

and hourly administration of fatal doses of carbonic acid gas; and the same treatment is the chief cause of the gravity of many cases which, without this poison, would be of mild form.

So little alive to this fact are a very large proportion of medical men that it will require copious and well-authenticated illustrations to convince them. And the difficulty will be rendered still greater by the errors in some of the domestic habits of physicians themselves.

I do not intend to enter into the subject of hygiene in general, or even the management of chronic diseases, but shall confine myself to the fatal or dangerous use of carbonic acid gas, so fearfully common in the treatment of acute disease. Let a person be attacked with no matter what form of acute disease, and in nine houses out of ten the doors and windows will be immediately closed to shut out draughts, and every step taken to retain the air of the room, and avoid any material change. Most houses are now built without open fireplaces, and are warmed by stoves, heaters or furnaces, which supply to parlors and bedrooms the air of the dining-room or the cellar. The lungs and the skin of the patient and attendants are constantly exhaling carbonic acid, and the lamps or gaslights are furnishing an additional supply, so that the atmosphere of the room is rapidly charged with it.

Now what is the effect of the inhalation of carbonic acid? The following bit of history will show what it does when inhaled undiluted: In the summer of 1872, a vine-grower, in the eastern part of France, having his vats partly filled with grapes, which had been pressed, and were already in the process of fermentation, had occasion to climb down into one of the vats. He had no sooner reached the bottom than he fell insensible. One of his sons followed immediately to assist his father, but dropped at once beside him, and another person going to their rescue shared their fate. They were with some difficulty all drawn up, but life was extinct. They were asphyxiated before they could save themselves, by the carbonic acid gas which had accumulated in a dense layer over the fermenting grapes.

Similar instances of immediate death from the inhalation of pure carbonic acid gas sometimes occur in wells which have been closely covered for many years, where the escaping gas from the soil slowly accumulates, and, having no current of air to aid its diffusion, gravitates by its weight to the bottom of the well, gradually displacing the atmospheric air. The man who opens the well, and, having put in a ladder, goes down into it, falls insensible before he reaches the bottom.