

The Household.

Air.

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Air is that one necessity of human life which cannot be withdrawn for even a few minutes without death. The fabric of our bodies may be deprived of solid food for a considerable time, and yet not be dissolved. It takes a long while to starve a man to death, especially if he be supplied with water. He will continue to live for many hours, even if this be withheld. Of course if we take away his meat and crink he will presently die, through his dissolution will be comparatively slow. But the total loss of air is speedy loss of life. If we stop a man from breathing, we stop him from living at once. And as life depends upon the having or not having air, so does health depend upon the sort of air that we have. Since we are incessantly inhaling it, we likewise necessarily take in what it carries—dust, motes, imperceptible germs. And we hardly realise what seeds of mischief, as well as mere lifeless matter, we may thus deposit within us. The purest air may be the vehicle of impurity. For this reason, however, well ventilated the bedroom of a person suffering from contagious disease may be, it is well not to sit in a draught which blows upon us from the bed. If we do, we may swallow and sow the seeds of the disorder in our own bodies. Thus, moreover, no one who anywise appreciates practical social science will idly hold his mouth and nose over drains, or over diggings in soil which may have long before been charged with impurity and decay. The settlers on the prairie in America, too, frequently suffer from malarious fever caused by breaking up ground which is a mass of old decay, and though potentially rich in human food, is sorely mischievous when first uncovered, to a man's life. In thinking then of the use of air that we cannot help breathing, we may well first recollect that even the best may be the vehicle of evil.

Again, we want plenty of air. Even when healthy persons are shut up in an unventilated room they suffer for it. They may inhale no seeds of disease, but they soon begin to breathe that air which has already done its duty in somebody else's lungs, and cannot as yet discharge it properly again. Gas, too, takes the life out of air rapidly; so that one man, long sitting or working in a closed parlour or study thus lit, will have his powers impaired. The oxygen which should have purified his blood is burnt up by the gas flame, and thus his heart and body are put upon short commons. The apartment may seem sufficiently roomy, but the goodness of the air in it is consumed. Of course, when several sit in one lit by gaslight the mischief is proportionately intensified. Always manage to have a fresh supply of our air in every inhabited room. The appetite of the lungs is enormous and exacting. If you watch water in which a diver is at work you will be astonished at the amount that he consumes. As he exhales each breath of air, it bubbles, or rather rushes up to the surface in such abundance that you might think there was a whale beneath it instead of a man. Our lungs want plenty of air as well as that which is clean, unbreathed, and unburnt. We cannot measure the subtle mischief caused by an insufficient

supply, or done by that which is foul and exhausted. Pale faces and aching heads are among the plainest symptoms of the harm wrought. Stunted growth, loss of appetite, and generally lowered powers of life, come from closed windows, stuffed-up chimneys, and tightly-fitting doors. A draught is unpleasant, certainly, and sometimes dangerous, but it is only the silent voices of the air pleading to come in and invigorate us. We must not be content with merely excluding it, but rather so arrange that the want it indicates may be supplied without peril or annoyance. We do not deny a generous friend because he knocks importunately at the gate, and when the breath of life pushes himself rudely in we should do our best to give him a quiet welcome, and not slam the door in his face. He is not particular, however, or likely to take offence. He is willing enough to slip into our company through a ventilator, and when he comes he always brings his gift of health. It is mainly because they close their windows tightly at night, and too many sleep in one room, that we see sallow faces among peasants who live in the country, and whose houses are surrounded by abundance of fresh air. The artificial stuffiness of the night undoes much of the purity of the outer day. The ventilation of bedrooms is a matter which especially cries for the use of Practical Social Science. People seem to forget that they breathe while they slumber, and that the life of the enclosed air they then inhale is soon exhausted. The riser is struck by the freshness of the morning air when he opens his window or issues from his door, whereas, in fact, his sense of it comes from having shut out the outer air altogether from his house, and therefore from his lungs, for several hours.

Change of air is often one of the most subtle and almost mysterious restorers or promoters of health. When, indeed, during holidays, the head of the household takes his family into the country or to the seaside from the town, the roses that come into the little one's cheeks are created mainly because they are almost all day out of doors, and not poring over lessons in the schoolroom. But there is unquestionably some difference in the quality of the air, since it may be not only hot or cold, but moist or dry, and have other properties besides.

P's and Q's.

The origin of the phrase, "Mind your P's and Q's" is not generally known. In ale-houses where chalk scores were formerly marked upon the wall, it was customary to put these initial letters at the head of every man's account, to show the number of pints and quarts for which he owed; and when one was indulging too freely in drink, a friend would touch him on the shoulder, and point to the score on the wall, saying, "John, mind your P's and Q's." That is, notice the pints and quarts now charged against you, and cease drinking.

One of the best remedies for rough or chafed hands is the following: One ounce of glycerine, one ounce of rose water, six drops of carbolic acid. In cold weather, whenever it is necessary to wash the hands, apply a few drops while they are moist, and rub well into the skin. It may also be used for the face.

Family Circle.

ONE YEAR.

"The second kiss, my darling,
Is full of joy's sweet thrill;
We have kissed each other always—
We always will.

"We shall reach till we feel each other
Past all of time and space;
We shall listen till we hear each other
In every place.

"The earth is full of messengers
Which love sends to and fro;
I kiss thee, darling, for all joy
Which we shall know!"

I cannot realise that scarcely a year has passed since Edgar Gray repeated that charming love-song to me. It was only one of many, but more to be remembered than the others, as it was the last time we should be together for a year or more, and the words so well engrossed our thoughts.

Papa was an invalid, with a great fondness for the sea, and so by the sea we lived, in one of those small picturesque cottages, which then were rare, but now may be found in great numbers in every sea-shore place. It was a perfect paradise to papa, who would sit all day in his large easy-chair on the veranda, contentedly gazing at the blue ocean. He could scarcely be induced to leave his favourite seat, even in storms, but would stay out until the spray compelled him to go in, so near was our cottage to the water. Loving the sea as he did, I never had the heart to propose our return to the city until the heavy frosts came.

My summers, you can see, were very quiet and uneventful. The village was a mile from us, and though there was a great deal of gaiety there among the summer visitors, I seldom left papa; for I was his only child, housekeeper, and nurse besides, my old mother having been dead some years.

The two winters I had passed at home since my return from school, were as quiet as the summers. Papa had lost all taste for society, having been in ill-health for so long. Through he still gathered around him a small circle of old friends, they could not possess much interest for me. I seemed quite alone, having no relatives living near, and I seldom went away, feeling that I ought not to leave papa, now that I was at home for good. So I refused all invitations from my school-friends, vowing eternal celibacy, and, in a girl's way, saying I should always live with him, and trying to be content in picturing such a future.

Something, however, had happened this summer, which overthrew all my plans for so calm an existence.

We were idly sitting at our not very early breakfast, one bright June morning, when, glancing up, I saw the unusual figure of a young man approaching the cottage. Papa rose to receive him. With a glance at me he removed his hat, and I found myself stupidly staring at the handsomest man I had ever seen. He was an artist, I felt sure, even before he announced the fact to papa, requesting, at the same time, permission to sketch from our rocks.

Nearly all artists seem to be the fortunate possessors of great personal beauty. Even if they do not possess it to any remarkable degree, they enhance what they have by their artistic dress. Edgar Gray, in ugliest clerical costume—and what is so wholly devoid of grace?—would have still been the admiration of any girl. But when those great brown eyes and olive complexion were shown to their best advantage by the artist's background of dress, what wonder that I lost my heart? Not that it left me on that day, or many succeeding ones. But weeks of such mornings, afternoons, and evenings, caused the most natural results, and the "old, old story" was told once again.

He was going now to be gone a year, perhaps longer, and the broad ocean, which I never had before, would separate us. Papa had readily given his consent to our engagement, from the first taking a great fancy to Edgar, who fascinated young and old alike with his gay, careless ways.

We had been sitting on our favourite rock, taking our last look together at the sea, so calm and beautiful in the still moonlight.

"My darling! my darling! if I could only take you with me!" he murmured, as he drew me to him. "But I shall work hard dear; and when I 'awake to fame,' please Heaven! there will be no more separations."

I could not let him go.

"You will: do forget me?" clinging to him. "I do not mean to doubt you; only you will be so long away, and will meet so many beautiful girls." I jealously said.

In his sweet, lover-like way, he whispered that none could ever be so beautiful to him as the one he now held to his heart; and my fears were quieted.

Unmindful of the time, we lingered and talked hopefully of the unknown future, until, realising the lateness of the hour, we knew that we must say "good-bye" at last. Edgar went in to bid papa "good-night"—for the latter would never say "good-bye" to anyone—and then I walked to the road with him.

"Keep up your courage, darling!" were the last words I heard, as I dragged myself back to the house, turning at every step to watch my handsome lover, until, with a last kiss, and a wave of the hat, he disappeared from my sight.

I miss Edgar so much! It was the first real happiness which had entered my life; and that it should be taken from me so soon seemed very wrong and cruel. But necessity soon forced my thoughts into another channel; for papa sank rapidly that autumn. We wanted to take him to the city, where his old physician and friend could look after him better. But he was not willing to leave his grand old sea; and so we remained by it until the last.