

themselves. Another point worthy of note is that, speaking from a strictly chemical standpoint, not one nor all the known gases which singly or unitedly go under the name of sewer gas would ever produce a specific disease, such as small-pox, scarlet fever, diphtheria, etc. In some of our manufacturing districts whole towns have been built on foundations consisting of chemical refuse and waste products, which foundations keep generating sulphuretted hydrogen and hosts of other gases, partially present in sewer gas, and yet while their unpleasantness is admitted, the specific action of each in producing the destructive power of sewer gas is nil. Again, speaking from a strictly chemical stand-point, it may with certainty be said that while undoubtedly certain chemical compounds possess strong life-destroying powers, are in short poisons, no pure chemical product known possesses the property of even blood-poisoning, much less of producing any specific disease. But sewer gas does possess in a most material degree the power or property of producing, or it may be of feeding or developing, that class of disease which is now known as zymotic, and by some as filth disease. The fact is that sewer gas is a chemical compound or series of compounds plus something else. This something else, whatever it may be, is the something that does all the mischief. As to its nature, I have no time, had I the ability, to discuss it on this occasion; suffice it to say that the majority of investigators look upon it as a low form of life, akin to the zyme of yeast in its action, and exceedingly capable of reproduction and development in a favourable soil. Moisture is also thought to be essential to its life and development.

At all events it is a product or a concomitant of the chemical decomposition of filth of all kinds, and especially of that class of filth consisting of human or animal excreta. The gases, etc., are the vehicles in which these respective particles float or are carried about. In all probability we shall discover that certain combinations of decomposing filth produce certain forms or species of infective particles, and that these, in turn, produce certain definite diseases, each after their own kind. But however interesting these investigations or theories may be, I must now put them aside, and accepting the universally acknowledged fact that when a human being comes in contact with sewer gas the health of that person is in danger, I will at once proceed to show how effectually to guard against this danger. Sewer gas is more dangerous in dwellings than out of them. In houses we have it in a concentrated form. Out of doors it is necessarily diluted, and according to the amount of dilution the danger is diminished; on this point I must just digress for a few minutes. It is held by some exceedingly clever investigators, Prof. Wanklyn, for instance, that there is a point of dilution at which all danger ceases. If he and his school are right, I would rather act in the belief that, though the chances of meeting the enemy may be lessened, yet the chance—that is, the danger—remains, and if encountered, no dilution will avail. The enemy is there; and if accidentally met in the road, it will avail nothing that a