

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR INSPECTORS OF NUISANCES

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A Practical Guide for Inspectors of Nuisances by F. R. Wilson

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BY

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INTRODUCTION.

THE aim of the following pages has been to put forward suggestions, as well as to supply notes of information, for the practical guidance of an inspector of nuisances in his endeavours to surmount and disentangle the various difficulties attending the discharge of his duties.

It is taken for granted they will only be consulted by those who are newly appointed to the office of inspector, and are desirous of availing themselves of the experience of others. It is probable that inspectors who have enjoyed their posts for several years could add many important facts to those set down. Their kind forbearance is craved.

Every year brings its own discoveries in sanitary science, leaving the best informed in arrears of knowledge, unless they make constant additions to their store. The celebrated Nicholas Culpepper was one of the first to familiarise sanitary matters. His particular doctrine was the use of English herbs in preference to foreign drugs. It was not likely, he used to argue, that Providence would so order things that a disease should be in one part of the world, and the cure for it in another. Accordingly, he urged, the London gardens of his day could grow everything that an Englishman could require as "Salves for every Sore." His successors introduced other panaceas. A celebrated French physician advocated air, diet and exercise as the sole sources of health. Dr. Hunter's

receipt for rearing healthy children was "plenty of milk, plenty of sleep, and plenty of flannel." The Duke of Wellington's first provision for the health of a soldier is said to have been a pair of good shoes, the second, a spare pair of good shoes, the third, a spare pair of soles. Dr. Kitchener's prescription was, "Denticate, masticate, chump, and chew." But we now know that none of these things would avail to those doomed to live in an unsanitary home.

Few circumstances are too trivial to be of no consequence. The mere colour of our clothing is not without influence. A wall-paper may be harmful. The foundations of our houses and the soil on which they stand should be matters of grave consideration. The soil affects the food, food affects our strength, health, and even height and bulk. A soil retaining moisture, in seasons of excessive rainfalls, has been found so coincident with diphtheria as to give rise to a conviction that there is the close association of cause and effect between the two. A diet in which the potato largely figures is found to be productive of a condition of body conducive to consumption, scrofula, rickets, ophthalmia, and rheumatism. But some sanitary circumstances are of much more consequence than others, and those coming under the care of an inspector of nuisances are the most important of all.

The early pioneers of the sanitary movement may look around them with satisfaction. Our sanitary legislators, too, may congratulate themselves on work achieved, notwithstanding what remains to be done. Already their labours are bearing good fruit. Speaking only of local experience, epidemics that were of frequent occurrence are now extremely rare. In the rural dis-