

RATE OF  
MORTALITY IN MANCHESTER, &c.

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IN regard to climatic qualities, Manchester bears an unenviable character. Its gloomy atmosphere, charged with unwholesome vapours, the product of numerous furnaces, and its reputed humidity, owing, as alleged, partly to some peculiarity in its geographical position, but chiefly to the heavy falls of rain which are spoken of as being incessant throughout the year, must of necessity, if true, render such a locality sufficiently disagreeable; while the density of its poor population, which is thought to be destructively great, and the pernicious influence of factory employment in more senses than one, contribute to form a combination of circumstances calculated to lead, by logical inevitability to the conclusion, that this town must also be eminently insalubrious as well as uninviting. Indeed, to hear its many grave demerits discussed by strangers who know it by reputation only, the listener cannot fail of being imbued with the idea that the city of Manchester can only be compared to a gigantic hotbed of pestilential fermentation.

Nor is the imputation altogether discredited by many of its inhabitants, who, unable to refute, are content to accept it as a truth, and to make the most they can out of time and opportunity, with a view to secure their own safety, by placing themselves at a convenient distance from it whenever circumstances shall render such procedure practicable. In cases of sickness, it is by no means uncommon to hear it assumed, as an admitted fact, that perfect restoration must be impossible unaided by removal to another atmosphere. Nevertheless, the great bulk of the inhabitants of Manchester do recover from maladies of severest type within its precincts, unassisted by such auxiliaries; and it does not appear, judging from its rate of mortality, that the public health of this city is much less favourably conditioned than that of many other town communities, even where cotton manufacturing influences are altogether unknown.

It is not here intimated that removal from the climate of Manchester, with all the associated advantages of change, is not serviceable to the convalescent. On the contrary, it often proves of the highest value, and in some cases, here as elsewhere, is quite essential; but this is, perhaps, chiefly so in the simple sense of exchange of the air of the sick room and that of the surrounding locality, with which the system of the patient has, by protracted confinement, become surfeited, for an atmosphere totally different, whether in town or country, and

irrespective of any specific virtue supposed to be possessed by that removed to. Nor need imagination stand responsible for the assertion that the Manchester atmosphere not seldom proves as powerfully and as speedily renovating to the convalescent whose malady has for weeks or months held him prostrate amidst the balmy air of the Cheshire meadows, or on the breezy hill-slopes of Cumberland, as the sea-side influence does to one removed from the midst of the town.

It is here purposed to enquire, with the utmost possible brevity, into a few of the principal agencies which render, or are supposed to render, the Manchester populace and its inhabitants generally, unfavourably circumstanced as to sanitary conditions in comparison of those of other towns differing more or less from it in regard to the distribution of social elements, and the character of their several industries.

#### ATMOSPHERIC IMPURITY AND HUMIDITY.

A smoke-charged atmosphere is undoubtedly objectionable and unpleasant to the senses, and by no means conducive to salubrity; but its influence upon health and the duration of life has probably been erroneously estimated. They who are most exposed to the direct action of coal smoke, such as