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**THE PREVENTION AND DISPOSAL OF
GASES INJURIOUS TO HEALTH.**

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(Read before the Ontario Medical Association.)

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN,— I will ask your permission to change to the above caption the title of my paper, thereby extending it so as to embrace the consideration, not only of sewer gases, but also of some sources of disease independent of sewers.

Some injurious gases reveal themselves unpleasantly to the nose, whilst others do not. These last are so insidious in their nature as to be doubly dangerous. As examples, I may refer to the baneful results which ensue from living in houses under which water lodges and becomes stagnant. There are, I believe, few of us who have not witnessed these results. The miasmatic poison of ague is similarly inodorous, or has no necessarily unpleasant odor. Sewers, also, have sometimes very little unpleasant smell. Sometimes we have a faint smell similar to that produced by those burning fluids into the composition of which fusel oil enters. People living in a house become so accustomed to these faint odors as to take little notice of them; and with some people the sense of smell is not very acute. Hence we must be very careful how we accept negative evidence as to the presence of noxious gases. And hence, too, we must be all the more careful to avoid their existence and presence, and to devise means to this end.

It is plain that to prevent the constant accumulation of noxious gases, we must get rid, as far as possible, of decomposable material before it begins to decompose; and must see that the noxious gases from any decomposing material do not reach us. How simple these two propositions are! And yet, in practice, how difficult of execution; but as the difficulty arises from the ignorance, and partly consequent carelessness, of others, we may accomplish much by constant vigilance and hammering away.

The principal decomposable materials are the waste and refuse of foods, the water for cooking and cleansing purposes, and our excreta.

1. The refuse of food should be disposed of in one of three ways:—

a. If we have domestic animals about us, they may eat most of it (and prepare it to come under the next heading, in diminished form.)

b. If we have no domestic animals, it may be removed to some more isolated region—into the country—for manurial or other purposes.

c. If this cannot conveniently be done, most of it may be burned at such time as our fires are not needed to be at their best.

2. Slop water should not be thrown out to saturate the soil of a semi-circle extending fifteen feet from the back door. This process is often persisted in year after year, under the pleasing delusion that "it all soaks away."

It may be better disposed of:—

a. By turning it into melons, grapes, and pumpkins. Gardens will thankfully receive, and render innocuous, a vast quantity of slop.

b. If the garden, or the gardener, be not at hand, it may be turned into a sewer.