

this impurity. Try to grow roses in the great cities. A great part of London stands upon a clay soil—where are our roses which delight in the clay? They are non-existent. Plants must breathe and children must breathe. Plants are susceptible to sulphurous acids, and to volatile oils, and to particles of carbon. We struggle, and cherish, and nurse them, but with too poor a result, the flower lovers of towns know well. Their breathing organs are choked, their light-thirst is unsated, they die, the victims of smoke.

What about our children? Those who have a knowledge of the *post-mortem* room know the black, insoluble pigment which blackens the lung tissue, not of diseased lungs only, as we know them, but of the healthy lung of the town-dweller. We may wash the dirt from our bodies externally, we may be scrupulously nice in our cleanliness; but inside, where it matters most, the dirt will stick. We cleanse our little ones with care, we practise the strictest asepsis in infant feeding, we sterilise, we talk, we lecture, but still the *post-mortem* room reveals the secret of the dirty lungs, of the respiratory organs blocked with dirty particles. Hundreds of our children die annually of dirt on the lungs, to put it in plain terms. It is an unpleasant reflection for a nation which prides itself upon its cleanliness. Naturally, the trouble does not stop short at children. But, being like the roses, more susceptible, they suffer most.

Where a great evil exists, before we can get rid of it, we have two, often most difficult, pieces of work before us—to find the cause of the evil, and to find and apply the remedy. There is a great deal said, and with justice, in regard to the smoke nuisance caused by large furnaces belonging to companies or manufacturers. Much has been done already, though much remains to be done, by legislation, and by an honest interpretation of the law on the part of those who administer it, in the direction of minimising the nuisance, by enforcing suitable chimneys, careful stoking, and proper construction. But there is a far more potent factor at work, at least in London, than all the chimneys of all the factories. We, ourselves, are the murderers of our children. On a clear autumn morning, when the air is growing chilly, and the first frost has brought the leaves low, you may see, between 6.30 and 7.30, a haze steal gradually over the sky, increasing as the day grows. The clearness disappears, there is a thickening and deepening of the atmosphere, and often, if the air is quiet, a distinct curtain veils the sun. It is to be seen morning after morning, with great regularity—and, as often as not, the veil is

lifted about ten at night. Our domestic fires are the sinners. It is there that the cause of the evil is to be found. Each one is contributing its quota of sulphur and carbon and watery vapour and volatile oils to swell the tale of sickness and death.

Physician heal thyself. Do not be so selfish as to refuse to realise honestly that in this great sin against humanity, each one of us is personally, individually responsible. Each one of us is the cause of the evil.

What, then, is the remedy? To a great extent that has been found, and has begun to be applied, but needs the force of public opinion to bring it home to the disease. The use of gas in the kitchen for cooking purposes, of coke for heating, the discarding of the common, bituminous coal, dear to the Englishman's heart, in the living rooms, and the substitution of gas fires, or the burning of coalite in the grate—they seem remedies almost too simple to be effectual.

"If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing!" verily we should have done it long since. But—we are ignorant, we are prejudiced, we are lazy, we are a slow-moving people, we love to let others get ahead of us in the solution of our social problems, to show us the way in the duties of our citizenship. Here is an ascertained fact. It is in our power to stop the pouring out of dangerous poisonous materials from our chimneys, and to use smoke consuming grates. Let us make use of that power. Agitate, educate, set an example, persuade others to follow it. This we can do, at the least, in our homes, in our daily work.

And, beyond them, support our sanitary inspectors, who strive year in and year out to make the life of the great cities more wholesome; help, and do not hinder them. Get the right men on to the borough councils, who will act honestly as the Sanitary Authority, encourage legislation to stop the evil, and remember daily your great personal responsibility, together with that good old saying, that a human being can live three weeks without food, three days without water, but only three minutes without air.

A.L.B.

An interesting Conference on "London Smoke: Its Effect on Health," was held on Monday at the Institute of Hygiene. Dr. Des Voeux said that Dr. Ascher, a German doctor, had found that disease and mortality were greater nearer to factories and where there was much smoke, and he proved beyond a doubt that human vitality was much less when living under the influence of smoke.

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