

SANITATION OF HABITATIONS, IN RELATION TO THE INCIDENCE OF CONTAGIOUS DISEASES.

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MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN,—In presenting to you to-day a paper on the above-mentioned subject, I feel that I am dealing with a subject which should have for its champion a more worthy exponent. This subject is a wide one and of much importance, and one which ought to concern us, as medical men, very deeply. To think that owing to carelessness, to absent-mindedness, to lack of personal interest, to utter disregard of the laws of health and various other causes, the lives of not only a few but of hundreds of people are being day by day placed in jeopardy, should make us shudder; but it should also make us resolve, as far as in our power lies, to take some steps to lessen the ill effects.

In our town during the past five or six years, we have had no serious epidemics of disease, and we attribute the healthy condition to three things: 1st, our better system of providing a purer drinking water for the people; 2nd, our improved sewerage system; 3rd, the watchful care of the Local Board of Health in relation to the housing and cleanliness of the poorer class of people. Our system of waterworks is, we know, working very satisfactorily. The water is pumped from the river into a settling basin (about 600 feet long, 80 feet wide, 18 feet deep); from here it is pumped through two filters, and then into the mains. In this way we claim to remove by sedimentation a great deal of matter, and, by double filtration, render the water not only palatable but comparatively pure.

We have been trying to formulate a plan for a trunk system of sewers, and the Board of Health has been urging upon the Council the necessity of these large sewers. In many cases their advice has been acted upon, but in many others the Board has had to recommend sewers in certain localities and on certain streets as a sanitary measure. Now, we have on the south side of the river Adelaide, William, Queen, and Lacroix streets, all running parallel, with trunk sewers, and at right angles to these, sewers on King and Wellington streets, so that all parts of the town on the south side of the river can be easily and thoroughly drained. In North Chatham we have Baldwin street and Victoria avenue, parallel with trunk sewers, and the lesser sewers drain into these two. All the sewers empty into the creek and the river, and the average fall is sufficient, and the average depth at which sewers are laid is 12 feet. The nearest outlet for any sewer is about 600 feet below the waterworks plant. The Board of Health arranged with the Council to thoroughly flush the sewers twice a year, clean all man-holes and intakes, and see that the outlets are kept free from debris.

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