

AS AIR IS THE FIRST ESSENTIAL OF LIFE, pure air is the first essential of health. Dr. Parkes observes: "It might be inferred from the physiological evidence of the paramount importance of proper aeration of the blood, that the breathing of air, rendered impure from any cause, is hurtful, and that the highest degree of health is only possible when to the other conditions is added that of a proper supply of pure air. Experience strengthens this inference. Statistical inquiries on mortality prove beyond a doubt that of the causes of death which are usually in action, impurity of the air is the most important. Individual observations confirms this. No one who has paid any attention to the condition of health, and the recovery from disease of those persons who fall under his observation, can doubt that impurity of the air marvellously affects the first, and influences and sometimes even regulates the second.

The supply of air is practically without limit; an immense ocean of it, many miles in depth, surrounds the entire earth. Perhaps it is largely by reason of its very abundance that man so commonly overlooks or disregards its great value; and in the higher civilization which he creates, and which carries him onward and forward, he neglects frequently to seek, in the first place, localities in which the air is naturally most pure, and most favorable to health and life; or by surrounding himself with elegant but almost impervious walls, he shuts out the pure air and breathes over and over again the small measure he has so closely imprisoned; or he makes foul that near his dwelling, by waste excremental matters, chiefly from his own body, or by the products or refuse of the occupations by which he lives, or too often but partly lives.

THE IMPURITIES WHICH FIND THEIR WAY INTO AIR are very numerous—gases, vapors, and solid particles: but a wonderful series of processes goes on continually in the outer atmosphere which preserves the air in most localities in a state of sufficient purity. It is for the most part in enclosed spaces, rooms, schools, shops, factories, and close yards, where these purifying processes are not and cannot be in full operation, that the air becomes impure, and too frequently quite unfitted for the purposes of respiration; as it does, too, near collections of decomposing waste organic matters, which rapidly foul the air.

In a hygienic point of view, the habitations and works of man furnish the most important impurities in the air: such as the pro-