

**THE SANITARY  
CONDITION OF  
CITY AND COUNTRY  
DWELLING HOUSES**

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The Sanitary Condition of City and Country Dwelling Houses by George E. Waring Jr.

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**GEORGE E. WARING JR.**

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THE  
SANITARY CONDITION  
OF  
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DWELLING HOUSES.

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*H. E. Scudder.*

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H. E. J.

## P R E F A C E .

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THE papers reproduced herein were prepared to be read before the American Public Health Association, and the Public Health Association of New York.

It has been thought unnecessary to modify the form in which they were first presented.

The paper on Country Houses led to a lengthy correspondence in the *American Architect and Building News*. This correspondence is reproduced nearly entire, as affording the best presentation of my own views on the subject, and as meeting objections which are likely to arise in the minds of those who have given it only casual attention.

G. E. W., JR.

NEWPORT, R. I., June, 1877.

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THE  
SANITARY CONDITION  
OF  
COUNTRY HOUSES.\*

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THE sanitary defects of the average country-house are due to ignorance. Had the architect who built it been stimulated to learn what is required for a perfectly healthful condition, he would of course have been, in every case, vigilant to secure it. Did the physician know, except in a vague and theoretical sort of way—that is, did he fully realize—the degree to which the ailments he contends against, and which he should be vigilant to prevent, are diseases due to removable causes connected with the construction and arrangement of the

\*A paper read before the American Public Health Association, at its meeting in Boston, 1878, by George E. Waring, Jr.

dwelling, he would insist upon a reform.

Did the householder himself know the extent to which his own efficiency and the health and lives of his family depend on an observance of the less obvious sanitary requirements, he would demand that both architect and physician should inform themselves as to the needs of his house, and should secure the fulfilling of those needs.

By far the greatest number of country-houses are farmhouses, laborers' dwellings, etc.; and these are not less subject to sanitary criticism than are those of the better class, though their defects are mainly of a different character, and relate more to the grounds about the house and to its water-supply, and to the condition of its cellar, than to the arrangement of its interior drainage. Indeed, in nearly every case, these houses have no interior drainage at all; and such reformation of their character and condition as is needed, will be sufficiently indicated in considering the better

houses. Unhappily, so far as the occupants of these farmhouses and cottages are concerned, there is little hope that any considerable improvement will soon be undertaken, or indeed that any thing we may say here will be heeded.

Until we can convince the country physician that his most important obligation to his community lies in a supervision of the conditions under which it lives, it is hardly worth while to waste breath upon the average members of that community. We may accumulate evidence as to the fatal effect of prevalent carelessness and filthiness in the cellar, and in the soil about the house, until we are tired of making quotations; and, for every instance that we bring forward, of a death from typhoid fever traceable to the use of poisoned well-water, the farmer will produce a hundred cases of persons who have always used water from wells standing in barnyards or close to privy-vaults or cess-pools, without suffering.

The action of poisoned water is less