

## CHAPTER VI

### MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES

**W**ITHIN the small compass of a book such as this, those of Chadwick's activities which cannot properly be classified under the various chapter headings but which are nevertheless important, must be included in one chapter. If in the planning of this book Chadwick's life story had been contemplated, these activities would naturally have been included as they occurred, but it has been thought best to collect them here under the heading of "miscellaneous" and to outline them in chronological order.

#### *The Half-Time System of Education*

In 1833, when the Factory Commission was making its inquiries into the conditions of child labour, Chadwick was appalled at

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the uneducated state of the factory children. It struck him forcibly that these children were being reared in a state of abject mental ignorance, and he foresaw the inevitable result that such treatment would have upon future generations.

The position of education at that time was deplorable. A scheme of universal national education had never been seriously suggested. Even Chadwick did not get as far as that. If parents had sufficient income they sent their children to school, but where these means were hardly sufficient to keep the parents alive the children were sent to the factories at the earliest possible age in order to augment the family income. The inevitable consequence of this was that these children were employed in the factories for such hours that physical debility precluded them from having any mental instruction whatever. In an earlier chapter a short account has been given of the physical condition the children were brought to by the long hours they were forced to work at the factories. Chadwick's prescription for this was threefold. Firstly, he would shorten the hours of their labour; secondly, he would institute compulsory education;

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and thirdly, he would inaugurate a system of physical training.

In an essay on *The Duties of Government for the Education of the People* Chadwick writes: "There can be no safety from the most fearful outrages against life and property, but in the intelligence and moral feeling of the labouring classes. The Government should, therefore, in the first place, be imperatively required to abolish entirely every fiscal import that can operate, directly or indirectly, to obstruct the diffusion of knowledge among the people." Chadwick had this in view when he drew up his report on the factory conditions.

Broadly speaking, Chadwick's scheme divided up the lives of the child factory worker into three divisions—a time for book work, a time for physical play and exercise, and a time for productive labour. Chadwick and his fellow Commissioners pronounced that six hours a day was the limit the State could afford to allow the children to work in the factories. The previous hours had been from nine to anything up to thirteen hours a day. Chadwick proposed a scheme, known as the half-time system, of six hours

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a day work and three hours learning. A further condition of employment in the factory was that each child should produce a certificate from a competent teacher certifying that the child had been under scholastic instruction for three hours a day for the preceding week.

This scheme was not embodied in the Poor Law Amendment Act, but Chadwick agitated for its incorporation in the administration of the Act. Many intelligent manufacturers and Poor Law district schools took up the idea, with the result that the whole theory of juvenile education underwent a change for the good. It must be understood that the three hours education did not necessarily mean three continuous hours of book work. Chadwick was particularly interested in games, drill and physical exercises, and these were included in the instruction.

The scheme, inadequate as it was, had a tremendous effect on the development, both physical and mental, of the children. Nervous disorder, spinal diseases, crooked limbs and hysteria began slowly to be less prevalent. Enormous advances in the science of teaching and training children

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were yet to be made, but Chadwick was indeed a friend to the coming generations, for by his persistent efforts he prepared the way for the full development of childhood along the lines of reason rather than of profit.

*Intemperance*

In 1834 J. Silk Buckingham was presiding over a House of Commons Committee on Drunkenness. To this Committee Chadwick was summoned to give evidence. His evidence, which was afterwards collected into essay form, was practical and full of common sense.

Chadwick was not a total abstainer, but from his experience as an Assistant Poor Law Commissioner he had been impressed with the distressing results of intemperance, especially among the poorer classes. He was a firm friend of any politician of whatever party who advocated the restriction of the indiscriminate output of alcoholic drinks.

His evidence shows that once again he was not afraid to probe to the bottom of the

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question at issue. To his mind the question was: What causes men to drink excessively? His evidence answered his own query.

If healthy athletic exercise and recreation were encouraged amongst the mass of the population; if decent, clean refreshment shops replaced the vulgarly gorgeous gin palaces; if sanitary dwellings were erected in the place of the hovels which housed the population; if parks and public places were instituted for the benefit of the people; if the transaction of business within the precincts of the public houses was prohibited by law; and if a heavy tax was imposed upon the traffic in liquor—if all these reforms were carried out, then the question of drunkenness would subside.

The Committee took due note of this very advanced view, and in course of time reported its decision, which was in agreement with Chadwick's evidence, to a derisive House of Commons.

Nevertheless, what Chadwick said then in his evidence before that House of Commons Committee is largely true to-day. Any worker in the slums of modern England will substantiate Chadwick's statement that

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the principal causes of intemperance among the working classes are the disgraceful conditions under which they live. Drink enables them, temporarily at least, to forget their hardships, their lack of proper food, their inadequate clothing and shelter. The temptation is persistent, and great strength of character is required if it is to be resisted.

Until these causes are removed and the lives of the working classes made happier and healthier, intemperance will remain a curse to modern society.

*The Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages*

In the course of his duties as Secretary to the Poor Law Board Chadwick discovered himself greatly hampered by a lack of knowledge regarding the birth and death rate. He saw that if a careful and accurate registration of these were made it would be invaluable service to the community.

To know definitely how many people died

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per annum from one particular disease; to compare the birth-rate of London with that of Manchester or the infantile death-rate in Glasgow with the infantile death-rate in Bristol; or, again, to be able to tell from the statistics the number of deaths from natural causes as compared with deaths from accidents: if all this could be tabulated by a department of the State Chadwick saw of what inestimable importance it would be.

Chadwick had had the scheme in his mind when the Poor Law Commission was at work, but he did not see a favourable opportunity of incorporating it in his report. But about 1836 a movement took place among the Dissenters agitating that the registration of births, deaths and marriages should be recorded not only by the Church but by the State as well. This civil registration had, in fact, taken place for a short time during the Commonwealth, but had since died out.

Immediately Chadwick heard that a Bill was actually before Parliament for the re-establishment of this civil registration, he applied to Lord John Russell to insert a clause to insure that when a death was

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registered the cause of death should be certified. But Russell turned a deaf ear, or to use Chadwick's own phrase, could not "be got to take hold of the idea." In distress Chadwick applied to Lord Lyndhurst, ex-Lord Chancellor in Peel's administration and now Leader of the Opposition in the House of Lords. Lord Lyndhurst, acting swiftly, incorporated Chadwick's most important ideas in the Bill, which passed through both Houses without difficulty and became law in 1838.

As usual the law differed in many respects from the original plan as thought out by Chadwick. In an essay on *Life Values* Chadwick had laid down that the objects to be attained by the suggested registrar-general were :

"(1) The registration of the causes of disease, with a view to devising remedies or means of prevention.

"(2) The determination of the salubrity of places in different situations, with a view to individual settlements and public establishments.

"(3) The determination of comparative degrees of salubrity, as between occupation

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itself and occupation in places differently circumstanced, in order that persons willing to engage in insalubrious occupations may be the more effectually enabled to obtain adequate provision for their loss of health.

"(4) The collection of data for calculating the rate of mortality, and giving safety to the immense mass of property insured, so as to enable everyone to employ his money to the best advantage for his own behalf, or for the benefit of persons dear to him; and that without the impression of loss to anyone else.

"(5) The obtainment of a means of ascertaining the progress of population at different periods, and under differing circumstances.

"(6) The direction of the mind of the Government and of the people to the extent and effects of calamities and casualties; the prevention of undue interments; concealed murder; and deaths from culpable heedlessness or negligence."

This quotation is given in full because it shows that at the early age of twenty-eight Chadwick had a rich and full mind, and that

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he was eminently practical, courageous and far-seeing.

Chadwick had proposed that the clerks to the Poor Law Unions should be the district registrars for births, deaths and marriages and that the medical officers of the unions should be required to record the causes of deaths. He also proposed that the country should be subject to an annual census. All these proposals were altered in the Act during its passage through Parliament. The registrars, it was decided, were to be elected by the Poor Law Guardians; the medical recorders of the deaths were to be the medical attendants of the deceased; and the annual census was altered to one in every ten years.

For the posts of Registrar-General and his assistant, Chadwick agitated for the appointment of a well-known scholar and a distinguished doctor respectively. He was successful in his nomination for the second in command. Doctor William Farr proved an unqualified success and was largely responsible for the excellent results which were obtained during his long tenure of office (1838-1880).

By this scheme of registering, estimating,

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calculating and tabulating, Chadwick had enabled the Registrar-General to determine facts about drainage, water supply, death-rates, birth-rates, and the general condition of inhabitants of town and country which had hitherto been impossible. He had lit a light in dark places so that men could more easily see to live.

*The Constabulary Commission*

On 26th October, 1838, Chadwick was appointed to a commission which was "to inquire into the best means of establishing an efficient constabulary force in the counties of England and Wales with a view to the prevention of crime." Towards the end of March in the following year the report was issued. It contained all Chadwick's well-known theories about getting at the removable antecedents of crime and the prevention of crime.

Chadwick had taken as much interest in the prevention of crime as he had in the prevention of disease and poverty. On this Commission he reaffirmed the principles he

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had laid down in the *London Review* in an article on *Preventive Police* in 1829. Sir Robert Peel's Act dealing with the police force in the metropolitan area was doing useful service, but Chadwick was not satisfied that the conditions existing in the counties were either efficient or adequate. So he pressed Lord John Russell to appoint a further Commission, and was himself, with two others, appointed to make the inquiry.

In the course of his Poor Law inquiries Chadwick had had ample opportunity for investigating facts about the methods of the police, and now he supplemented these inquiries by an exhaustive examination of the criminals themselves.

The report of the Commission advocated that the existing system of disjointed organization under the control of different public bodies each with a different set of regulations should be done away with. In the place of this undisciplined mob a system of closely co-ordinated and well organized police should be instituted, with one set of rules and regulations governing the whole body. This new force should act upon the principle of preventing crime and public

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calamities and not merely of punishing offenders. It should preserve public peace and order, and should be prepared to undertake useful functions on behalf of public welfare.

Effect was only given to some of the recommendations of the Commission. Yet it was soon seen that the cost of the new scheme, with all its additional expenses of organization and equipment, was less than that of the old-fashioned, inefficient and unpaid parish constables.

*Interments in Towns*

In 1843 Sir James Graham requested Chadwick to submit a report on Interments in Towns as a supplementary to the Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population. This subject had for some time past been agitating the public mind, and Chadwick's report was the final complete statement thereon. The report has now served its purpose and the question is no longer so vital and urgent as it was eighty years ago. Although rather distasteful and



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unpleasant it was then a matter of great importance. Chadwick entered upon his task with his usual energy and zeal. He made his investigations among the clergy, who performed the funeral rites, among the working classes, among the officers of burial clubs and societies, among undertakers and those employed in the burial of the dead, and among those of his foreign friends who were acquainted with the mode of procedure in other countries.

Of all Chadwick's reports perhaps this on the burial of the dead is the most brilliant, comprehensive and interesting. Besides being a wonderfully clear statement of fact, it gives a vivid description of a certain phase in the social history of England in the first half of the nineteenth century. But Chadwick was never content with mere investigation of evils, and the report contains suggestions for drastic remedies and reforms.

"It proposed," writes Sir Benjamin Ward Richardson, "in its recommendations to make the whole system of the interment of the dead a national system, national as to proscribed methods, and national also as to the principle of carrying the process out

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on one uniform design." Once again the recommendations were not completely carried out. Once again Chadwick had to submit to a compromise, but he obtained many important reforms. The intramural system of burial, which allowed the burial of the dead within vaults of churches, was done away with, and the principle of an extramural interment in cemeteries outside the town was made compulsory, whilst the overcrowded church graveyards in towns and cities were closed. Chadwick gave ample evidence in his report to prove his contention that, especially among the poorer classes, the retention of the body in the house for days and sometimes weeks until sufficient money for the burial had been collected, was injurious to the live inhabitants, and a direct encouragement to insanitation and disease. In his report he planned for the provision of mortuaries to which the dead could be removed while awaiting burial, thus preventing the possible spread of infectious disease and allaying the fear of premature interments.

As a result of his report Chadwick received much correspondence. Thomas Carlyle's views are interesting and the following



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extract from a letter to Chadwick dated 3rd April, 1850, from Chelsea is taken from Richardson's *The Health of Nations*:

"DEAR CHADWICK,—I unluckily have no horse at present, and know not when I shall, though I often grumble about the want of one—the state of the hepatic regions not being good at all. Some days I go out in utter despair and walk four hours over the heaths on the Surrey side, rushing to and fro, all alone, in a very rabid humour—getting a little good, however, by the operation after all!

"The intramural interment practice is a kind of thing that chokes one's very soul. I think such irreverence to the sacred existence of man was never done before by any of the posterity of Adam; the thing oppresses me with a feeling quite chaotic, almost more than infernal, such irreligion presided over by the shovel-hat was never heard of till now! I have long been of opinion that the dead, in large towns, ought all to be buried in the Roman fashion, by burning; one *rogus* each morning for all

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the dead (which would come very cheap, and might be very solemn), and a rich individual might have a funeral pile to himself if he were of mind to pay for it.

"This, I think, will be the real remedy, so soon as men are prepared for it; but Semitic and other rubbish lies in the way yet.

"Yours ever truly,

"T. CARLYLE."

Carlyle's theory is still far from being the recognized fashion, but the method of disposal of the dead by cremation is gaining ground. Chadwick, making allowances for sentiment and religion, always maintained that the destruction of the dead body by fire was the most sanitary solution of the problem.

*Paris*

"Fair above, Sire, and foul below" is reported to have been Chadwick's reply to Napoleon III on being asked by the Emperor what he thought of Paris. But according to Richardson this smart retort was never made. His real answer was: "Sire, they

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say that Augustus found Rome a city of brick, and left it a city of marble. If your Majesty, finding Paris fair above, will leave it sweet below, you will more than rival the first Emperor of Rome."

This conversation took place at one of the many interviews between Chadwick and Napoleon III when the former was in Paris on what he described as an "instructive holiday." The years 1855-6 were the years of the Paris exhibition and Chadwick's "instructive holiday" was spent in sight-seeing at the exhibition, and investigating the sanitary principles and ideas current at the capital at that time. From his reply to the Emperor it was obvious that Chadwick was not greatly impressed with what he had seen, and he quickly persuaded the Emperor to hold an inquiry into the sanitary condition of Paris.

Chadwick's work on behalf of sanitary science and hygiene was much appreciated in France, and his reports and various papers had a wide circulation. The appreciation of the country was shown when he was elected a corresponding member of the Academy of Moral and Political Science of the Institute of France. The following

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extract from the *Revue Internationale* showed a sense of deep gratitude to a man who had been tireless in his energies on behalf of world sanitation :

*"M. Chadwick est une des gloires de l'Angleterre. Il a quatre-vingt-sept ans, et il est pour l'Angleterre ce qu'est M. Chevreul pour la France."*

*Parliament*

Chadwick was a great man, an impressive character and an able administrator, but he would have been futile as a parliamentarian. In the House of Commons he would have been laughed at for his sincerity. His long rambling speeches would have bored members, and his fierce aggressive manner would have been derided. Nevertheless in 1867 he stood as a candidate for the University of London, and proposals were put forward at different times that he should stand as a candidate for Evesham and Kilmarnock Burghs. None of these, however, came to anything.

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In his address to the electors of the University Chadwick presented himself as what would now be called an Independent. His address was a *précis* of his life's work. He made no efforts at canvassing the electors, but told them in plain unadorned language what he had done, and the motives which had inspired him. He mentioned education and the half-time system, and stressed the point that he had been one of the earliest enthusiasts for the full development of the University. He pointed out that he had been the first to recognize the necessity for legislation to safeguard workmen employed in building the railways from negligence on the part of the employers, and had even advocated the nationalization of these public highways—as already carried out in other countries. He also referred to his work on behalf of public health.

His candidature is interesting for the support he received from well-known men, among whom was John Stuart Mill. Probably no one understood or appreciated Chadwick's administrative powers better than Mill, and the following extract from a letter from Mill addressed to him in support

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of his candidature showed how deeply his services had been valued :

“ No one whom I know of has devoted so great a portion of his life, or so great an amount of mental power, as you have done, to the study of the scientific principles of administration. The course of your official life has continually brought you into contact with the most difficult administrative problems, and . . . there is hardly one on which you have not originated thoughts, and suggestions of the greatest value. . . . On several of the most important branches of public administration, you add to your knowledge of principles a knowledge of details which few can rival. I need only mention the Sanitary Department, the importance of which, now so widely recognized, you were among the very first to press upon a careless public; the various branches of the administration of relief to the destitute; and many parts of the great subject of the education of the poor. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

But in spite of his essay setting forth what he had done for the nation, and in spite of Mill's support the electors of the

<sup>1</sup> Richardson, *The Health of Nations*, quoted.

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University, to the secret gratification and relief of his friends, did not return him to Parliament.

Chadwick outside Parliament was a source of constant terror to Government and Opposition alike. Chadwick inside Parliament would have been like a wild bird in a cage.

## CHAPTER VII

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

**I**N making a summary of Chadwick's life, in estimating his place among the Roadmakers of the British Isles, we start by acknowledging him as a great worker. From the time of his first appointment he worked continuously, methodically and successfully at several subjects. But hard work alone does not constitute a roadmaker. The work must be of value to the country, must open up a new avenue for progress.

The conditions of the Poor Law before 1834 were such that it was necessary for a man of iron will and superlative energy to administer the new Act. The nadir of demoralization and inefficiency had been reached. Drastic enforcement of the new law was essential at once if the country was to be saved from revolution. Quickly grasping the central fact that demoralization had