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striking change that is taking place in the men themselves. There has developed a happiness and enthusiasm and a sense of corporate life that is quite unmistakable. Failures were exceptionally few, being found among those who had difficulty in adapting themselves to their disabilities or those who suffered from diseases which were overwhelming in their manifestations.

This pioneer venture well merits the attention of those who are concerned with community health and who cling to the view that in medicine final social resettlement is the end of therapy.

F. A. E. Crew


At least a generation has grown up in Britain in an environment in which the bacterial purity of the water and food supply has been assured by the application of hygienic methods and controlled by statutory regulations. The benefits to health have been immense and several once common diseases have become, as a result, comparative rarities. No comparable advance has been made in air hygiene. Two technical reasons are probably responsible for the delay. First there is a much greater quantity of air requiring control than of food and water. Secondly, the majority of micro-organisms responsible for air-borne infections will not grow on agar plates, the corner stone of all research on the purity of food and water. This report describes basic experiments in air hygiene, which should foreshadow practical advances comparable with those at the end of the last century in water and food hygiene. It covers seven years' work by a team of research workers at the National Institute of Medical Research, Hampstead, begun in 1939 under the captaincy of Sir Patrick Laidlaw, carried on under Dr. C. A. Andreas, and completed and expounded under Dr. R. B. Bourdillon. The report is a model of what a well-integrated research team can accomplish.

Part I deals with methods of sampling air for bacteria, a difficult bacteriological problem. There is the implication that air either free from, or heavily contaminated with, bacteria is probably correspondingly either free from or heavily contaminated with pathogenic viruses. Until precise methods of detecting viruses in air become available, this must remain a hypothesis. Nevertheless, it is an assumption on which practical policy can be profitably based. Parts II to V deal with air disinfection by chemicals, by ultra-violet radiation, by heat, and by recirculation through filters. Part VI discusses the use of masks. There follow accounts of field trials in a city hospital, in operating theatres, in a dwelling house, in factories, on a cruiser, and on a submarine. Animal tests with infective aerozols are described. Finally some general conclusions are given. The findings are not as yet sufficiently clear-cut or concise to be summarized in a few sentences in a review.

This report demands careful reading and study by all interested in the prevention of upper respiratory diseases. The many authors must be congratulated on the clear manner in which much difficult technical matter has been expressed. There can be little doubt that many of the findings will have far-reaching results on the health of the people.


This catalogue of an Exhibition organized by the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum contains an excellent bibliography of early works on smallpox and vaccination and much other useful information. It will be invaluable to anyone starting a study of the history of smallpox or of infectious diseases in general.