

The Household.

Consumption, from a Mechanical Standpoint

BY WALTON HARRISON.

The human body is a machine, because it consists of a number of inanimate elements so united, arranged and adjusted as to be capable of performing work when acted upon by a certain motive power. It is a compound machine because it is composed in part of smaller machines, the most important of which are termed organs. Each organ is required to perform a certain amount of work, to the nature of which its structure is adapted. Although the character of the task assigned to one organ may differ entirely from that assigned to another, both have a common dependence upon the general system. Each organ does its work in accordance with mechanical or physical laws, some of which are understood perfectly, others partially, and yet others not at all. The motive power is designated by the vague and general term "life," and its precise nature is no better understood by the physiologist than is the exact nature of heat or of electricity understood by the machinist.

Two organs which have assigned to them a work of great importance are the lungs. Their principal task is to remove from the system particles of worn-out flesh and other impurities brought to them by the blood, and to supply to the general system fresh oxygen from the atmosphere. The circulating system, consisting of the blood, tubes, valves and ever throbbing pump, comprises the machinery used for the purpose of transportation, and for that purpose alone.

Consumption is what might be called a "mechanical" disease. It kills not from inflammation or other incidental causes, but because it disables and renders useless a portion of the machinery. A man in the last stages of consumption dies not because his system is worn out, but because he has no lungs. With the exception that a portion of his body is virtually absent he is otherwise a healthy man. He resembles the locomotive which would be in good running condition were it not for the fact that the slide-valves have been removed rendered useless. He dies from the same cause which extinguishes the life of a drowning man, because his supply of air is cut off.

A consumptive becomes fearfully emaciated. The emaciation is the result, and not the cause, of the real disease. Any well informed physician will admit that the emaciation is caused by unnatural and arbitrary decay of the lungs, no matter what may be the origin of this decay; he will also admit the emaciation arises from a curtailment of the functionary labor of the lungs; carrying the point further, he will admit that the emaciation results from the fact that lungs are able to handle only a limited quantity of available air. Here, then, is an important portion of the great secret unfolded. It is a law created by divine wisdom, yet so clear, simple and beautiful that when once understood it will be forever beyond the range of controversy: The emaciation incidental to consumption is simply an effort on the part of nature to reduce the body to such a size as will be suited to the limited and constantly-decreasing capacity of the disabled lungs. In other words when the machine, from some unknown and

arbitrary cause, is rendered incompetent to perform its proper amount of work, the task is lessened in order that the work may be continued as long and as thoroughly as possible. The purpose of this article is to illustrate the truth, application and moral of this wonderful principle, which is known to everybody and recognized by none. If the principle be admitted as true, then it must also be admitted that much of the usual treatment for consumption is radically wrong, in every sense of the word; that, should the patient recover, his recovery will be in spite of rather than through the aid of his treatment. Reference is made to the "building up" process of adding new flesh and blood to the frail body. If a railroad engineer finds that his engine has become disabled to such an extent that it is hardly able to pull the train, he will dispose of a few cars until the necessary repairs are made; if a cannoner discovers that his gun has become weak, he lessens the amount of his charge; if a teamster's horse becomes lame, he will contrive a way to decrease the load; yet an intelligent physician, when he makes a discovery that a patient's lungs have become so reduced in capacity as to be unable to do the work required by even a frail body, will endeavor to enlarge, strengthen, and if possible to fatten that body. Inasmuch as by this process the lungs themselves are not enlarged either in size or capacity, it becomes evident that they are thus made proportionately smaller and relatively weaker.

The healthy portion of the lungs will be taxed far beyond its normal capacity, for the simple reason that extra work has been added at a time when the lungs were hardly able, in fact almost unable, to accomplish the limited amount of labor which had already been assigned to them. Surely the building up of a body not supported by sufficient breathing apparatus can have no good effect, and the heavy duty and high rate of speed required of the diseased organs must inevitably hasten the untimely end.

It would be fair to answer, then, that the all-important step necessary when the disease first makes its appearance is to assist nature in her effort. By some legitimate means not much in conflict with the general laws of health, reduce the weight of the body a few pounds; as a consequence, the patient will breathe freely, easily, naturally and without effort. His lungs will be relieved of much of their burden; let his exercise and regimen, be calculated to expand and develop his lungs, rather than add flesh and weight to the general system. The patient will then, and not till then, be in condition to receive medical treatment.

That milk contains all that is required by the body, and the best proportions of mineral matters; is less irritating than other foods and better digested.

If glycerine agrees with one's skin, the following face lotion faithfully used will give some of the freshness of youth back to a complexion that has faded from want of care. Make oatmeal into a paste with glycerine two parts and water one part, and apply to the face at night. Some persons wear a mask over this.

"A beautiful woman is a jewel; a good woman is a treasure." So said Saadi, the Persian poet, some 600 years ago, and though we can't all be jewels, every woman may be a treasure in the poet's sense. Peach-like cheeks may become wrinkled, brilliant eyes dim; but real goodness never grows old. A good heart and a good temper will keep a woman lovable and attractive, if not beautiful, to the end of her days.

Minnie May's Dep't.

MY DEAR NIECES,—It is too bad that our duties confine us to the house such a delicious morning, for a glance from this window tells us it would be much pleasanter out of doors. The barn-yard is deserted, the cows and sheep have gone to pasture, the horses are at work, and ducks, geese and hens are in full possession. A motherly Brahma struts about, surrounded by thirteen white chickens that look like little balls of fluff. She has all she can do to find fat morsels for so many mouths. But seductive as this scene is we must turn our attention to household duties. House-keeping, whatever may be the opinion of triflers of the period, is an accomplishment. It includes all that goes to make up a well-ordered home. Perfection may be attained by study and experiment, but success is oftenest reached through great tribulation. And work badly done is only drudgery, but work well done is artistic. There is no dignity in slighted work; and no girl who aspires to be queen at home can afford to remain ignorant of the smallest details that contribute to the comfort, peace or attractions of home. There is no luck in house-keeping, however it may seem. Everything works by exact rule. There must be a place for everything, and everything in its place; a time for everything, and everything in its time. The reward is sure. Many valuable ideas are gained, how to stop numberless little leaks, which keep many a family in want, while a little care and economy in these details would be the saving of dollars and dollars. A neat, clean house, a tidy table and well-cooked meals are safeguards against the evils of intemperance. So we with our frying pans and soup kettles can wage a mighty war against it, though it has proved a deal too strong for an act of legislature. Well-fed men from well-ordered homes are not usually drunkards; and as women are the chief sufferers from this vice, with us it remains to stamp it out. It cannot be done all at once, but can, by slow degrees. We know what patient, persistent women have accomplished, and can accomplish again. We must begin with ourselves, for example always counts for much. Keeping our homes bright, tidy and sweet, and ourselves too; refusing to marry any man who is in the slightest degree addicted to intemperance; educating our children to despise it, and do all we can to raise the fallen and strengthen their resolutions. Women should be the very last to offer temptation to any man. The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world; and all great reforms have been commenced in home education. But what a long way I have wandered from my subject. Apropos of men and their shortcomings: Does it ever occur to any of my nieces that the men of our households might be a little more polite to us; and instead of saying: "For a wonder, dinner is ready in time!" they might say: "What a nice sound to a hungry man!" It would encourage us in our efforts, for we are often heart hungry. If dinner is not quite ready he need not say: "Of course not; it never is." It would not detract one whit from his manliness to give his wife a kind word by way of encouragement; and instead of the heart stab, he might say: "You are a good wife, Susie." I wish I could train several hundred boys to be husbands for the next generation. You may smile, my dear girls, but this is anything but a subject to laugh over.

MINNIE MAY.