

haps with some leaves, grass litter, or rushes. In fact, people lived in structures very little better than our modern stables of the worst class. Naturally, as years rolled on, things improved also. Stone, tile, and wooden floors came into vogue, and the wealthy made an approach to comfort in the shape of furniture in their castles and strongholds. But also in these real ease was practically unknown, and what we term the laws of sanitation utterly neglected. Epidemics and plagues were constant, and none knew their cause; when they came, they were looked upon as a visitation of God, and this notion the priests were careful to foster to their own profit. So far, drainage was an unknown science; every house had its own heap of filth close to the front door, and, considering the conditions under which men lived, it is a wonder that the race did not become extinct. When glass began to be common, a greedy Government was not slow in putting a surface tax upon its use, and hence windows were to be measured in square inches, rather than in square feet and yards, as is the case to-day. The foul smell of the houses at this period must be left to the imagination and not described. Ventilation was positively not known; the ordinary means of lighting consisted in the burning of filthy tallow candles or evil-smelling oil lamps, and, as already stated, the windows were of the smallest.

To kill these foul odours, men and women had recourse to the extravagant use of scented pomatums and other perfumes—a practice, by the way, which has not yet entirely died out. The writer can well remember an aunt's old-fashioned country house at Edmonton (be it mentioned, that the good lady and her husband were comfortably off), the only convenience to which was a small roofed shed in the kitchen garden, erected over a cesspool. To kill the stench which rose from this abomination, and which spread for yards around, the whole place was hung about with bunches of dried lavender, and he verily believes that this plant was so extensively cultivated in the garden only for this purpose. This was some forty years ago, but no doubt similar cases could easily be cited in our year of grace.

Gradually we approach more recent times. Cleanliness of person and of the general surroundings became more the vogue; back scratchers ceased to be used at Court and began to accumulate at the curiosity shops; men commenced to wear their own hair and to discard powder and its attendant filth; rushes lost their hold on fashion (it is recorded as a piece of luxury that Queen Elizabeth was wont to have these floor coverings renewed each day; ordinary folk, on the other hand, when they laid any new, would place them on top of the old until, in some cases, they lay to a depth of 18 in.). Dress also, as it became less extravagant in its nature, grew less expensive, and hence could be had new more frequently and was consequently cleaner.

Even now we have scarcely come down to the

days of gas, and every dwelling reeked with its oil lamps, wax and tallow candles. People yet slept in four-post bedsteads with full testers, curtains, and valances, the men wearing knitted nightcaps similar to the head-covering affected by some brewers' draymen, and the women dreadful constructions of linen and lace, which no lady nowadays would dream of being seen in. Judges had to bury their faces in nosegays, and bunches of rue were fastened round the railings of the dock to prevent their prisoners communicating the jail fever to the court—precautions, by the way, which were not always effective.

Again we move on, and get to the latter half of the last century. The window tax has gone, and daylight in our dwellings becomes much more common. Houses actually begin to be built with bath-rooms as a necessary adjunct, and iron or brass bedsteads gradually replace the old reservoirs of foul air in which our grandparents wallowed. Gas has largely banished the oil lamp, and this latter has lost most of its smell. Dress has become still cheaper, and few wear their clothes for more than a single season. In fact, we get to modern times.

Are we to rest satisfied? Have we in these respects reached perfection, or are there still worlds for us to conquer? Has the last word been spoken concerning what is needful for our health, are our houses so perfect in construction that we have nothing to fear from them? Do we get all the pure air, the warmth we require, or is there yet something to desire? In short, are we crying "Peace, peace, when there is no peace"? It is the object of these papers, which will be continued, to examine these questions in detail, to point out where we commonly fail to reach even our present ideals of perfection, and this especially with a view to helping those whose vocation is the charge of the sick and helpless, to remedy the existing evils wherever they may meet them. As far as possible, all technicalities of expression will be avoided, so that the least initiated reader may have a clear conception of what is meant. As shown in the foregoing, man has travelled through many stages to reach his present conditions of life; perhaps it is a long road yet before he attains a real paradise on earth.

(To be continued.)

Wedding Bells.

A marriage is arranged, and will shortly take place, between Miss M. Alice McMahon, of the Registered Nurses Society, and Mr. Goodall, of Market Drayton. Her many friends in the nursing world will wish her all happiness in her new life.

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