

**Science Notes.****An Old Physic Garden.****THE VALUE OF FRESH AIR.**

WE may safely assume that very few, if any members of the Nursing profession need to be convinced of the value of pure air, and most other persons would perhaps claim to be as well informed as the professional Nurse in this one particular, if in no other.

In their case, however, practice does not always agree with precept, and they are averse to admitting pure air if it should be at all cold. They have much more definite and distinct convictions of the dangers of cold air than of those of impure air. Has not everyone who travelled in a railway carriage in cold weather had experience of the truth of this? The carriage is perhaps quite full and someone suggests having the window open just a few inches. Someone else (and this particular "someone else" is sure to be present among ten persons taken at random) objects on the score of "having a cold already," "being subject to neuralgia," &c. After such objection not only he, but very likely the majority of persons present feel that for one to insist on opening a window is really an exhibition of ill-breeding and cantankerousness.

As it is more particularly various diseases of the lungs from which persons seek protection when they avoid draughts even to the point of breathing air which is unmistakably foul, we wish that everyone could read an article in the Medical Magazine, dealing with the subject of pneumonia and defective ventilation. The writer, in speaking of the prevalence of pneumonia in the French and German armies and the alleged infectious nature of the disease, gives his own experiences in the war in Afghanistan. The general opinion there was that pneumonia was highly infectious and the fact that it was so, is attributed to the overcrowding of the men and the blocking up of every ventilating aperture on account of the cold. There is no doubt that over crowding and foul air are very powerful predisponents to attacks of pneumonia; while with pure air and free ventilation there is no danger of the disease spreading by reason of proximity alone from the diseased to the healthy.

We all know, of course, that an ideal system of ventilation admits pure air without any cold draughts, but at present there are few dwelling houses which admit of no improvement in this respect, and probably ideally ventilated railway carriages are even more remote than ideal houses.

What we must do for the present is to make the best of the houses and railway carriages which we have, and while guarding as far as possible against exposure to draughts one must not ignore the dangers of foul air altogether.

When a fellow passenger, somewhat remote from the open window, asks in a tone that requires no mark of interrogation in the writing, "would you mind having that window shut; it makes such a draught up here," how pertinent it would be to reply "and as you keep that window shut all the offensive and poisonous air you breathe out comes down here," and how very *impertinent* most persons would consider it.

CHELSEA, known formerly when it was separated from London by green fields and country roads, as the village of palaces, possesses, even in these matter-of-fact days, many real charms, not only to the artist and antiquary, but to all who have eyes to see, and the smallest modicum of imagination. Here have lived dear old Sir Thomas More, and Sir Hans Sloane, the first member of the medical profession that was made baronet, and in the old Manor House, Catherine Parr, widow of Henry VIII., and the cynical Swift, and many other distinguished persons.

But besides memories of the past it has a more substantial possession—a delightful old garden, little known to the public, as its sacred privacy is preserved by four high walls. But a good glimpse can be obtained through two iron gates. How often have we taken a walk on a summer afternoon along the Thames Embankment, when the plane trees are in their best attire, and when Battersea Park on the other bank, and the river sparkling under a bright sky, form a picture as fair as any city can offer, to have suddenly our spirit of sweet serenity disturbed by an unconquerable desire to get within those iron gates and rest awhile by the hollyhocks and roses, and vetches.

We know better now; we have learnt the charm, the open sesame that will move those iron bolts. It is nothing more nor less than obtaining the permission of entry from the most noble Society of Apothecaries, whose quaint old Hall, "re-edificated" soon after the Great London Fire of 1666, repays a stroll down crooked, dirty Water Lane.

This Company of Apothecaries, after re-housing themselves, cast about in 1673 for convenient lodgment for their ornamental barge—of course a city company could not do without a barge in those days, it was out of the question! They therefore leased for sixty-one years three acres of land from Charles Cheyne, Lord of the Manor, at a ground rent of £5 per annum!

It was then, having thus obtained possession, that the members of the Society conceived the idea of enclosing the land with walls, and planting a botanic or physic garden. And a botanic garden it has been ever since, the sole survivor of those which may be regarded as its contemporaries—that planted by the famous old herbalist, John Gerarde in Holborn, and that in South Lambeth laid out by the gardener of Charles I.

In 1722, the sixty-one years' lease of the ground granted by Mr. Charles Cheyne having expired, Sir Hans Sloane, who had purchased the property and the old Manor House, agreed to grant the freehold of the garden to the Apothecaries on certain conditions, prompted by his love of science.

(1) That it should be employed for ever as a Physic Garden.

(2) That the Company should annually deliver to the President and Fellows of the Royal Society fifty specimens of different sorts of plants, well cured and of the growth of the said Physic Garden, till the amount of specimens amount to 2,000.

Sir Hans, be it remembered, was a prominent member of the Royal Society, and indeed enjoyed the honour of being President, in succession to Sir Isaac Newton.

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