

Author's Preface

THE READER will find here only an outline of the history of industrial hygiene. A comprehensive study would require studies in the archives of the United States and those of the highly industrialized countries of Europe—England and Germany, also France, Belgium, and Italy—studies which cannot be carried out in these postwar times. Therefore this summary is based on my own library, rich in German, Austrian, and English material, and the extensive libraries of New York, among them the New York Public Library, the libraries of the New York Academy of Medicine, of the British Information Service and of the Engineering Societies.

I shall attempt to make a survey of the history of factory hygiene, that is, of the hygiene of the plant and its installations as well as that of the work itself, especially of health safeguards in dangerous occupations, and also of the protection of miners.

I realize fully that some other aspects of working conditions, such as the protection of women and children, the regulation of working hours and wages, have always been of much greater importance for public health and labor protection, because they protect the greatest number of working people in the most effective way. However, being a physician and industrial hygienist, I wish to confine myself to my own field, the hygiene of work. I shall mention the other phases of labor protection only in so far as they will enable the reader to follow the course and understand the development of the history. Accident prevention will also be treated, but since it is rather the concern of engineers it will be dealt with less thoroughly and without technical details. This survey also is restricted to the most industrialized countries: England, Germany, and the United States. Other countries are mentioned occasionally,

and especially the important publications of other countries, science being international, legislation national.

Even in this restricted field I can give only a history of legislation and pertinent scientific progress. In the most industrialized states of Europe and in several states of the United States, the practice of factory hygiene parallels its theoretical growth, never quite keeping pace with legislative measures. There are other states in which there is a decidedly wide gap between legislation and practice. It is no doubt simpler to publish regulations and sign international treaties dealing with labor protection than to complement the laws by an efficient system of factory inspection.

It is almost impossible to acquire a real knowledge of factory hygiene as it is actually applied in different countries. Only a limited number and type of factories are open to the researcher and therefore only a very superficial impression can be gained. The one practical way to become acquainted with the state of factory hygiene in any particular country is to work there as a factory and mine inspector. This I did in Germany, and I am therefore quite familiar with the conditions existing in that country. However, I feel that my inspection tours in England and France, and my activity in the United States, did not produce information specific enough for my purpose and consequently these experiences will not figure in my study.

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