

HEALTH AND HOUSING IN MALTON.

(SPECIALLY CONTRIBUTED)

I

Population and Health Statistics

We have frequently heard the word "Happy" applied to Malton, from which it is fair to assume that it enjoys its life, and, therefore, that it might be truthfully described as "Healthy Malton;" but, before a district can lay claim to being healthy it must take care to prove its title by reference to reliable health statistics. There are many considerations which go to make a distractive attractive, from the health point of view, and amongst these are the quality and quantity of water supply, the nature of the soil and subsoil, the purity of the atmosphere and associated meteorological phenomena are of first importance, for upon these the health of the community mainly depends. Malton is "happy" in regard to all these matters.

Objects of this Enquiry

It is the object of this and two or three proceeding articles to prove the good health of Malton by an examination of certain vital statistics of Malton Urban district (not accessible to the general public). We will complete this enquiry by looking at the census returns of the population of Malton and Norton from 1841 to 1901, and comparing these with England and Wales and with the north and East Ridings of Yorkshire (estimates are given for the years intervening between two census enumerations):-

Census Year	Malton	Norton	England and Wales	N. and E. Ridings of Yorks
1841	5,395	1,644	15,914,148	399,637
1851	5,370	2,335	17,927,609	436,197
1861	4,089	2,983	20,066,224	485,381
1871	4,998	3,170	22,712,266	561,744
1881	5,272	3,479	25,968,286	661,720
1891	4,910	3,682	29,002,525	768,033
1901	4,758	3,842	32,526,075	838,255
1908	4,758	3,954	35,348,780	913,697

Birth and Death Rates.

The birth-rates and death-rates of the Malton Urban District from 1861 to 1908 are:

Year	Birth-rate	Death-rate	Infantile mortality
1861	39.01	24.70	
1871	29.63	19.80	
1881	35.19	16.12	
1891	26.77	21.29	151.51
1892	26.51	13.97	62.01
1893	26.92	21.12	138.46
1894	30.25	11.68	117.24
1895	24.29	19.68	206.89
1896	26.48	17.58	152.00
1897	25.40	16.01	100.84
1898	27.54	15.79	162.79
1899	27.32	18.51	164.06
1900	26.47	19.64	161.29
1901	27.32	15.34	87.69
1902	21.65	16.39	96.15
1903	29.42	16.60	107.14
1904	22.70	18.91	111.11
1905	27.74	17.65	75.00
1906	23.95	17.23	140.35
1907	22.69	12.18	83.33
1908	20.80	10.59	121.21

The highest birth-rate in the period covered by this table was in 1879 (40.51), and the lowest that for 1908 (20.80). The highest death-rate was recorded in 1862 (31.82), and the lowest one again in 1908 (10.50). It will be noticed that the highest infant mortality rate reported since 1891 was 206.89 per thousand births in 1895; the lowest rate being 62.01 in 1892, and the next lowest 75.00 in 1905. The figure for 1908 (121.21) is distinctly disappointing. The whole question of infant mortality will be dealt with in a later article.

In order to understand the relative position of Malton, we give the vital statistics in the following places in Yorkshire (in the East Riding for 1907, in the North Riding for 1908):

	Population	Births	Deaths	Infant Mort.
Malton Urban	4,798	20.8	10.5	121
Driffield Urban District	5,766	22.3	15.8	80
Driffield Rural	11,988	25.4	13.9	10
Pocklington Urban	2,463	20.7	22.3	211
Pocklington Rural	11,246	24.2	15.7	111
Norton Rural	5,738	23.9	13.7	90
Norton Urban	3,842	29.0	13.7	105
Pickering Urban	3,480	24.7	15.22	162
Helmsley Rural	3,391	19.46	14.45	45
Thirsk Rural	12,710	22.34	14.08	113

Norton Compared with Malton

The following chart and tables give the birth-rates and death-rates of the Norton Urban District as based on census returns, and the infantile mortality:-

Year	Birth-rate	Death-rate	Infantile mortality
1891	34.20	20.30	111.11
1892	29.70	15.12	127.27
1893	37.60	20.41	228.57
1894	34.18	12.55	100.00
1895	35.33	17.26	233.83
1896	35.41	15.85	194.02
1897	31.01	11.56	161.01
1898	32.67	11.64	88.00
1899	28.86	15.08	144.14
1900	31.55	16.81	188.52
1901	31.40	14.80	173.53
1902	31.88	17.62	97.56
1903	30.71	18.06	134.45
1904	29.04	16.45	106.19
1905	27.90	15.86	119.26
1906	31.61	11.47	88.70
1907	28.94	13.43	105.26
1908	25.03	20.23	170.21

Some readers may remember that the separation of Malton and Norton Urban Districts took place in 1889, and that the first election for the Norton Urban District Council was in 1899. The average birth-rate for Norton during 18 years works out at 31.50, the average death-rate for the same period being 15.92. The average birth-rate for Malton is 25.67, and the average death-rate 16.56.

The presence of the Union Workhouse in Malton Urban District has contributed too largely in the past due to the mortality of the town, owing to certain difficulties associated with the "previous residence" of paupers, and illegitimate infants dying in the institution.

The difference in age constitution between a residential and average working-class district must be obvious to anyone who has devoted ordinary attention to the subject of vital statistics. Whilst Malton's population is largely a residential one, that of Norton is largely working-class. Hence the difference in both birth-rates and death-rates. It will be noted that the death-rates for Norton for the years 1891, 1893, and 1908 were over 20 per 1,000, whilst in the years 1897, and 1906, the minimum was reached at slightly over 11 per 1,000.

Death-rates are not, however, a final test of the sanitary condition of a district or of the health of its inhabitants; they form factors only in the problem of health statistics. Neither can the district be compared with another by the simple use of statistics. As has been said before, the age constitution of the community must be stated, i.e., the number of persons living at various ages in the populations compared.

Why Has Norton Increased and Malton Decreased?

It will be noted that the population of Norton has more than doubled itself in the period over which the table extends. Only a simple calculation is needed to find that had Malton progressed at the same rate its population would have been 11,344. Furthermore, it will be found that while the yearly decrease of the Malton population amounts to 15.2, the increase in the Norton population equals 15.9. In other words (if we take no account of emigration to and immigration from places outside the area under discussion), had Malton retained its own population, Norton would have remained little more than a village. Let us try to illustrate what is meant by a growing population under average conditions. In England every 100 persons living in 1801 had increased to 175 in 1841, and at the same rate of increase would amount to 200 in 1850, and to 300 in 1879. The mean rate increase was .0141 per unit, 1.41 per 100, or 14.1 per 1,000.

Now let us suppose the rate of increase constant and uniform over the whole of Yorkshire. If applied to the population of Malton in 1841, this would then have doubled itself in the middle of 1891, that is it would have been 10,790, instead

of 4,910 as revealed by the last census; and the population of 1008 would have been 13,785, instead of 4,595, which is the approximate estimate. That the population of Malton has been steadily drained of its natural increase there can be no doubt whatsoever. That here has been no effort to retain or augment it is also true.

Is Malton Housing to Blame?

The greatest factor in the problem we have now arrived at is that of housing. Is it want of suitable houses which has drained away population from Malton? Is there an adequate provision of houses for the working class?

The number of inhabited houses in the Malton Urban District is 1,093, in 1909, with an estimated total rental of £16,772 10s.

No. Of Houses	Range of rentals	Estimated Rentals
631	At rentals under £10	£4,372 10
227	Exceeding £10 and under £20	3,405
92	Exceeding £20 and under £30	2,300
73	Exceeding £30 and under £40	2,555
37	Exceeding £40 and under £50	1,665
11	Exceeding £50 and under £60	695
6	Exceeding £60 and under £70	390
4	Exceeding £70 and under £80	300
5	Exceeding £80 and under £90	425
1	Exceeding £90 and under £100	95
6	Exceeding £100	660
1,093		£16,772 10

These figures are of particular interest in several ways. Remembering that 80.8 per cent of the homes of great Britain are rented at less than £20, the fact that in Malton, 858 houses out of 1,093, or a percentage of 78.4 are thus rented shows that the proportion of working-class to their houses in Malton is rather smaller than it is throughout the country. Similar figures are not available for the rather higher rentals. If they were so available, our impression is that they would emphasise the existence of a much larger proportion of better houses in Malton than in the country generally. Turning to another point, we may note that in 1891 Malton had 1,014 houses, and in 1901 1,040. Taking the same periods Norton had 781 and 861 respectively. These figures show that the number of houses in Malton has increased by 79 during the last 18 years and by 53 during the last eight years, or at the rates of 4.3 and 6.6 houses per year during the respective periods taken. But with the exception of

Wentworth-st., erected in 1897, the new houses are almost entirely of the higher-rented class. In 1896, the Medical Officer of Health reported that 25 cottages had become untenanted during the previous 25 years. At the present time (1909) 35 cottages are closed, or are about to be closed, whilst 8 more have recently been pulled down. It is not sufficiently realised by our local Council that a condemned house is a menace to the health of the community. It harbours all kinds of vermin, and although innocent in aspect may be the means of spreading an enormous amount of disease. It would be greatly in the interests of the community for the demolition of such houses to follow automatically upon the the closing order if the repairs required by the local authority are not executed within, say, six or nine months of the issue of the order. Several ruined warehouses are a real danger to the children who play by them.

We have now placed before our readers reliable data upon which they may arrive at definite conclusions with regard to the health and prosperity of Malton. That the population has shown no increase, but, on the contrary, has decreased since 1841, is a matter of serious importance to those traders whose living depends upon the inhabitants of the town. The diminution in the population cannot be attributed to any of the various epidemics which decimate population, to excessive mortality from general diseases, nor by reference to want of work.

Harmful Effects of Lack of Household Accommodation

The real answer as to the chief cause of the decrease in the population is quite plain. For years emigration has taken place from Malton to the adjoining town of Norton, owing to the fact that Malton has continuously set its face against any further increase in the artisan population by the simple process of not providing house accommodation for its workers. This point need not be laboured, since it can be seen in operation on any working day, when many Maltonians pass to their Norton homes, an exceedingly trying necessity for all who live far from their work. It is a short-sighted policy to ignore the signs of the times when so much is made of the duties of property as contrasted with its rights. True, the

method in Malton has not any appearance of that adopted on the other side of the Irish Channel, but its results, extending over a period of years, are certainly more efficacious, if less advertised.

We would lay special stress upon the humanitarian side of the question. That there is a financial side we freely admit, but we are persuaded that both should be carefully studied. There are certain parts of the town in which there is a preponderance of sickness and mortality; and it is in precisely in these parts that dilapidated cottages and other insanitary conditions exist. We may instance Greengate, Old Maltongate, parts of Newbiggin, and Westgate, Old Malton.

Now, there is ample room to build decent working class dwellings in all these positions. The provision of such a class of house would raise the standard of the population, both in health and morals; the amenities of the surroundings would be improved, and local trade would be increased. We hope that the local Council and the noble owner of the estate will see that this question is worthy of their best and most serious consideration. "Salus populi suprema lex est."

Question of Nuisances

We also give a chart and table of nuisances reported and nuisances abated during the past 18 years, as abstracted from the yearly returns of the Sanitary Inspector. We may remark that it is the custom to prepare a schedule of unabated nuisances at the end of each quarter, and to submit the same to the Council for its orders, but in spite of this useful precaution on the part of the officials, many cases might be cited which have gone unabated for years, and this especially with regard to dilapidated cottages.

Under the general term "nuisances" in the following chart and table, it must be understood that varied insanitary conditions are included, amongst which may be mentioned dilapidated and dangerous buildings, defective drainage, ventilation, spouting, paving, asphaltting, insanitary ashpits, privies and w.c/s, the keeping of animals in such a state as to be a nuisance and dangerous to health, overcrowding, etc. A whole article deserves to be given to the last-mentioned subject, for there are as bad cases of

overcrowding in Malton as can be found in many of our large cities.

In his reports the Medical Officer of Health frequently refers to the necessity of the due observance of the orders of the Council as issued in "Notices to owner and occupier," but we do not remember any case in which the Council has prosecuted, for neglect of these "orders."

The Medical Officer of Health says in his last-issued annual report, "there has been a remarkable decrease in the number of nuisances reported during the last few years I regret to find that the number of unabated nuisances is somewhat large, and I must again recommend the Council to enforce due compliance with its orders."

Nuisances reported and nuisances abated:

Year	Reported	Abated	Year	Reported	Abated
1891	309	47	1900	36	30
1892	159	91	1901	90	67
1893	113	90	1902	104	58
1894	31	17	1903	40	15
1895	153	19	1904	20	13
1896	191	25	1905	26	11
1897	33	23	1906	24	13
1898	43	8	1907	24	15
1899	102	54	1908	25	19

The work of inspection has more than trebled itself within recent years. The inspection of factories and workshops, the special enquiries into every case of infectious disease notified to the Medical Officer of Health, the special regulations with regard to the milk supply, the inspection of meat, and the medical inspection of school children have all been added to the ordinary systematic inspection of the district. If this work is to be properly done it is obvious that much time must be devoted to it, and we are pleased to observe that the council has "resolved" to allow no private work to be undertaken by the gentleman who unites in his person the two important offices of Surveyor and Inspector of Nuisances.

Next week: "Infantile Mortality in Malton"