PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

One of the most remarkable features in the educational movement of the present day has been the increased effort to diffuse a knowledge of the relations which exist between our health and the air we breathe, the water and food we consume, the soil we tread and the buildings we occupy. Known under the various current names of Sanitary Science, Public Health or Hygiene, this subject involves an acquaintance with such diverse sciences as physics, chemistry, geology, engineering, architecture, meteorology, epidemiology, bacteriology and statistics. To these, strictly speaking, may be added the study of the law or those legal enactments which concern the sanitary well-being of communities.

When, therefore, the publishers asked us to prepare a small work on this many-sided subject, to form one of their Science Manuals, such as would present its facts and principles fully, briefly, and yet in simple language suitable for both non-professional and professional readers, we were early confronted with the difficulty of deciding what to include and what to omit.

We have endeavoured to consider the general laws of health, the causes of disease and the means of combating them, in the simplest language, and, by divesting them, where possible, of scientific technicalities, to make clear, even to non-scientific readers, those great natural laws and processes upon which our healthy life so much depends. While doing so, we have felt bound to be not unmindful of the wants of others, desirous of entering more fully into the study of what should be a great and practical subject in our national education. The work is not to be regarded as a substitute for the regular and more advanced
books which discuss the subject of hygiene in its many bearings, but rather is intended as an introductory manual for the use of junior students or others, preparatory to a more extended and practical study of public health work.

As regards chemical analysis, we have only attempted to give such details as appeared absolutely necessary in order to make the book useful to those capable of appreciating the meaning and value of results. For their practical application, laboratory experience and instruction are essential. In order to encourage uniformity of international knowledge, the metric system of weights and measures is used.

In view of the increasing public interest taken in facts and laws concerning Weather, Climates, and Vital Statistics, short chapters have been given upon these subjects, in non-technical language as far as possible.

For illustrating some part of the text, we are indebted to Mr. L. Casella for the use of drawings of various meteorological instruments, and to Mrs. Bruce for several original diagrams. In order to further illustrate the text, use has been made of four diagrams published by the Local Government Board in their annual reports.

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