

other excesses, especially with exposures; want of sunlight; and any causes which depress and debilitate the system. A humid atmosphere favors the development of consumption, and a residence on a damp, undrained soil or in a damp house is often an important factor in causing the disease.

**IMPURE AIR**, in unventilated apartments, is, perhaps, of all exciting causes, the most important—the most common cause of this disease. “A celebrated French physician, Baudelocque, writes that, the repeated respiration of the same atmosphere is a primary and efficient cause of scrofula—consumption being one of its most common forms; and that invariably it will be found on examination that a truly scrofulous disease is caused by vitiated air, and it is not always necessary that there should have been a prolonged stay in such an atmosphere. Often, a few hours each day is sufficient; as sleeping in a confined room when the air has not been renewed. Large numbers of the pupils at a school in Norwood, England, some years ago, fell victims to scrofula. and on investigation it was decided that insufficient ventilation and the consequent atmospheric impurity was the cause. Twenty years ago, consumption was very prevalent among the British soldiers. A sanitary commission, consisting of men of the highest standing, after investigation, declared it was caused by over-crowding and deficient ventilation;—in other words, by re-breathing breathed air. When this cause was removed,—more space in barracks and better ventilation provided—the number of cases of this disease materially diminished” (Playter’s *Physiology and Hygiene*).

A great many facts are upon record which prove that the re-breathing of breathed air acts a most important part in the development of consumption.

**IMPROPER DIET.**—Among the causes of consumption, Sir James Clark writes: “Imperfect supply of food holds a conspicuous place.” But we have rarely an opportunity of seeing the effects of this alone, he adds, “because when the means of procuring proper nourishment are wanting, there are generally other causes of the disease in action at the same time; such as residence in ill ventilated and dark apartments, exposure to cold from imperfect clothing, &c.; the whole of which are often combined, and hence more speedily effect the deterioration of the health. Food in excess, or of a kind too exciting for the digestive organs, may also induce tubercular cachexia,—a circumstance which is not sufficiently attended to,—we may say not generally understood, even by medical men: nevertheless we hold this to be a frequent cause of scrofula and believe that it produces the same effects on the system as a deficient supply; the imperfect digestion and assimilation in the one case and the inadequate nourishment in the other, being equally injurious; the form and general characters which the disease assumes may differ, but the ultimate result will be the same in both cases. The adaptation of the food, both in quality and quantity, to the age of the individual, as well as to the powers of the digestive organs, is too little considered; and the evil consequences of this neglect are often evident in the children of the wealthy classes of society, who are frequently allowed an unrestricted use of the most exciting kinds of animal food.”

**OF OTHER CAUSES**, it is difficult to say whether continued over exertion or deficient exercise ranks next, as a cause of this disease. Amongst the poor, in their struggles for existence, and sometimes amongst the well-to-do in their struggles for wealth, excessive labor prostrates the vital powers until there is not vigor enough in the body to enable it to resist the invasion of the immediate specific cause of the “fell destroyer.” So it is with idleness or inactivity, a like effect is produced and like results follow. Too close application to study frequently operates as a cause, chiefly from want of physical exercise. And it is not difficult to understand how deficient or improper clothing, the abuse of alcoholic liquors, or any depressing habits, may so reduce the bodily vigor as to make it an easy prey to tuberculosis.