

give the various boards of health full jurisdiction over any business, matter, or thing dangerous to life or detrimental to health. True; but while every other source of danger is manifest to one or more of the senses electricity is silent, impalpable, odorless, invisible. A man in the lawful pursuit of business or pleasure may be flashed out of life or have his nervous system hopelessly shattered by a contact between a metal railing and damp pavement simply because some electric lighting company chooses to use a dangerous current or neglects safeguards on account of their expense.

Special legislation, therefore, is needed to prevent these hidden dangers. Burying the wires is no protection unless you bury with them lights and motors. Chicago has never had overhead electric light wires, and yet at least six men have been killed in that city by electricity. The wires of the telephone, telegraph, messenger service fire or burglar alarm, etc., while harmless in themselves either above or below the surface, may be made death dealing by the presence of a dangerous system of electric light or power. If corporations are permitted as at present to enmesh our cities with wires carrying death-dealing currents—currents which can escape and produce death through any known insulation—it will not be long before the public clamor will cause the adoption of laws hampering, if not destroying, all electrical industries.

During the past years a long series of careful experiments was made by the writer to determine the comparative danger to life of the various forms of electrical currents, the results of which were considered at the December meeting of the Medico-Legal Society. This work proved beyond question that the continuous current, which flows steadily in one direction, was in itself perfectly safe, at least up to a pressure of 1400 to 1500 volts; that devices suggested by the writer would make its use reasonably safe in light and power systems up to 3000 volts; that an interrupted or pulsating current was dangerous, and that an alternating current, known by physicians as "Voltaic alternatives," whose impulses are rapidly reversed in direction, was deadly at a very low pressure.

These conclusions are verified by the death record, for out of eighty-five fatalities, the particulars of which I have been able to obtain, not one is due to the low tension continuous current, but eight to the high tension continuous, fifty-four to pulsating, and twenty-three to the alternating. The latter has but recently come into extensive use, and its plants are supplied with new insulated wire. As this institution deteriorates with age, and as the system is extended, its death list will be rapidly increased. The physiological effects of these currents upon nerves and muscles also bear out these conclusions—The Sanitarian.

SOME OF THE LIMITATIONS OF MEDICINE.

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IT is a trait peculiar to some minds to believe too much and to others to believe too little. Between these extremes, however, there are many who, though keenly alive to the limitations of medicine, are, at the same time, able to appreciate the great boon it is to mankind. . .

The questions have often presented themselves to me why, after so many years of familiarity with disease, is there such a wide difference of opinion regarding its management? Why is it possible that

there are two large schools of medicine opposed in theory if not in practice? Why the endless and surprising consumption of patent remedies? It would seem that more or less superstition still prevails in reference to disease, as well as much ignorance respecting its natural history. I am not well convinced that illness is a necessary concomitant of human existence: and to believe that it is unavoidable is to paralyze all legitimate efforts for its prevention. That it will, at any time, be wholly