

CAUSES OF DISEASE.

There are two ways in which disease may be occasioned: — First, by the introduction of improper substances, commonly known as poisons.

Secondly, by the misrelation or improper use of good things, or hygienic agents. Of the **poisons that may enter the system from without** and thus become a cause of disease, the following are among those best known: —

Of **inorganic poisons**, alkalies, acids, salts, oxides, earths, metals, alcohol, and all other distilled and fermented liquors, poisonous gases, and malarious exhalations. The **organic poisons** may be of either vegetable or animal origin. Of the vegetable poisons, some of the most common are opium, tobacco, aconite, ipecac, colchicum, quinine, etc.

Of the animal poisons, we may mention the venoms, viruses, infections, cantharides— Spanish flies— castor, musk, etc. All the drugs and medicines of the entire materia medica of all the systems of medicine belong to one or the other of these classes of poisons. Whenever a person is called to treat the sick, he should, if possible, ascertain whether the disease was caused by the reception of some poison from without, and whether that poison is still entering the system; for it is evident that the most successful way to stop an effort of the system to cast out a poison

would be to prevent any more of that poison from entering the system; then, when what had already entered was cast out, the action, or disease, would cease. This shows how it is that diseases are naturally self-limited. The improper use, or misrelation, or abuse, of hygienic agents, may become a cause of disease by so changing the conditions of the individual that the impurities, or wastes of the body, or broken-down tissues, are retained in the system until it is clogged therewith, and a diseased action is set up for the purpose of expelling them.

A disease of this kind may be caused by insufficiency of air, by defective light, by living in constant shade, by extremes of temperature, by the inordinate use or misapplication of water, by food taken in improper quantities and at improper times, by too little or too much clothing, or clothing improperly adjusted, or by over exercise, indolence, sleeplessness, depressing mental influences, mental shocks, morbid religious sentiments, perverted moral influences, and mechanical injuries. If the misrelation of any of these otherwise hygienic agents is the cause of a disease, it is evident that, before the patient can re-cover, that cause must be removed by properly relating all hygienic agents to the system.

The Hygienic Family Physician: A Complete Guide for the Preservation of Health, and the Treatment of the Sick without Medicine, pg. 210-212 by M. G. Kellogg