

**ESSAY ON THE
EXPERIENCES
AND OPINIONS
OF JOHN HOWARD**

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Essay on the Experiences and Opinions of John Howard by R. D. R. Sweeting

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R. D. R. SWEETING

**ESSAY ON THE
EXPERIENCES
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ESSAY
ON
THE EXPERIENCES AND OPINIONS
OF
JOHN HOWARD
ON THE
PRESERVATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE HEALTH OF
THE INMATES OF SCHOOLS, PRISONS, WORKHOUSES,
HOSPITALS, AND OTHER PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS,
AS FAR AS HEALTH IS AFFECTED BY
STRUCTURAL ARRANGEMENTS RELATING TO SUPPLIES
OF AIR AND WATER, DRAINAGE, ETC.
(TO WHICH WAS AWARDED THE STATISTICAL SOCIETY'S HOWARD MEDAL
AND PRIZE OF TWENTY POUNDS IN NOVEMBER, 1883).

BY
R. D. R. SWEETING,
M.R.C.S. ENG., S.S.O. CHEM. CAMB., ETC.
MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT OF THE WESTERN FEVER AND SMALL-POX HOSPITAL;
FELLOW OF THE MEDICAL AND STATISTICAL SOCIETIES OF LONDON;
MEMBER OF THE EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SOCIETY, AND THE SANITARY INSTITUTE OF GREAT
BRITAIN, ETC., ETC.

'Labor omnia vincit.'



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1884.

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INTRODUCTION.

IN presenting to the Council of the Statistical Society of London the subjoined competitive Essay for the 'Howard Medal,' its author feels constrained to offer an explanation, and make an apology. The former touches the motives which led him to compete, which comprise not only the distinction which would accompany success, but, from his having been led to the study of hygiene, the actual information that might be gleaned from research into Howard's sanitary experience and teaching; this last, he confesses, has more than repaid him for the labour that has been expended upon the elaboration of the essay, and will serve as some solace in the event of the coveted honour not being awarded him. His apology owes its necessity to the subject of the essay, and is urged on behalf both of the style and the subject-matter; for, in endeavouring to adhere closely and faithfully to the title, the one may appear cramped and formal, and the other dry and monotonous.

We will now proceed to sketch the plan of the essay. This will consist, first, of a brief chronology, containing the principal incidents of Howard's life; it will then pass on to embrace, fully and in detail, his experiences and opinions regarding the *role* played by structural arrangements relating

to air, water, drainage, and other matters (viz., construction, warming, disinfection, clothing and bedding, isolation of the sick, food, and exercise), in the hygiene of public institutions, with observations on each point, and comparison with the opinions of modern public-health authorities. Howard's experiences on his last tour of inspection in England and Wales will then be given ; after which, his detailed recommendations for various public buildings. The Essay will finally conclude with an attempt to review Howard's position as a sanitary pioneer.

CHRONOLOGY OF HOWARD.¹

1726. Born at Enfield, or Clapton.

1741. Bound apprentice to a grocer in Watling Street.

1742-44. Takes a tour in France and Italy, to learn the languages.

1752. Marries his landlady.

1755. Embarks for Lisbon, to alleviate the sufferings caused by an earthquake; is imprisoned at Brest, and notices the treatment of prisoners of war.

1756. Elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.

1758. Marries again; constructs model cottages and schools on his estate at Cardington.

1768. Crosses to Holland, visits France, Switzerland, and Italy, returning by Germany and the Rhine.

1773. High Sheriff of Bedford; visits the gaols of the condemned in England.

1774. Appears before the bar of the House of Commons, and lays before the House information relating to prisons, receiving the thanks of the members; returned M.P. for Bedford, but unseated; takes a tour in Scotland and Ireland.

1775. Takes a tour through France, the Netherlands, Germany, Hanover, etc.

1775-76. Second tour of England.

1776. Visits the Swiss Cantons.

1777. Publishes his 'State of Prisons in England and Wales.'

¹ See H and I in appended bibliography.

2 *His Experiences and Opinions regarding Air.*

1778. Crosses to Amsterdam, thence to Prussia, Saxony, Bohemia, Austria and Italy, Lombardy, France and Flanders.

1779. Appointed first supervisor of Penitentiaries (19 Geo. III. cap. 74).

1781. Visits Denmark, Sweden, and Russia.

1783. Visits Spain and Portugal; retires to his estate.

1785-87. Travels through Holland and France to Florence, Rome, Naples, Malta, Zante, Smyrna, and Constantinople; returns to Smyrna, takes a ship to Venice, is detained in quarantine there, returns by Trieste and Vienna.

1787. Returns to England; makes a new and final inspection of the prisons and hospitals of the United Kingdom; publishes his work on 'Lazarettos.'

1789. Takes his last journey through Holland and Prussia to St. Petersburg and Moscow.

1790. Dies at Cherson, at the mouth of the Dnieper, of malignant fever, caught during attendance on a young lady.

HIS EXPERIENCES AND OPINIONS REGARDING AIR.¹

In the introduction to his chief work, 'The State of Prisons,' Howard draws attention to the mischievous effects of want of fresh air. During his inspections, he noticed that the inmates of prisons and other institutions were robbed of this important element, and that the re-breathed air was of a feulent character. He refers to the famous 'Black Hole' of Calcutta, where the air was made worse by the effluvia from the sick, and states that his own clothes were often so saturated with foul effluvia that he was obliged to travel with the windows of his carriage open. He quotes Hales and Pringle as to the pernicious effect of 'putrefied air,' and Bacon, who, in his 'Natural History,' observes, 'The most pernicious infection next the plague is the smell of a jail.' He found that prisoners were crowded in dungeons for fifteen

¹ F and G *passim*.