

**HEALTH, WORK,
AND PLAY:
SUGGESTIONS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649297375

Health, Work, and Play: Suggestions by Henry W. Acland

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HENRY W. ACLAND

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SUGGESTIONS,

BY

HENRY W. ACLAND,

M.D., F.R.S.

OXFORD,

AND 377, STRAND, LONDON:

JOHN HENRY AND JAMES PARKER.

M DCCC LVI.

TO
MY FATHER,
WHO TAUGHT ME BOTH TO WORK AND PLAY,
AND TO
THE FELLOW-LABOURERS AND FRIENDS AMONG WHOM I WORK,
THESE FEW AND HOMELY THOUGHTS
ARE GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED.

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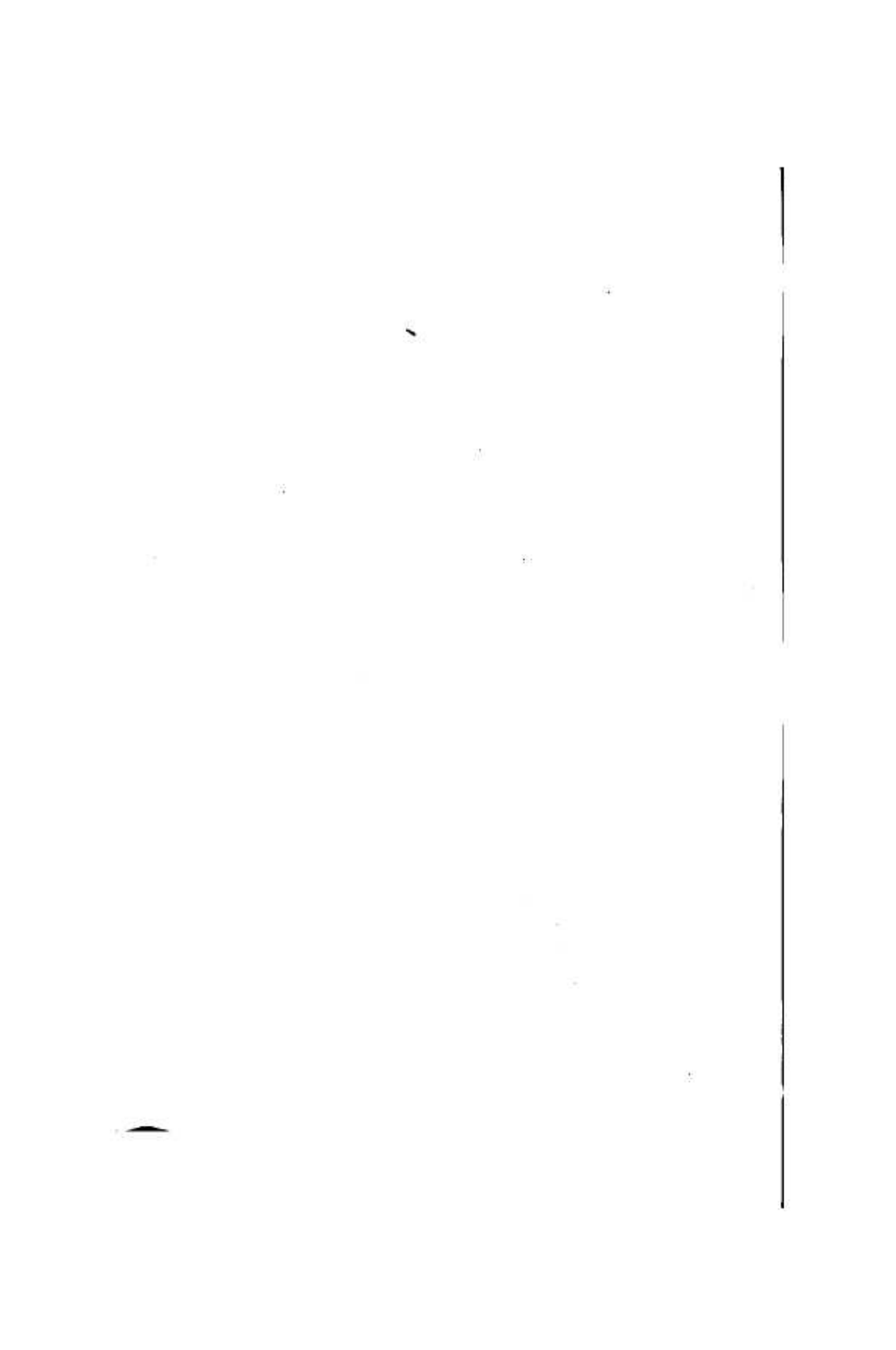
AFTER the last Visitation of the Cholera, I was called upon to draw up an Account* of the Disease as it occurred in Oxford; and of that Account, the last Part was devoted to certain practical considerations that naturally arose out of the subject.

I have received numerous applications to print, in a separate form, one of the Chapters of that Part, and, with certain necessary modifications, I do so in compliance with these requests.

HENRY W. ACLAND.

OXFORD, *May* 1856.

* Memoir on the Cholera at Oxford in 1854, with Considerations suggested by the Epidemic, by Henry W. Acland, M.D., F.R.S. London: Churchill. London and Oxford: J. H. and J. Parker.



SUGGESTIONS

FOR HEALTH, FOR WORK, AND FOR PLAY.

§ 1. A CRY concerning the violation of Sanitary laws, and the necessity for Sanitary improvements, is in England daily heard. If any one asks himself what is the nature or the need of this cry, he finds that, in the answer, he is engaged on an attempt to describe the manner, in which a civilized and well-regulated people, acquainted with the laws of health and the causes of disease, should strive to live. He is led into questions of the most extensive nature—social, so called, political, and religious,—questions which certainly cannot be discussed in this place.

That such a history, however, will alone state the needs of any thoroughly peopled town, in the particular matter before us, a little reflection will shew. It is quite certain, and it would be impertinent now to spend words in proving it, that the health of individuals is influenced by their manner of life. No one doubts but that a man may drink himself into hope-

less dropsy; that by over-labour he may induce heart-disease; by imprudent labour, disease of his lungs; that by mental excitement and late hours he may destroy the integrity of his nervous system; or shorten his days by ever working at work for which he is by nature unfitted. Instances of individual self-destruction from avoidable circumstances might be multiplied without end. With these individual cases we have not here to deal. Each man has a free will, and he must make his choice according to the knowledge he possesses. But with communities this is not so: they have lawgivers and laws: these may be good, or they may be bad. The people may be either barbarous or civilized. We have now to do with Civilized Communities only; and concerning them it is not to be doubted, and no educated person does doubt, that *Communities*, as well as *Individuals*, may violate the sanitary laws which our Creator has imposed on us; and that the consequence of the violation of these laws is punishment to the *Community* for its *common* crime, as it is in the case of the *Individual* for his *Individual* crime.

§. 2. This argument cannot be now pursued. In many ways it has been shewn, that bad municipal laws and bad local management cost more, in many

particulars, than good laws and good management : to use common expressions, "Bad work makes work," and "The ratepayer pays twice." The subject is as interesting as it is extensive. Life is a holy thing; and if Communities throw away the lives of the Individuals who compose them, or make these sickly, short, and miserable, the Community will, in some manner, 'pay for it.' It will have work done badly by the crushed artisan while he lives; it will have to maintain him for years in his sickness, and his children on his death.

I should be ashamed of dwelling on subjects of this kind, did I not feel that in this matter, as in many others, many of the People of England have even yet to awake as from a dream. Though scientific men, aided by the press, have for many years striven to rouse us to a sense of insecurity, the habits of our country, the lengthy labour of discussion which is to be gone through in most public questions, and the precarious results of the votes in public assemblies, retard improvement, and too often ensure mischief. And therefore I have ventured to lay before the Reader some plain thoughts that lie even below the root of so-called Sanitary Questions, but which are necessarily and intimately connected with them.