

to another, slightly warmed by contact with the furnace pipes or the floor above, then it is that putrefaction is most rapid; moulds grow most luxuriantly, milk turns sour with every thunderstorm, fruit will not keep, and the housekeeper is continually throwing out decayed vegetables. Often fruit slightly decayed is consumed, and causes a lowering of the tone of the system; foul emanations, the result of decay, further pollute an already impure air.

In speaking of unhealthy sites, Sir Douglas Galton gives an instance that actually occurred at Balaclava. The hillside sloping down to the plain was composed of an outcropping of clay, with an outcropping of rock immediately above. The 79th Highlanders were placed on the clay, and as the materials were soft their huts were placed on terraces cut out of the hillside, and had one wall and the floor embedded in the ground. The floors were constantly damp, and, as a consequence, half the men were down with fever. The 42nd were placed on the rock just a few yards above; their huts were built on projecting terraces, so that they were quite dry and the air circulated freely all round. This regiment did not suffer from fever.

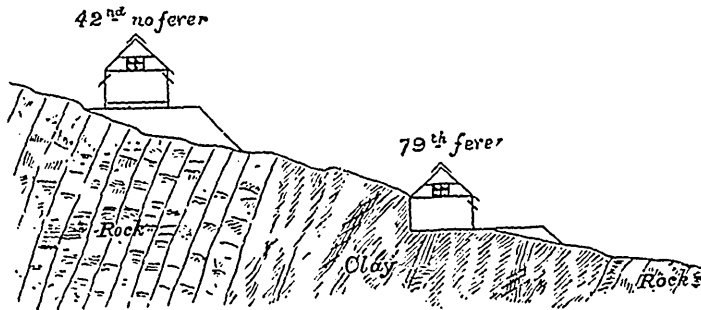


FIG. 1.—FROM "HEALTHY DWELLINGS."

Now, this was years ago; army engineers of to-day look after things better. But what are we doing? We buy a lot and order a house to be built. "Will you want a cellar?" "Yes, I want a good cellar with plenty of head room." And immediately the contractor digs a hole which is practically a shallow well. The walls are built without any precautions, and unless the site has been particularly well chosen, we wonder why our cellar is damp, why we do not feel well, why we do not feel rested in the morning. It is because the air of the house is bad, being drawn from a damp cellar. It causes a further loss of the working power of the inhabitants.

If a man finds his cellar wet with, say, an inch or more of water, he may be trusted to ask the cause, for he realizes that so much water, if often repeated, will damage or undermine not his health, but the foundations of his house. Such a large amount of water might come from a spring, a burst water pipe or sewer pipe, surface water may be flowing in through some window, or, what is very frequent, the rain water pipe gets broken and the water, instead of flowing into sewer or cistern, percolates through or under the foundation into the cellar. The down pipe from the eavetrough is run into a drain which very often gets broken by frost or concussion when it comes near to the surface; the break is not discovered for some time, perhaps not until the rain has washed a large amount of the surrounding earth into the sewer, but, meanwhile, this earth has blocked the sewer, and during a heavy rain the water finds its way into the cellar. Spring water and rain water are not in themselves harmful, but if allowed to stagnate in a cellar, it is not long till the health of the inhabitants begins to suffer.