



PEASANT'S SONG OF WINTER.

BY JAMES LINEN, POET LAUREATE OF CALIFORNIA.

Autumn has died and Winter is come,
The groves are mute, and the birds are dumb,
The winds are cold and the skies are gray,
And the weary sun makes short the day.

And the gushing streams and tiny rills,
That danced and leapt down the rugged hills,
And meandered through the withered plains,
Are bound in fetters of icy chains.

Like fragments of robes that seraphs wear
Now the fleecy snow flakes fill the air;
And the crispy earth is wrapt in white,
And moon nor stars lend now their light.

But snows may drift and the clouds may scowl
The hail may beat and the tempest howl;
They bring not want to the peasant's door,
Whose thrift has garnered his winter's store.

All the joy he feels no tongue may tell,
For love and peace in his cottage dwell,
And scorns the slave of base desires,
While he lives as lived his honest sires.

Though trees are stript of their leafy plumes,
And the garden glow no more with blooms,
Oh the little snow drop sweetly chaste,
Will blossom soon on the hoary waste!

Warm suns will shine and the soft winds blow,
And rivers swell with the melting snow,
And the daisies soon again be seen,
And the seeming fields be clothed in green.

Torpid Nature into life will spring,
The orchard bloom and the skylark sing;
While the swallows back again will come,
And the woodlands be no longer dumb.

The bees will steal from their cloistered cells,
To gather sweets from the cups and bells,
And the dreary mountains joyful be,
When nature is set from Winter free.

So the changing seasons come and go,
While the springs of life still onward flow;
And faith and hope cheer the peasant's end,
When the chilling dews of death descend.

He knows when his earthly race is run,
That the golden prize of life is won,
He goes to a better land than this,
To traverse fields of eternal bliss!

SORGHUM SUCRE.

The success that has attended the cultivation of the Chinese Sugar Cane in this Territory, will unquestionably induce many to give the subject more attention than heretofore, and it is presumed that there will be far more seed planted the coming spring than there was last season, especially in locations most suitable to its growth. Those who are making calculations to cultivate sorghum in large or small quantities, will do well to provide in season, if they have not already done so, good clean seed, unmixed with broom corn, as was most of the cane that was grown in this county last year and, especially that which was raised in this city. We have been informed by several persons who were extensively engaged in the manufacture of molasses from sorghum last fall, that broom corn had been so much mixed with the cane that in many instances the yield of syrup was thereby greatly diminished.

If more care is not taken hereafter, than there has been thus far since the introduction of sorghum into the country, in growing it where there's no broom corn near enough to mix with it, the seed will soon become so adulterated that the cane will be of little worth for making sweets; and those who are intending to engage extensively in its culture the present year will do well to be careful in the selection of seed and to have it ready for planting as early in the spring as the season will permit. Not only should pure seed be planted, but that which was fully matured and gathered before it was injured by frost. The seed grown in the southern part of the Territory would be preferable in our opinion, to most of that which was grown in this vicinity, as farmers there have been more careful, it is said, in keeping it pure, and the summer season below the rim of the Basin is of sufficient duration for the crop to fully mature.

Exemption from Taxation.—For the purpose of encouraging the production of Sheep in Kansas Territory, the Legislature last winter passed an act exempting all sheep in the Territory, owned by citizens thereof, and all lots, fields, pastures, barns and shed inclosed or erected for the exclusive protection of sheep, from all taxes whatsoever.

HEALTHY DWELLINGS.

WHERE, WHEN, AND HOW TO BUILD THEM.

Mr Henry Roberts, F. S. A., read before the Ladies Sanatory Association of Great Britain, an elaborate paper on "Healthy Dwellings," which was published in the London Builder. The following condensation of the paper may not be altogether uninteresting to individuals, who prefer pleasant, comfortable habitations to those that are built without due regard to health, comfort, and convenience, as many are, both in city and country:

All have a personal interest in knowing what are the conditions essential to a "healthy dwelling." In endeavoring to point them out with precision and brevity, my aim will be to avoid the use of technical terms, as much as possible; and with a view to simplify the treatment of the subject, it will be considered under the three heads already indicated. 1st, as to that which is local; 2d, as to that which is structural; and, 3d, as to that which may be distinguished as being mainly, though not wholly dependent upon the occupants of the dwelling.

In regard to locality.—High and dry situations, with a free circulation of air, whether in towns or in country, are proverbially healthy, while those which are low and damp, or surrounded by confined air are the opposite. Experience afforded by the state of troops when encamped, or when in permanent barracks, or in hospitals, is conclusive on this point. It is on record that the mortality of troops in Jamaica has been diminished from 120 to 20 per thousand, by their removal from the plains to the hills. And it is well known that ague, dysentery, and fever prevail in localities where the surface of the ground is naturally wet, and insufficiently drained; or where there exists an accumulation of decaying matter, of which one sure indication is the presence of an abundance of flies. Dampness of situation is also productive of mental depression, bodily feebleness, and a disposition to intoxicating drink.

Wherever, therefore, dwellings are built on naturally wet ground, it is essential to their being healthy, that ample provision be made for draining the soil, as well as for ordinary surface drainage, and the carrying off of surplus fluid from the house itself. This necessity is more manifest in the country than it is usually in towns, as their gradual formation and progressive increase, has generally been accompanied with surface drainage, under some form or other.

HOUSE DRAINAGE.

In house drainage, one valuable modern improvement is the use of glazed earthenware tubes, which should invariably be kept as much as possible without the building; and especial care ought to be taken that the pipes which discharge into them are properly trapped, in order that they may not become a medium for the escape of foul air into the dwelling. Cesspools under basement floors have been the cause of sickness and deaths innumerable. During the cholera in 1849, to my own knowledge, several cases, wholly traceable to this cause, occurred in one house. Whenever these latent sources of mischief are discovered they should be removed as quickly as possible. The experience of an eminent sanitary engineer leads me to believe that in many houses of the first magnitude, both in the metropolis and in the country, which are not of recent construction, this evil exists, as well as that of defective drains, causing the ground under the house to become sodden with fetid matter. The gases which originate from these sources and diffuse themselves over the dwelling, constitute one of those conditions of local impurity which exercises a powerful influence, when the state of the atmosphere is favorable to an outbreak or spread of cholera, fever, or other kindred complaints.

PURE WATER.

For an ample supply of pure water, one of the most important accessories to a healthy dwelling, the public authorities should, in case of towns, be held responsible. The contamination of our rivers, by their being unscrupulously, and at the same time most wastefully, made the receptacles of sewerage, has rendered them very generally incapable of supplying the neighboring population with wholesome water. That drawn from wells is not unfrequently impure, though its sparkling appearance and freshness to the taste might lead to the contrary supposition; in towns this is generally caused by an infiltration from some neighboring drain, cesspool, or other deposit of putrifying matter.

For dwellings in the country good drainage and ready access to pure water are not less essential than they are in towns, and they ought, therefore, to be made the subject of deliberate investigation before the locality of a dwelling is fixed on.

THE SOIL.

Gravelly soil is unquestionably the most healthy, and next to it one of sand. The embosoming in trees should be avoided; loose soil close to the house is frequently a cause of damp, which might be remedied by a flagging of stone, covering a dry drain formed round a building. Care should, therefore, be bestowed in regard to the surface of the ground round a dwelling, as well as the selection of a site.

THE OUTLOOK, ETC., ETC.

The influence of aspect on the salubrity of a dwelling is too often overlooked, in prefer-

ence to all others, the south should be chosen. In towns the difficulty of obtaining a sunny frontage may frequently be great, if not insurmountable; but the value of having the sun's rays for some portion of the day within the dwelling, especially in the rooms occupied by children or by invalids, should never be forgotten. I could point to a large convalescent asylum in the country, so arranged that the spacious gallery used by the patients for exercise, and where much of their time is passed, is for the greater part of the day, without the cheering and warming rays of the sun. I know not whether in this instance it was the case, but such mistakes are likely to arise out of the prevailing mania for the choice of plans in competition, which are often made by novices and selected by incompetent judges, instead of experience and professional advice being taken.

In particular localities diseases which formerly prevailed have, under the sanitary improvements—such, especially, as a free circulation of fresh air, efficient drainage, and cleanliness in the houses and the persons of their occupants—greatly diminished, and in many instances entirely ceased. This has been the case to a remarkable degree in some of the valleys of Switzerland, where the painful disease in the neck called "goitre," and the species of idiocy called "cretinism," formerly prevailed much more extensively than they do now. Remarkable instances have been mentioned to me in that country of the sad consequences to children born and reared in a low and damp ground story, whilst those in the floor above were perfectly healthy.

The beneficial results of sanitary improvements effected in several of our large towns within the past ten years, are very manifest. I select three, out of nineteen, returns which have been obtained. In the metropolis, the death-rate has been reduced from 25 in 1,000 to about 23; at Croydon, the reduction has been from 27 in 1,000 to 22-9; and at Liverpool, from 39 in 1,000 to 27. Knowing, however, as we do, that the normal standard is certainly not above 17 in 1,000, these results should only be regarded as a proof of our responsibility, and an encouragement to perseverance in the discharge of duty.

Before passing on to the next head, I observe, in reference to the local position of the building in towns, that, if the streets around them are of sufficient width, and there is no obstruction to the current of air, dwellings in towns may be better ventilated when they are moderately high, than when they are low and surrounded by higher buildings which exclude a free circulation of air. Nothing can be worse in this respect than the narrow courts terminating in a cul-de-sac, which are so numerous in London and many other towns, small as well as large.

Having already noticed under the head of "Locality," that a free circulation of pure air, an efficient drainage, and an ample supply of good water are indispensable requisites to a healthy dwelling, we come now to inquire secondly, what is essential in the structure of a dwelling to its being healthy? 1. It must be dry. 2. Warm. 3. The number and area of its apartments must be in proportion to the number of its occupants, and a due provision be made for a well-ordered family life. 4. It must be properly ventilated, and entirely free from noxious vapors of every kind.

DRYNESS.

1. In order to a house being dry, it must stand on a dry foundation; and where this is not otherwise obtainable, artificial means should be adopted, either by forming a stratum of concrete, varying in depth according to circumstances, but never less than 12 inches, or by bedding slate in cement, or laying asphalt through the whole thickness of the wall, under the floor level. The ground floor should be raised not less than about 8 inches above the external surface, and where there is no basement story, and the floors are of wood, they should be ventilated by means of air-bricks built in the external walls, the ground being excavated to the depth of not less than 12 inches.

The walls must be weather-proof, of sufficient thickness to secure dryness and warmth. On the facility for obtaining the material may depend whether brick, stone, or flint be used, whichever it be, good mortar is essential to dryness. In some places concrete, Pise, or cob, with an external facing of plaster, may be employed with advantage, provided the foundation be dry. Hollow walls conduce greatly to dryness and warmth; and with stone or flint externally, a lining of brick or tile, with a small hollow space left between, is an effectual means of securing both these benefits. A glazing on the external surface of brickwork is an effectual preventative of damp, and it is to be regretted that suitably glazed bricks are not easily to be obtained at a moderate price.

Whenever, for the sake of economy, a ground-floor is laid with brick or tile, it is essential that there should be a dry bed beneath it. Hollow bricks, if well made, may, with advantage be used for this purpose, and will prove warm and durable. In some parts of the country lime and sand floors are pretty generally used for cottages, and when properly made are said to last upwards of forty years. Stone or slate is, of course, preferable to either, in places where there is much wear. Bedrooms ought, in our climate, to have boarded floors.

It is a false economy to use inferior or unseasoned wood in any part of a dwelling, whilst the cracks and shingles caused thereby are often prejudicial to health.

For the covering of roofs, tiles are generally found to be warmer in the winter and cooler in

the summer than slate, and, requiring less lead, are more economical. In some situations, however, slate more effectually excludes the weather, and is, on that account, preferable. Projecting eaves should invariably have gutters, to prevent the drip, which renders the walls and foundation damp.

WARMTH.

2. The warmth of a dwelling depends not only on its aspect, its dryness, the materials used, their proper application and substance, as I have already noticed, but also on the structural plan, and particularly on the relative position of the doors and fireplaces, as well as of the windows and spaces for beds; which should be so contrived as that the occupants are not exposed to draughts.

It is surprising, that, with all our regard for comfort, we should not more frequently, by the use of double sashes, which are so commonly used in many parts of the continent, endeavor to modify the effects of our valuable climate, and retain more of the small portion of genial warmth which passes into the room from our wastefully constructed open fireplaces. The artificial warming of buildings will be referred to hereafter in connection with ventilation.

APARTMENTS—THEIR AREA, ETC.

3. It is essential to a healthy dwelling, that the number and area of the apartments be in proportion to the number of the occupants, and that suitable provision be made for all that appertains to a well ordered domiciliary life. The question of the amount of space required for health being greatly dependent on efficient ventilation, will be considered hereafter under that head. Suffice it at present to say, that the scale of accommodation in most dwellings, depends in a great measure on the means and circumstances of the occupants; as these vary so much, all that I can attempt is to point out the minimum provision which should be made in the country for a laborer's family, consisting of parents and children of both sexes. There should be a small entrance-lobby, a living-room not less than 150 feet in area, a scullery, of from sixty feet to eighty feet area, in which there should be a stove or fire-place for use in summer, as well as a small pantry. Above should be a parent's bed-room of not less than 100 feet superficial, and two sleeping-rooms for the children, averaging from seventy feet to eighty feet superficial each, with a distinct and independent access. Two of the sleeping-rooms, at least, should have fire-places. There should also be a ventilated and well-drained closet, and suitable receptacles for fuel and dust. The height of the rooms, in order to their being healthy, should be scarcely less than eight feet, and even nine feet would be desirable, but for the extra expense. With a view to ventilation, the windows should reach nearly to the ceiling, and the upper part be invariably made to open.

CHIMNEYS, WATER PIPES, ETC.

To revert again to the essentials in the construction of a healthy dwelling, I add, that the smoking of chimneys, if not caused, as it often is, by the want of sufficient air in the apartment, or by bad management in the first lighting, or in putting on of fuel, generally arises from some defect in the construction of the flue, and not unfrequently from its being too large for insuring a continuous upward current. Nine inches square, or, which is preferable, eleven inches diameter, is size sufficient for all ordinary chimneys. Especial pains ought to be taken to avoid smoke, an evil which so greatly contaminates the air, and proverbially has but one parallel in the category of domestic grievances.

The use of lead for water-pipes, and especially for cisterns which are to hold drinking water, ought to be dispensed with as much as possible, on account of the injurious effects produced by the chemical action which frequently takes place when the water is soft. Iron, properly varnished, may be substituted for both purposes; and for cisterns, slate is a very suitable material. The offensive smell which often proceeds from sinks of ordinary stone or lead, renders the substitution either of slate, of glazed stone ware, or of enameled iron, very desirable, wherever it be practicable.

LIGHT.

4. A dwelling, to be healthy, must be well lighted—a dark house is not only gloomy and dispiriting, but always unhealthy. We know, on high medical authority, that "the amount of disease in light rooms as compared with dark ones is vastly less." Light ought to be diffused over the whole dwelling, so that no dark corners be left to invite a deposit of that which is untidy or offensive.

VENTILATION.

5. Proper ventilation, efficient warming, and entire freedom from noxious odors, constitute, with the four points already noticed, the sum total of those essentials to a healthy dwelling which are dependent on locality and structure.

The question of ventilation is of the first importance; though, judging from the neglectful indifference of multitudes, its value is far from being duly appreciated by the educated, and even by some of the scientific classes of the community. Were it otherwise, the closeness perceptible on entering many of their dwellings, the oppressive heat of the rooms, the sickening fustiness in the apartments occupied by the servants, and too frequently in those of the children, would certainly not exist. In halls and lecture rooms, as well as in schools and other places of public resort, how often does the atmosphere become unbearable through the neglect of an efficient application of known laws.