

CHAPTER XI.

THE AFTERGLOW.

It was at this time that the Prince Consort died, and England was full of mourning. Lord Shaftesbury speaks, in his diary of December 16, 1861, of that national loss, and then alludes to the death of my grandfather in these words:—

“I hear, too, that my valued friend and co-adjutor in efforts for the sanitary improvement of England is gone—the learned, warm-hearted, highly-gifted Southwood Smith.”

But the work he had set on foot and the principles he had established did not end with his life. They have gone on with an ever-increasing vitality to this day.

The efforts he made for the non-employment of women and young children in mines have resulted in the entire cessation of the practice;

while his work for the provision of proper schooling for factory children has culminated now in a whole system of workhouse and factory supervision and in the school-board system throughout the land.

Intramural burial is virtually at an end. And the "Home Hospitals" and "Nursing Homes," which are established in all our large towns, are the successors of that "Sanatorium, or Home in Sickness," which he devised, and for which Charles Dickens pleaded in its early days.

The marshy Bethnal Green and Spitalfields, where he first visited the individual homes, and which he took Lord Normanby and Lord Ashley to see, are now comparatively healthy places. He found them without water; there is now water laid on to every house. He found them without drainage; now a complete and scientific system of drainage exists throughout the metropolis. The "£7,000,000 of public money spent on sanitary reform," over which he rejoiced so greatly, is, since he spoke in 1857, increased by all the millions spent on such works in the last forty years.

His first set of "Model Dwellings," in the

St Pancras Road, is now multiplied by the countless blocks of such in all the large towns of England. Sanitary Law and Sanitary Inspection everywhere prevail, and the thousands of lives annually saved—the lowered death-rate both in town and country—attests the power of the laws he was one of the first to perceive and proclaim.

To show the saving of life in London alone, the death-rate in the early "forties" was 26 in the thousand, it is now 19; whilst in the Model Dwellings the improvement is even more striking, since there it is not more than half that of London at large. To show how completely the experiment he made to prove the possible healthfulness of such dwellings has answered, it is only necessary to quote the figures given in the report just issued for this fifty-third year of the Society which he founded.

"The rate of mortality," we learn, "in the Dwellings of the Association, was 9.64 per 1000, including 12 deaths which occurred in hospitals, infirmaries, &c. In the entire metropolis the rate was 18.2 per 1000. As regards infant mortality, the deaths under one year of age were

at the rate of 79 in every 1000 births; and in the entire metropolis, at the rate of 161 per 1000 births."

Allusion has been made to the bust which was executed as a tribute to the public services of my grandfather by those whom we have called the Pioneers of Sanitary Reform—Lord Normanby, Lord Shaftesbury, Lord Carlisle (formerly Lord Morpeth), Charles Dickens, Mr Slaney, and others. This bust is now in the National Portrait Gallery, and accompanying it are the following lines by Leigh Hunt, which proclaim the services of his life in the cause of the poor to wider circles still:—

"Ages shall honour, in their hearts enshrined,
Thee, Southwood Smith, Physician of Mankind;
Bringer of Air, Light, Health into the Home
Of the sick Poor of happier times to come!"

APPENDIX