

Paris, in weather when the Parisians sit with the casement windows of their saloons wide open. Yet it is, undoubtedly, all a matter of habit; and we Yankees, (we mean those not forced to "rough it,") with the toughest natural constitutions in the world, nurse ourselves, as a people, into the least robust and most susceptible *physiques* in existence.

So much for the habit of exercise in the open air. Now let us look at our mode of warming and ventilating our dwellings; for it is here that the national poison is engendered, and here that the ghostly expression is begotten.

However healthy a person may be, he can neither *look* healthy, nor remain in sound health long, if he is in the habit of breathing impure air. As sound health depends upon *pure blood*, and there can be no pure blood in one's veins if it is not re-purified continually by the action of fresh air upon it, through the agency of the lungs (the whole purpose of breathing, being to purify and vitalize the blood,) it follows, that if a nation of people *will*, from choice, live in badly ventilated rooms, full of impure air, they must become pale and sallow in complexions. It may not largely affect the health of the *men*, who are more or less called into the open air by their avocations, but the health of women, (*ergo* the constitutions of children,) and all those who are confined to rooms or offices heated in this way, must gradually give way under the influence of the poison. Hence, the delicacy of thousands and tens of thousands of the sex in America.

"And how can you satisfy me," asks some blind lover of stoves, "that the air of a room heated by a close stove is deleterious?" Very easily indeed, if you will listen to a few words of reason.

It is well established that a healthy man must have about a pint of air at a breath; that he breathes above a thousand times in an hour; and that as a matter beyond dispute, he requires about *fifty-seven hogsheds* of air in twenty-four hours.

Besides this, it is equally well settled, that as common air consists of a mixture of two gasses, one healthy (oxygen,) and the other unhealthy (nitrogen,) the air we have once breathed, having, by passing through the lungs, been deprived of most of the healthful gas, is little less than unmixed poison (nitrogen.)

Now, a room, warmed by an open fire-place or grate, is necessarily more or less ventilated, by the very process of combustion going on; because, as a good deal of the air of the room goes up the chimney, besides the smoke and vapour of the fire, a corresponding amount of fresh air comes in at the windows and door crevices to

supply its place. The room, in other words, is tolerably well supplied with fresh air for breathing.

But let us take the case of a room heated by a close stove. The chimney is stopped up to begin with. The room is shut up. The windows are made pretty tight to keep out the cold; and as there is very little air carried out of the room by the stove pipe, (the stove is perhaps on the air-tight principle,—that is, it requires the minimum amount of air,) there is little fresh air coming in through the crevices to supply any vacuum. Suppose the room holds 300 hogsheds of air. If a single person requires 57 hogsheds of fresh air per day, it would last four persons but about twenty-four hours, and the stove would require half as much more. But, as a man renders noxious as much again air as he expires from his lungs, it actually happens that in four or five hours all the air in this room has been either breathed over, or it is so mixed with the impure air which has been breathed over, that it is all thoroughly poisoned, and unfit for *healthful* respiration. A person with his senses unblunted, has only to go into an ordinary unventilated room, heated by a stove, to perceive at once, by the effect on the lungs, how dead, stifled, and destitute of all elasticity the air is.

And this is the air which four-fifths of our countrymen and countrywomen breathe in their homes,—not from necessity but from choice.

This is the air which those who travel by hundreds of thousands in our railroad cars, closed up in winter, and heated with close stoves, breathe for hours—or often entire days.

This is the air which fills the cabins of closely packed steamboats, always heated by large stoves and only half ventilated; the air breathed by countless numbers—both waking or sleeping.

This is the air—no, this is even salubrious compared with the air—that is breathed by hundreds and thousands in almost all our crowded lecture-rooms, concert rooms, public halls, and private assemblies, all over the country. They are nearly all heated by stoves or furnaces, with very imperfect ventilation, or no ventilation at all.

Is it too much to call it the national poison, this continual atmosphere of close stoves, which, whether travelling or at home, we Americans are content to breathe, as if it were the air of Paradise.

We very well know that we have a great many readers who abominate stoves, and whose houses are warmed and ventilated in an excellent manner. But they constitute no appreciable fraction of the vast portion of our country-