

(editor's note: This paper was transcribed from a handwritten cursive copy with various difficulties. For a perfect rendition, the reader might wish to consult the original, itself a copy, in the volume entitled *Literary Club Papers*, May 30, 1891 to February 6, 1892)

The Spiroplethe Or a Mechanical Device for the Relief of Persons Afflicted with Weak Lungs

Mr. Editor:

About 10 years ago a young lawyer of this city who was a member of the Club was told by his physician that he could only prolong his life by removing to a climate where his lungs would be benefited. He left his family and friends and went to Colorado but the disease of his lungs seemed to gain upon him notwithstanding the alleviating influence on the atmosphere of that state.

Among other remedies which he tried he practiced strengthening his lungs by the continued inhalation of long breaths. He practiced this for an hour at a time regularly three times a day and though it gave him some relief by strengthening and developing his lungs, he could not keep it up sufficiently to derive from it much permanent good. Finally it occurred to him that if he could contrive some means of compelling himself to take continuous long breaths, he might get relief of a permanent sort.

To do this it was necessary that he should be constantly reminded of this otherwise he would unconsciously drop back into his natural habit of breathing short and quick. After some experimenting he invented for his own use a device which he has since patented recently under the name of Spiro-plethe. At the time the patent was taken out, the invention was noticed favorably by the Scientific American where some of the members of the Club may have seen a description of it.

It is a little steel or silver box about the size and shape of a small [ver] flat or thin watch which being fastened upon the chest produces there an intermittent pressure, not strong enough to injure the patient or cause him pain but sufficiently effective to attract attention and if relief is not obtained by an expansion of the chest, in a short time the continuous pressure becomes noticeably annoying. The effect of deep breathing in time and in a natural way produces a development of the lungs and the fuller breathing thus induced becomes a habit.

Inside of the little box, which has been described, there seems to be, so far as I can tell from the specimen of the device which I have, a flat steel strap which is set up on a spring so that upon being drawn out it will fly back if released, but if caught and held, exerts a slight force towards recoiling itself in the box, very

much like the little steel yard measures which thus recoil themselves. When the device is applied, it is put on next to the skin or just over the underclothing and the steel strap is drawn from the box and the end of it attached to the cord or band which goes over the shoulder and around the body and holds the device in place, and it is the pulling on this strap which seeks to recoil itself which produces the pressure which induces the fuller breathing described and which is desired. I will bring to the club with me tonight a specimen of the device which the members of the club may, some of them, like to examine. The inventor writes me that he has increased the size of his own chest since he began to use it not less than two inches.

C.B. Wilby
Dec 26th 1891

Cincinnati Literary Club
Hon Joseph Cox
Editor