

Health Department.

[A certain space in each number of this journal will be devoted to questions and answers of correspondents on all subjects pertaining to health and hygiene. This department is now in charge of an experienced Medical Practitioner, and it is believed that it will be found practically useful. Questions under this department should be as brief as possible and clear in expression. They should be addressed to the editor of this journal and have the words "Health Department" written in the lower left corner on the face of the envelope.—Ed.]

Hygiene for Smokers.

Under the above unique title, Dr. Felix Bremont, a smoker himself, has published an interesting article in a French magazine. The testimony contained in the following extract from it is weighty because it comes from a user of tobacco, and not from a prejudiced theorist:

"This article is not intended for school-boys desiring to enjoy their cigarettes out of sight of their tutor, nor for children who try to play the man by taking up one of his faults. It is addressed to smokers, but does not purpose to increase the number of them. Its design is to indicate what precautions may be taken to diminish, as far as possible, the inconveniences of smokers' glandular irritation; but it affirms the reality of these inconveniences, and declares it impossible to remove them completely.

"The first hygiene principle relative to tobacco is, do not smoke at all; don't smoke at any age. More than one old smoker will agree with me that it would have been good for him if he had never lit a cigar; for he suffers now if he cannot smoke a half-dozen of them in the course of the day. The habit of smoking creates a fictitious want that is, perhaps, more imperative than real wants, and which is a constant trouble to those who feel it. When I have a pressing engagement after dinner, I cut my meal short so as to have time to smoke a cigar; and there is to me nothing to suggest doubt in the story related by Philibert Audebrand of Father Schoene, director of Louis Philippe's park of Monceaux, who loved two things—his plants and his pipe. From morning till night he lived in the garden, and from morning till night he carried a short pipe in his mouth, which he would not take out for any one. 'It may pass before me,' said Louis Philippe to him one day, 'but to smoke so in the presence of the queen and the princesses!' 'Sir,' replied Schoene, 'it is stronger than I am. If your majesty is not satisfied with my service, I shall have to present my account; I shall probably die with vexation over the matter, but it will be with my pipe between my teeth.' Do not enroll yourselves, then, beardless readers, in the battalions of Nicotia. Initiation into her mysteries has painful accompaniments, and her fervent worship brings trouble of another character. Tobacco is smoked in cigars, cigarettes, and pipes. Placed in contact with the mouth, the cigar, which cannot escape some chewing, colors the saliva and charges it with the toxic principles of the tobacco—elements, principally nicotine, that should be carefully rejected. A person smoking only a simple light cigar may, perhaps, see the end of it without spitting, but, if he consumes any number of them, he must spit frequently. This is less indispensable when a cigar-holder is used, and the adoption of such a mouth-piece is recommended by hygiene as a means of avoiding the direct contact of the mouth with the tobacco, and considerably diminishing the inconveniences of smoking. Cigar-holders are made of amber, shell, glass, bone, cherry, birch, lilac, jasper, maple, and cane. Holders made from the last wood are the best, because they are generally longer than the others, whereby the smoke may become cooled, and because, being very cheap, they can be frequently renewed. Other inconveniences, involving questions of cleanliness, are avoided by the use of the cigar-holder. Too many hands touch the tobacco while it is being manufactured into a cigar for one to be able to say it has not been soiled, and cases of its having been the vehicle for conveying contagious diseases are not unknown.

Deep Breathing.

Hall's Journal of Health contains always many novel suggestions in regard to remedies and sanitary matters. Of their practical value TRUTH does not pretend to be qualified to speak. The following suggestions are given for what they may be worth. They can be tried without any danger, at any rate:—

In this season, when coughs and colds are "all the rage," any method of preventing them, and checking the first symptoms without drugs, may be of inestimable value. Therefore the following suggestions are offered.

When you find you have a cough, and before it gets to be deep-seated, go into the air and practice deep breathing. Draw air into the lungs until they are completely distended, raising the arms above the head during inspiration to more fully expand the chest. Hold the air in the lungs for a few seconds, then breathe it out slowly. Repeat the operation a dozen times or more, and after an hour try it again.

Persistence in this treatment will often cure a newly-contracted cough in a few hours. If the cough is of long standing, pain may be felt under the shoulder-blades and across the chest during the breathing, but as this is caused by the tearing away of adhesions of the lung tissue, it will usually pass away in a day or two, and the fact that it is felt shows that the lungs need thorough inflation.

Three cases have recently come under our observation where this treatment has proved beneficial.

The first was that of a lady who had been troubled with a dry cough for several months, but whose lungs were apparently sound. In three days she cured herself entirely by deep breathing, and, although a month has gone by since then, there has been no return of the cough.

The second was a gentleman who thought his lungs were failing. Deep breathing gave severe pain, as above described, but it soon passed away. A burning sensation was also felt in the lungs at each deep breath, owing to the access of oxygen to irritated lung tissue. The cough decreased in frequency and violence, he has gained in general health, and recovery will probably ensue.

The third was the Editor of the *Journal of Health*. He "caught cold," which settled into a severe cough. A dozen inhalations would stop the cough for an hour or two, when it would return and be stopped again in the same way. Two days' treatment drove it away entirely.

Sometimes the first deep breath is interrupted by a cough, but after a trial or two the inclination to cough can be controlled, and after five or six breaths are taken a sense of relief is felt and the desire to cough passes away.

A physician friend informs us that he has seen many cases of supposed consumption speedily cured in this way. At all events, it can do no harm to try it, and benefit may result.

The Two Membranes.

Two of the membranes of the body are of pre-eminent importance from their extent, their work, and the diseases to which they give rise. Their chief office is to secrete fluids for the purpose of keeping the parts soft, lessening friction, and aiding in the passage of substances.

One is the mucous membrane, the other is the serous. The former lines every cavity of the body that has an external outlet—the nostrils, mouth, gullet, stomach, the ducts of the liver, the intestines, bladder, etc., and the bronchial tubes of the lungs.

The serous membrane lines the cavities of the chest and of the abdomen, and also covers—as the skin does the body—the brain, heart, lungs, liver, etc. It also forms a sac around the heart, which it encloses, and is called the pericardium. It moreover lines the heart within, where it is called the endocardium.

It may aid the memory of some of our readers if we add that *endo* means "within," and *peri* "around."

The brain also is enclosed with a second serous membrane, called the arachnoid. As the brain substance extends down through the spinal column, so the investing serous membrane follows it. A similar membrane lines the smooth surface of the joints.

Coryza—a "cold in the head"—is an inflammation of the mucous membrane of the nostrils; pharyngitis is an inflammation of the mouth; laryngitis, in the larynx, or vocal box; bronchitis, in the bronchial tubes.

So, too, the mucous membrane of the stomach may be inflamed, causing a large secretion of "phlegm"—mucus. Inflammation of the mucous membrane of the liver or gall ducts prevents the flow of bile, causing most agonizing pain and jaundice. A similar inflammation in the intestines gives inflammation of the bowels, or enteritis.

An inflammation of the serous membrane of the brain causes at first delirium, and then stupor, by the pressure of the accumulated fluid. This is *cerebral meningitis*. When the inflammation affects the membrane of the brain and the spinal cord, it is *cerebro-spinal meningitis*. *Pleurisy* is inflammation of the serous membrane of the chest and lungs; *pericarditis*, that of the heart-sac; *endocarditis*, that of the inner membrane of the heart; *peritonitis*, that of the abdomen.

Cleaning Teeth.

The majority of those who clean their teeth do so upon getting out of bed in the morning and upon going to bed at night. Personal convenience and comfort have appointed these times, but it is better to cleanse them after every meal. The leaving of remnants of food between the teeth is what greatly helps to make work for the dentist. If the little cavities and spaces between the teeth are filled with food, the teeth will decay through the fermenting of the little remnants. Says a writer on this topic:

We have now in mind an old gentleman under whom we worked as second-hand in the weave-shop twenty-one years ago, who cleaned his teeth invariably after he left his morning, noon, and evening meal, with a reasonably stiff tooth-brush and the hardest old white castile soap he could purchase at the druggist's.

Five cents' worth of soap, which would amount to about a third of an ounce, for such soap is really valuable, would last him three months.

His soap and brush were always kept in an inner vest-pocket rolled up in clean, white flannel, which was as carefully washed every week or changed every week as the week came to its end.

This man at that time was fifty-five years of age and is still living, and his teeth two years ago, when we last saw him, would positively shame those of any woman we ever saw.

He is now upwards of seventy; never knew what the toothache was, never had a dentist look in his mouth, except to admire the teeth.

Unconsciously he had been following the most common-sense practice possible, avoiding chemical action and attaining what not one in twenty thousand Americans do attain—sound teeth.

Dangers From Impure Water.

Too much reliance is placed on the senses of taste, sight and smell in determining the character of drinking water. It is a fact that has been repeatedly illustrated that water may be odorless, tasteless and colorless, and yet be full of danger to those who use it. The recent outbreak of typhoid fever in Newburg, N. Y., is an example, having been caused by water which was clear and without taste or smell. It is also a fact that even a chemical analysis sometimes will fail to show a dangerous contamination of the water, and will always fail to detect the specific poison if the water is infected with discharges of an infectious nature. It is therefore urged that the source of the water supply should be kept free

from all possible means of contamination by sewage. It is only in the knowledge of perfect cleanliness that perfect safety is guaranteed.

The local European volunteer health commission in Alexandria, where the cholera has been raging along back, is unearthing, according to the *Sanitary News*, some very unsanitary conditions in that city. They have found a large native cemetery, underneath which runs a canal, with which communicates a well, the water of which is used to wash dead bodies. A drinking fountain adjoins this well, and the canal is the water supply of a crowded portion of the town. In the mosques are stagnant pools of water used for ablutions prescribed by religious belief, the water in which, being unchanged, gets indescribably foul. Such nuisances are difficult to abate because of religious prejudices. Is it any wonder that pestilential diseases attack such locality?—*Hall's Journal*.

Eating.

Hurried eating is a breach of good manners. Americans are proverbially fast eaters. Not the boorish or low lived, but the "best" people, so called, are often guilty of this indecency. Dr. Willard Parker, in a recent lecture, gave the following bill of fare seen to be eaten in Albany by a "legislator" in three and a half minutes: Two boiled eggs, two large potatoes, a beef steak, two goblets of milk, a plate of ham and eggs, a plate of buckwheat cake and a large cup of coffee. The poor man, however, complained to a friend that he "didn't feel well, and was troubled with dyspepsia!" What sort of legislation can be expected from such bilious creatures! Animals do better. The carrier pigeon arrives from its long flight exhausted, refuses food, taking, perhaps, a little water, and settles down to rest. Then it will revive and eat. Instinct teaches it that when the nerve power is gone it can't be turned on at the stomach for digestion; the steam is too low. The proprietor of the Astor House restaurant says that it is strange "to see the way these Americans go at their food. A man will start at Wall street, run all the way to the Astor as fast as his legs would carry him, and shovel in his lunch as though his life depended on his getting through in five minutes. Then he will stand around here and talk for an hour or longer without thinking of going back to his office. I have seen them go over and converse for a solid hour with the cashier, after running through their feed like chain lightning."

Eight Hours to Sleep.

The value of sleep to brain-workers cannot be exaggerated. In a recent lecture Dr. Malins, a famous English physician, said that the brain requires twelve hours sleep at 4 years old, gradually diminishing by hours and half-hours to ten hours at 14, and thence to eight hours when the body is full grown and formed. Goethe, in his most active productive period, needed nine hours, and took them; Kant—the most laborious of students—was strict in never taking less than seven. Nor does it appear that those who have systematically tried to cheat nature of this right have been, in any sense, gainers of time for their work. It may be a paradox, but it is not the less truth, that what is given to sleep is gained to labor.

MEDICAL QUERIES.

A correspondent asks TRUTH for a remedy for inflamed eyes, and another asks for a cure for water brash. For the benefit of those requiring such remedies, please publish the following:

FOR WATER-BRASH.—Eat small portions of raw carrot at intervals of say half an hour. It is an excellent remedy.—R. H. W., Port Hope.

FOR INFLAMED EYES.—Take off the inner bark of the soft maple, (from a young tree is best), put in a clean kettle with soft water, boil slowly, until about the color of writing ink. When cool, bathe the eyes freely; it gives immediate relief, and a few applications will effect a permanent cure.

G. C., CORTLAND, O.—Q.—About two years ago I strained my eyes reading night. Since that time I cannot read much at a time, especially nights, etc., etc. A—Consult a specialist on diseases of the eye.

LO

"Oh, it is I for myself," she said, and then she looked at me and said, "I know you are a good man, but you are a little bit of a fool."

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