

## STUFFY HOUSES.

## HOW TO AVOID HAVING THEM.

Sight is too often lost of the influence, mentally and physically, of the atmosphere of the house. It is almost impossible to have a healthy body or mind in a house which is not well aired and into which sunshine is not freely permitted to enter. Sunshine and pure air are such important sanitary things that a house which has an ample amount of each has two of the greatest aids to health and cheerfulness. Of the many causes of stuffiness in a house, these are a few: The rage for decoration and ornaments, useful and otherwise, has filled many a house to overflowing with all sorts of things that catch and retain dust, besides making the matter of cleaning a room one which demands much time and labor. The temptation is great to omit the frequent sweeping and dusting which are necessary to the sweetness and wholesomeness of a room. The large number of portieres, rugs, cushions, etc., used nowadays should be frequently shaken in the open air. Only such ornaments as can be properly cared for should ever be kept in a room.

"Keep a thing seven years, and if you have no use for it, give it away," has been the motto of many a housekeeper, with the result that rooms and closets are packed with what are of no use to the owner, collecting dust and, perhaps, moths; making the work of cleaning and airing a burden to the housekeeper, when the same might be of much value to somebody else. Think of the coats, vests, trousers and other garments that have been cast aside by the men of the family which would be a welcome gift to some poor woman to make over for her boys; and think also of the dresses and other clothes discarded by the women of the family, which would be of value to some hard-working mother for wear by her children! Such things often hang in closets or lie on shelves until they become moth-eaten and worse than useless. When you no longer need a garment, give it away where it will be of use.

Well-worn white cotton and linen clothing that is no longer of value to the household, except as cleaning-cloths, should be sorted, folded, and sent to some hospital, reserving, of course, enough to use in case of sickness or accident. Old linen and cotton can not be bought, and so much of it is needed in sickness that it is a valuable gift to any hospital. The charge of becoming stuffy can not be brought against old cotton and linen, but being of such value in an institution or among the poor in time of sickness, they should not be hoarded nor wasted in house cleaning.

Many houses are always in order, and one fails to detect dust or dirt; yet they lack the freshness and sweetness which should be a part of every home. In such houses the carpet-sweeper or the small brush-broom and the dust-pan are used to remove all the perceptible dirt from the floor. The sunlight is shut out, lest carpets and furniture coverings be faded; the rooms do not get a thorough airing every day, and this is why a visitor feels oppressed on entering. A woolen carpet will absorb not only the dust, but also all the gases and unpleasant odors which come in contact with it. The carpets or rugs in a sitting-room should be swept or shaken once a week at least, and these rooms should be thoroughly aired every morning.

Straw matting or hard-wood or painted floors are sweeter and more conducive to health than woolen carpets. It is, therefore, a pity that anything but matting is ever used for covering a bedroom floor. Small rugs that anybody can easily shake may be placed beside the bed and wash-stand and, indeed, wherever one would like a mat to give an air of warmth and comfort to the room. Many persons object to matting because, they say, it does not wear well. The best quality will, however, outwear an ingrain carpet. Cheap mattings are expensive at any price.

There should be nothing in a bedroom that is not washable, and the furnishing should be so simple that it can be cared for without too much time and labor. The beds should be thoroughly aired every morning; the sheets, blankets, pillows and mattresses so disposed that there shall be a current of air about them; and if possible they should be exposed to the sunshine. All closets should be thoroughly aired daily.

The kitchen and cellar must be as carefully watched as any other part of the house. How often the bad odors and much sickness could be traced to the kitchen or cellar! A few decayed vegetables or fruit left there may cause an unpleasant odor that will penetrate every part of the house and often bring on serious illness. In the kitchen there must be a daily inspection of closets and a thorough airing several times in the day. The windows should be dropped a few inches from the top all the time, in this way keeping the air pure and, as a matter of fact, keeping the whole house sweeter. It is a misfortune to have an enclosed sink, because the closet is, as a rule, a receptacle for damp, dish, sink and floor cloths, all of which should be exposed to air and light instead of being thrown into a dark corner until wanted again.

Another important thing to keep in mind is the plumbing. The more conveniences a housekeeper has in the way of set-bowls, bath-rooms, etc., the greater her cares; for these modern conveniences may be a source of the greatest danger. It is singular that but few understand the necessity for a thorough flushing

of the pipes once or twice a day. Some folks think any use of water beyond what is actually necessary is a waste. A constant leakage is a waste, but there should be a perfect rush of water through all the pipes at least once a day. Once a week all the pipes should have poured through them boiling-hot soda water—half a pint of washing soda dissolved in two gallons of boiling water. When bought by the quarter-barrel soda is very cheap.

Three or four barrels of charcoal set in different parts of the cellar will be of great help in keeping the house sweet.

In damp weather in summer a fire should be lighted in some room in the main part of the house and the doors in all the rooms be opened, in order that all the house may be kept dry. If we have sweet homes we must be prodigal in our use of water, fresh air and sunlight.—[Maria Parloa, in "Good Housekeeping."

## Lengthening Life.

Notwithstanding all that religion and philosophy tell us, there are few of us, and those only under the pressure of great distress, disease, or loss, or trouble, that do not hold length of days to be a blessing, and do not look with interest on the report from physicians and scientific people that the average of human life is lengthening, and that where once, not two hundred years ago, fourscore was an age of wonder, now nearly fivescore is not infrequent; and that not only is life longer, but limbs are stronger, men are of better stature, women are of more endurance. It is, of course, quite well known that the armor of the Middle Ages can be forced on by but few of the men of to-day, and that men are much taller now than the doorways under which if their forefathers entered without stooping they had to be shorter than their descendants. It is rather to be doubted if the ameliorations and alleviations of life that go under the head of luxuries have had much to do with increasing the stature or the longevity of the race as yet. On the contrary, many of these luxuries must have been in some degree enervating, and cannot have tended toward promoting endurance or making those who enjoy them hardy. The modern improvements of houses heated by hot air and steam, of rapid transit, of a thousand once unheard-of delicacies of food within the reach of almost all, together with the advance of medical science, and the absence of great need of exposure that formerly existed, with the wearing of more suitable clothes, with an enlarged knowledge of hygiene, have all undoubtedly tended to keep those alive who in earlier times would have died out of hand while meeting and enduring the harder conditions of life. Living, then, they have imparted to their children a weakened physical frame and a lowered vitality, and have in so much only impaired and vitiated the race of humanity. But the probability is that in time the same influences which made it possible for these weaker ones to live, will vitalize and strengthen and build up their descendants, and so restore the average in that way, and really on a higher scale at last; and in the meanwhile those that were always strong, and were born of the strong, will have been going constantly to greater strength and greater length of days, helping in their way to leaven the mass.

It is now maintained among those of a scientific habit, that is, who insist upon accuracy, that the stories of marvellous old age in various individuals are untrue; that Dr. Parr is a myth, along with Tithonus; that no Countess of Desmond ever lived to be a hundred and forty, but that two ladies continued the title during that period of time; and so of all the rest. To-day there are few among those who have come over seas to make a home in America but will inform you of those in their acquaintance who have passed the century's boundary line; but the stories are entitled probably only to as little credit as those of the same peasant order of mind of an earlier era. Yet we have seen in our own time the life of M. Chevreul draw to an end in its one-hundred-and-third year, with every faculty alert; and many of us have begun to have in our experience knowledge of some one individual who has approached if not equalled as old an age, so that we have ceased to consider eighty as very great age at all.

The fact of age is not told altogether by years, and not even by gray hairs and wrinkles, since those sometimes come early. One may be eighty and have gray hairs and wrinkles, but the spirit within will assert itself in the desire still to be and to do that is always a part of youth. Hair will whiten and muscles will shrink, leaving the skin to shrivel and wrinkle as years go on, even when the health is perfect; but let the health be perfect, and no matter what the years or the wrinkles are, the spirit will be young. Hence to create and maintain health is the work of those who look for happiness in longevity; for, although one may not shrink from very old age in any circumstances, regarding it as a part of the working of Providence, yet no one can wish to become painfully feeble and decrepit, with all he was in ashes, unless he is willing to sigh with Tithonus about the

"Happy men that have the power to die,  
And grassy barrows of the happier dead."

Any one whose opinion has worth would prefer death itself to that senility where the mental powers halt, and the spirit is so clogged with weakness as to give forth no ray. But since life has been described as a disease, cause unknown, diagnosis variable, prog-

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nosis fatal, it is self-evident that the disease has to be fought from the first, and if the termination is to find us dying, like old Chapman's hero, on our feet we have to re-enforce our powers all the way along. The wise parent will see to it then, the wise child will see to it later; for sound bodily habits are of course at the root of all success in the effort.

## About Women.

A mother is naturally expected by her children to be a perfect encyclopedia to draw from, and no one has such need of varied knowledge and accomplishments.

A large majority of the workers on cheap readymade clothing are young women. It is estimated that they number 5,000 to-day in the city of Boston, and that their average weekly pay is \$3.

"You have noticed it, haven't you," asks *Colman's Rural World*, "that when a man rises from poverty to wealth and distinction, from humble beginning to affluence and honor, he is pointed out as a model self-made man. And you have noticed that when a woman commences life as a waitress, chambermaid, kitchen girl, or any like position, and afterwards rises in the world, by marriage or by personal effort, the rest of woman-kind never forgive her. Why is it so? Is society responsible for this injustice?"

Economic relations are sometimes a good deal governed by custom, and it would be rash to affirm that upon women as newcomers in certain employments custom has not borne hard. But in employments where their position is established, such as those of the singer, the musician, novel writer, the artist or the milliner, women are not underpaid. Who is more overpaid, or if managers speak the truth, more rapacious, than a prima donna?—[Prof. Goldwin Smith.]

No woman desires a beard, because a beard means care and trouble, and would detract from feminine beauty, but to have a strong and, in appearance, a resolute under-jaw may be considered a desirable note of masculinity and of masculine power and privilege in the good time coming. Hence the cultivation of it by the chewing of gum is a recognizable and reasonable instinct, and the practice can be defended as neither a whim nor a vain waste of energy and nervous force. In a generation or two it may be laid aside as no longer necessary, or men may be compelled to resort to it to preserve their supremacy.—[Charles Dudley Warner in Harper's Magazine.]

A case parallel to Mrs. Miller's is that of Mrs. Francis Hodgson Burnett. When this clever woman first made her appearance in literary society her costumes and manners were a source of epigrammatic comment. Mrs. Burnett was provincial and she had all the rustic's love for swan's down trimming on her gowns, a display of massive jewelry on her fingers and bosom and a general picturesqueness of attire more fitted for the stage than the parlor. At that time her eccentricities of attire were the more noticeable because she was writing only for country newspapers and third rate magazines. But the people who sneered at Mrs. Francis Hodgson Burnett are now at her feet. Her income at present is reasonably near fifty thousand a year, a literary earning which, it may be stated, is larger than that of any other writer in the world, although Mark Twain loudly asserts that his pen brings him thirty thousand a year more.

## Consumption

Interesting statistics by a prominent English physician indicate that consumption is very greatly promoted by a damp soil, and its presence has been abated, even to the extent of 50 per cent. where suitable drainage has been introduced. Researches of other physicians, including the well-known Dr. Bowditch of Massachusetts, confirm this conclusion and determine that the amount of moisture in the soil is a fair criterion of the proportion of consumption among the residents. Local causes are becoming more and more disregarded, and the infectious nature of consumption is receiving increased attention from physicians.