stand well on the list of healthy occupations. Their activity, conjoined with their knowledge of physiology and hygiene, aids in the prolongation of life.

Clergymen stand higher than doctors, and if they begin their professional life with a good stomach and robust lungs are generally long-lived. "Clergyman's sore throat" would be rarer if the preacher would speak with his natural voice, and not in a falsetto tone. Every clergyman should rest on Monday as his Sabbath. The labor which a visiting pastor has in "going in and out among his people," attending to public business, and in writing forty or fifty sermons in a year, which are expected to be delivered in an attractive manner, cannot be estimated by those who have not written ten lines of an essay, or spoken a dozen words from a platform. A working-man once seriously remarked to me, that ministers who do so little during the week should be asked to teach in the public schools three days every week.

The health of commercial travellers and business men who are out and about depends much upon the regularity and temperance of their lives, and their success in trade. Almost any occupation may be rendered more healthful by a constant and reasonable attention to the rules of personal and public hygiene. Dissipation, worry—not steady work—kills men.

In the upper and personal classes, the toil and anxieties of life press chiefly on the men—the women enjoying a comparative exemption from them. When so many are striving to be foremost in the race of life, the husband is frequently engaged in an arduous struggle to maintain or improve his condition, and in too many instances he injures his health in the effort. Unless he be exceptionally unfortunate and have no friends to fall back upon, his wife and family will probably still be sufficiently supplied with the physical necessities for healthy existence. With the laboring classes the case is very different. Among them the anxieties of obtaining a livelihood are rarely great enough to produce injurious results; but if the husband's wages are insufficient, the consequent physical privations tell upon the health of his family, his wife included, as much as upon his own.—(Mr. Charles Ansell's "Statistics of Families.")

Artificial flower-makers sometimes suffer from the coloring and other matters used at their humble occupation. Picric acid in one of the coloring powders has given rise to severe inflammation and ulceration of the mouth. In twisting the stems of the flowers the patient had been in the habit of moistening her fingers with the saliva, and in this way seriously affected the mouth.—(Medical Examiner.)

Sailors and soldiers, when they escape the combatant perils and privations of their profession and bad climatic influences, are healthy, if they are temperate men and well cared for. It is a great temptation to soldiers to be billeted now and again at the houses of publicans, where they can scarcely refrain from drinking, if their hosts be frank and kind.

No boy nor girl, belonging to a consumptive family, should be set to an occupation where they must sit indoors, and where there is much free dust, an aggravation of all pectoral diseases. It would preserve the health of many a lad, if he were entered in either Her Majesty's navy or the commercial marine, thus combining satisfactory occupation with profit to health.

It is impossible in a brief article to notice every trade. Those who wish further information will find some valuable paragraphs on health, temperance, and occupations, in the last half-year's Report of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Factories, which may be had for a few coppers.—*League Journal*.

COLD FEET.

The feet should be washed in tepid water every day or two; but do not put them into water so hot as to make them tender. In concluding the bath, dip them into quite cold water, which closes the pores naturally; and then wipe and rub them entirely dry and warm.

Wear broad, heavy-soled, capacious boots, with a loose insole. The foot appears smaller in a boot quite large for it, than in one which the compression compels the sides to overjut the sole and look tight over the instep or toes.

Ladies should remember this fact, which is so well-known to fashionable shoemakers. A stylish dealer was daily complimented about his small feet and nicely-fitting boots; a compliment which his wife also shared among her lady friends. The secret was, they never pinched their feet. He wore No. 8, while his wife wore the unpopular size of fives. He could put on six, or his wife a four, or perhaps a three. By wearing boots of the form of their feet of ample size, the boots remained in graceful shape. The gentleman's boots were nearly number nine in length; so made, to lend proportion and add comfort in walking.

Change your boots often. In use, they absorb moisture from within and without, and by frequent change and drying will be much warmer. If you haven't two pairs, remove the insoles and dry them thoroughly with the boots each night. The patent cork-covered insole is a nice thing for those who can afford them, if they do not sweat the feet. But the smooth, stiff-leather insole is the best for all people; and one good pair will wear out several pairs of boots.

If your feet sweat easily, and then chill from the dampness, wear light cotton stockings with your wool socks over them.

When your feet are cold stop and warm them. No business at the desk, the counter, the bench; no domestic task or social or conventional circumstance is of so grave importance as to warm one's feet when they are cold. You can't afford the hazard to health incurred by indifference to the discomfort nature is giving you as a premonition of danger. Many a little disease has crept in through the toes which found its way to organic abode in lungs or heart or brain, and there developed until it cast a death-bolt.

Keep your feet dry. Self-acting rubbers—on and off with a kick—are the grandest life-preservers of the age. But if, by accident, you wet your feet, don't be foolish, and sit till death-damp steals to your vitals; or, still more foolish, be frightened into a fever. Exercise common sense, and remove the wet stockings. If chilly, take a warm foot-bath, closing, as usual, with a "cold dip," and wipe and rub entirely dry; and feel and be the better for the accident. If, in a judicious way, people would wet their feet oftener—clear up to their ears—it would be better for their health.

As you prize your health, do not lie in bed with cold feet. If your blood is at a low ebb, or you are suffering nervous debility incident upon too serious mental stress, and, as a consequence, you experience, upon retiring, a flood-tide of all your life-currents to a cerebral centre, with a throbbing, throbbing, like the martial music of a man-of-war's man in your brain, while your feet seem like two young icebergs floating in an open polar sea, just arouse yourself and command, rather than calmly submit to the situation. Indeed, people of delicate constitutions who are not consciously plethoric and robust, better always take the precaution of defensive preparations as they launch upon the sea of dreams. Abundant bedding and flannel blankets are not enough. A hot brick or jug of hot water afford instant relief, and are not bad friends with which to court Morpheus until morning; unless the brick forms an alliance with the frigid zone, or you incur a deluge by loosing the cork, or an earthquake by kicking the jug out of bed. A modern rubber bag is the proper thing. The stopple screws in and imprisons the aqua caloric with perfect safety, and becomes a boon companion to the most fastidious and nervous.—*Phrenological Journal*.

CULTIVATION OF THE SUNFLOWER AS A PROTECTION AGAINST MALARIA.—On this subject we have received from a correspondent a communication which, containing no facts that are not already familiar to the public, we deem unnecessary to publish. However, for the benefit of those persons who may still be cultivating the unsightly sunflower, under the impression that it really possesses some hidden power to ward off malaria, we may state that this notion was long ago exploded, and now ranks only with such remedial absurdities as the carrying about in the pockets of horse-chestnuts and potatoes as prophylactics of rheumatism, or the equally ludicrous one of basking in light that streams through the "blue glass." Notwithstanding the romance attached to its origin by mythology, it is about as coarse, ugly, and useless a plant as we know. With nothing about it to please the eye, with no medical qualities whatever to give it value, the only possible economic use to which it can be put is that of cultivation for the sake of an oil that its seeds yield. But whatever value it might have for this purpose is more than counterbalanced by the positive injury it does to the soil, for it is well known as an insatiable consumer of potash, and would rapidly exhaust any land of this already too scarce salt, and hence render it unproductive. The proper place, then, for this unpromising exotic is where we chiefly find it—the gardens of rural districts, in which it is often planted to hide objects that have the misfortune to be still more unsightly.—*Scientific American*.