

any way. Six years is a long time to be faithful to a silent lover, Edith."

"We were scarcely lovers, doctor," she replied, with a sad little smile. "Jack just said, 'I'll come back, Edith; will you wait?'" and I said I would—that was all. But poor papa was alive then, and we were rich: now everything is so different. For myself, I am content as I am, but the children!"

"Ah, yes, the children—something must be done for them. They are far too much for you. Did you say Jack Clifford went to the Cape, Edith, and that you never heard from him?"

"Yes, he said he was going to make his fortune in the diamond-fields, but he never wrote, so I dare say he was not successful, poor fellow. Indeed, I think he must be dead."

"I think not," Dr. Ashby replied thoughtfully. "Once more, Edith, I thank you heartily for your candour and confidence, and I will come to you for your final answer at the end of a month. Till then, good-bye," and the doctor lifted his cap, and turned down a by-path that led to the Dingle, and poor Edith went home more perplexed than ever.

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"It's a whole month since we've seen Dr. Ashby—whatever did you say to him, Edith?" Mrs. Bertram said one evening; "the house has seemed wretchedly dull without him. You did not surely refuse him point-blank?"

"No, I did not refuse him," Edith replied wearily; she had answered nearly the same question every day for four weeks, and was tired of it. She was looking pale and worn, but Mrs. Bertram never had eyes for any one's illnesses but her own.

"Mamma," Eva cried, bursting into the room, "here's the doctor and another gentleman!" And Mrs. Bertram smoothed her fluffy hair and put on her amiable smile, while Edith's heart began to beat fiercely. She had thought the matter over from every point of view, and at length come to the conclusion that it would be positively wicked to marry the doctor while Jack Clifford

was so much in her thoughts, and, come what might, she would not do it.

Presently he came in alone, and, after a few moments' conversation, he asked her to walk with him for a few minutes in the garden. She went at once, longing to have the interview over, and burst into the subject directly. "I cannot be your wife, Dr. Ashby; I think it would be wrong of me to accept your proposal, feeling as I do. Please try and forgive me, and let me go."

"First, let me introduce my friend," he said, laying his hand on her arm, "and my new assistant—the work of Ashmead is rather too much for me—Miss Bertram—Mr. Clifford."

"Jack!" In a moment she was in his arms, her face hidden on his shoulder, all the long years of absence and silence forgotten. She only felt that he had returned, and she was still free. Later she learned how it all came about—how Dr. Ashby saw an advertisement in the paper, and guessed that "Jno. C." must mean Jack Clifford, lately returned from the Cape, and several old letters he discovered in a drawer in one of the rooms of the Dingle convinced him that there was treachery at work somewhere. So he just engaged Jack, and then told him all about the Bertrams, and how Edith was still faithful to him, though she never received one of his letters.

The result was a very quiet wedding in Ashmead Church, and on that day Dr. Ashby handed over the Dingle and the practice to his partner, and went to travel in South America, promising to return about the time Blanche was seventeen. Both the children he placed at school, and Mrs. Bertram, feeling very much ashamed of the part she had played in intercepting Jack's letters, left Ashmead, and in a few years married a retired merchant at Brighton, and so never troubled her stepdaughter further.

Jack Clifford is fast becoming the most popular doctor for miles round, and when Seymour Ashby returns, if he ever does, he will find the practice greatly extended. Edith is perfectly happy in her old home, the Dingle, and never for a moment has regretted her perfect faith in Jack.

THE AIR WE BREATHE IN-DOORS.

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.

THE following colloquial tid-bit was related to me by a country practitioner. It is rather amusing in its way, and shows the kind of prejudices which medical men have often to do battle with in the discharge of their duties.

First Member of a Bricklayer's Club.—"Doctor been to your 'ouse again, Gaarge?"

Second ditto.—"Ay, Bill, that he ha,' and on the rampage as usual. He says I can't expect my wife to git well if I doan't give she wentilation; says he has a good mind to poke his stick through a pane o' glass, like

somebody else did—which I'd like to catch him, Bill. An' he says we shouldn't use the water out o' t'ould pond. Now, Bill, I looks on the matter like this 'ere. My father never used nought but the water out o' t'ould pond, it never did he any 'arm as I knows on, and what's good enough for my father is good enough for me."

First Speaker.—"Right you be, Gaarge. But them doctors must grumble. Fac' is, they gives you physick, and if it doan't do no good, they rounds on you at once and puts the blame on the windows, or the water, or the wentilation, or summut."

It would be well not only for medical men, but for society at large, if such ignorance and prejudice as this were entirely confined to the lower classes. Unhappily it is not. The bugbear cold shuts the doors and hermetically seals the double windows of many of the best houses in town and country. The air we breathe in-doors is seldom or never pure; it may support life after a fashion, as muddy water will the life of a fish, but that is all you can say of it. It may not in itself be positively poisonous, but it is nevertheless often eminently well suited to the propagation of the germs of disease. It is on foul and unwholesome air that these live and multiply. It should be remembered that the obnoxious gases emanating even from sewers are not *per se* capable of breeding fever when breathed, but it is in them that fever-germs float and live; they are to these germs what the soil around it is to the plant. It is for this reason among many others that the sense of smell was given us, to enable us to distinguish between what is poisonous and what is wholesome. There is an analogy between taste and smell in this respect; we should never eat anything that is unpalatable, and we should never, if we can possibly avoid it, inhale an evil odour.

Let me here mention parenthetically a mistake that is very commonly made by people, male or female, who, bent on missions of charity, have often to pass through obnoxiously-smelling streets or lanes, or stand for a time in rooms that call aloud for aid from disinfection, viz., that of trusting for safety to the use of eau-de-Cologne or other perfumes with which the handkerchief has been damped. A perfume is not a disinfectant, it does not kill but merely disguises the poison inhaled. At the same time I should say that a good colourless and perfumed disinfectant in the shape of a strong tincture or spirit, that could be sprinkled on the clothes and poured on the handkerchief, would be a great boon to all who are in the habit of visiting for charitable purposes the poor and ailing.

All the nerves of sensation, such as those of the eye, the ear, nose, and palate, are capable of a very high education; the acoustic organs of the great musician and the eye of the colourist furnish us with proofs of the truth of what I state; but delicate nerves are easily trained to the wrong as well as to the right, and what is more, they are often easily dulled and blunted. The sharper the edge of a cutting instrument, the more easily is it spoiled. The olfactory nerves, for example, seem to get inured to unwholesome air after a time; or, what is much the same, the brain becomes incapable of taking cognisance of the impression. A person may be sitting in a room or railway-carriage, and feeling rather comfortable than otherwise in an atmosphere that a person coming directly in from the fresh air finds suffocatingly unwholesome.

I have used the words "rather comfortable" in my last sentence, and if we were to analyse the feeling of comfort which some people enjoy in bed-rooms in which a fire or a lamp is burning, and all fresh air excluded, we should, I think, find it very illusory indeed. It is occasioned partly by warmth and partly by the amount of carbonic acid gas in the room, which being

inhaled acts as a narcotic upon the blood and nerves. Carbonic acid gas is certainly a narcotic, but it is a narcotic *poison*; it is this that kills many infants who are found dead beside the nurse and are said to have been overlaid. In the far northern regions of our own islands, many people are in the habit of going to sleep with their heads entirely buried in the bed-clothes, especially in winter time. Warmth is thus induced, and the re-breathing of the carbonic acid gas exhaled from the lungs acts as a narcotic. But the practice is a dangerous one, no doubt cases of death in bed are sometimes due to it from failure of the heart's action, and it is at all times a most unhealthy one.

What we ought to have in the rooms we sleep in at night is pure air combined with warmth.

The practice of sleeping with the windows of the bed-room open is a good one during the summer months, or all the year round for those who can stand it. But it must not be forgotten that a certain uniform degree of warmth is necessary for the health of the sleeper as well as fresh air. And the liability to sudden changes in the temperature of the atmosphere must always be borne in mind. The air when one goes to sleep may be deliciously temperate, but a chilling frost may come before morning and smite the helpless sleeper as it does a plant or flower. But with a proper system of ventilation, and a proper degree of warmth, a bed-room is very easily rendered both habitable and healthful. As regards warmth we must not go to extremes. It is better the room should not be too hot at first, but the fire should be banked so that it shall maintain the warmth of the room all the night.

Some use stoves instead of open grates for the purpose of conserving the heat. This a stove certainly does, but the heat it throws out is a dry and unwholesome one, and though this can be remedied, and means adopted for moistening the air, a stove is not so good a ventilator as a grate. Worse by far than the ordinary coal-stove is the gas or petroleum apparatus. No one who permits a stove of the kind in his sleeping apartment, *without some scientific system for carrying away the foul air that it generates*, can expect to awake in the morning feeling a sense of refreshment and renewed strength.

Curtains all round beds are very objectionable, for if they do protect from draughts, they exclude the fresh air on which health and life itself depend.

Burning a lamp or gas all night is a most objectionable practice, and I hardly know which is the worst; the lamp probably, but ordinary gas in burning gives off carbonic acid, carbonic oxide, sulphurous acid and other gases, and of course uses up the precious oxygen in the room. It has been estimated that a gas-light of about eight-candle power gives off as much carbonic acid as six men would.

The uneducated cannot quite grasp the idea of the breath of their own bodies being so poisonous as it is. The air that comes from the lungs is colourless and invisible even as that which was inspired—yes, but nevertheless it is very impure indeed. Says a recent writer: "If all the carbonic acid gas that a person exhales in twenty-four hours could be collected, and the

carbon extracted therefrom, the latter would be equal in weight to half a pound or more of charcoal, and this quite independent of the other obnoxious matter given off by the lungs."

Sleeping in bed-rooms which are lighted and warmed artificially, without being properly ventilated, tells against the health in two ways, for the air is not only poisoned by the carbonic acid given off by the fire and lamp or gas, but these latter also deprive it of a deal of its oxygen.

Air in-doors is undoubtedly impure, and incapable of supporting life healthfully, if it contains ten parts of carbonic acid in ten thousand. Well, to say nothing of other impurities, I do not think it would be above the mark to reckon thirty parts instead of ten to the air of ordinary school-rooms, public buildings, theatres, and other places in which crowds assemble, and the atmosphere of nineteen out of every twenty bed-rooms is just as bad.

We have at all events in scientific ventilation a remedy for the impurities of the air caused by the deadly gas carbonic acid. In a well-ventilated room this is carried off up the chimney, or outside somewhere, it matters little so long as it does go, and so long as pure, wholesome, breathable air takes its place. Bed-rooms, by-the-by, are too often ventilated, as it is called, through doors that open into passages, themselves probably highly impregnated with unwholesome odours and bad air. The system of ventilation in many hotels, for example, is faulty in the extreme, and the bed-rooms when untenanted are very often completely neglected, so far as the purity of their atmospheres is concerned.

The air we breathe in-doors is often poisoned by noxious gases emanating from the drains, and not from these alone, but from everything fluid or semi-fluid or damp that is capable of giving off either vapour or odour. Even the odours from the kitchen ought to be prevented from entering the living-rooms.

Want of cleanliness—perfect and complete cleanliness—tends also to poison the air. We should remember that an atmosphere impregnated with dust is not a wholesome one, especially if that dust is occasioned by the disintegration of substances in the room. But I may safely say that dust and dirt are convertible terms.

Although I do not wish to touch upon the subject of ventilation in this paper, I must remind my readers that the object and purpose of all ventilation should be to obtain pure air of a uniform temperature; and that this air should be equably diffused, and never amount to an actual strong current or draught, that may come in contact with and chill the body of the inmate.

The air in the house should be pure *all throughout*. It is folly ventilating one room and neglecting others; the law of diffusion of gases militates against any such plan, and the atmosphere of a house ought to be pure and wholesome from attic to basement. This is very seldom the case; on the contrary, the air of one apartment often poisons that of another; and accidents to drains periodically poison the whole. Very large houses or mansions are sometimes most faulty in their drainage, and outbreaks of fevers are not unfrequently the result of this, so much so that to reside in some of these is quite as dangerous to the health as to reside in one of the poorer districts of London.

The air we breathe in-doors cannot be too often renewed nor too carefully regulated while sickness prevails; but more especially should the ventilation be attended to when that sickness is in the house in which we live. It gives a patient a far greater chance of life if, when ill, he is put in a room with a southern or south-western exposure—a room from which the carpet has been removed, the floor being kept spotlessly clean, and every unnecessary article of furniture taken away, and every curtain or hanging, that may collect dust, taken down. The room should have a cheerful appearance nevertheless; nothing should be left a moment therein that may taint the atmosphere; and such a thing as a slop-pail should never be seen inside its door. A plentiful use of disinfectants should be made, and if the illness be of an infectious character, a screen should be hung before the door, and kept damp with some disinfectant.

It is a well-known fact that a window may be opened wide without fear of cold or draught, if the space be covered with a wire-gauze screen or piece of perforated zinc. This should be borne in mind by those who wish to awake of a morning feeling refreshed and comfortable instead of tired and jaded and sleepy.

DOCTOR JOHNSON ON THE TEMPERANCE QUESTION.



At the present time, when the topic of intoxicating drink is occupying more attention than it has ever done in the history of mankind; when physicians of the highest standing in the world of medicine are pitting the stern authority of science against the insidious attractions of alcohol; when Captain Nares proves that the austere cold of the North Pole can be best encountered without the aid of "strong waters;" when Lord Wolseley, of Cairo, wins Tel El Kebir, amid the burning sands of

the East, upon diluted tea; when the advance of the Blue Ribbon Army has become as imposing a fact as the Holy Crusades; when the genius of the Chancellor of the Exchequer is called upon to face a grave fiscal difficulty, all brought about by the great decrease in the Excise returns; when Sir Wilfrid Lawson has grown quite as much an institution in the House of Commons as the Prime Minister, or the Speaker—it is, perhaps, neither uninteresting nor inopportune to focus what the great and good moralist, Doctor Samuel Johnson, said on the Temperance Question,