

so much in vogue as in the past, less stress being placed on the beauty of small feet—except in China.

Most of the troubles that afflict the feet are due to ill-fitting coverings. It is not alone the boots and shoes that maim and deform the feet. The stockings come in for their share of blame. If these are tight or badly shaped, turning in and cramping the toes, the joints are thrown out of place, the action of the foot is impeded, the muscles do not have proper play and the result is deformity. In the army are used stockings with a special compartment for the big toe, suggesting the thumb of a mitten. Such stockings are highly recommended. The principal defects of stockings are in being too short and having the toes narrow too much, especially on the inside of the foot. One who has not looked into the subject would never think, judging from the ordinary shape of boots, that the line from the heel to the tip of the big toe on the inside of the foot should be nearly straight, or should slant out from the foot rather than in a contrary direction. It is the losing sight of the anatomical contour of the foot that gives rise to more trouble than even tight shoes. Even when the shoe fits well, if the stocking is narrowed into a point, the large toe will be deflected from its rightful position and deformity will result.

#### PEDAL DEFORMITIES.

The natural and artificial deformities of the feet give rise to serious discomfort. The joints become misshapen from gout and rheumatism, ailments increased by wearing ill-fitting boots and shoes. As much mischief may be done by wearing shoes that are too large as those that are too small. Many people think that the more ugly a shoe, the more hygienic. The large, wide-toed boots in which the feet look so unsightly have been worn by many with the idea that they were performing a meritorious act. But a shoe may have a graceful form and at the same time fit the wearer. It should be long enough to leave the toes uncramped and wide enough not to exert pressure upon the joints. The toes must not be curled under or held rigidly in place, but there must be space enough so that they can be readily moved. If the shoe is too large, it plays up and down on the foot in walking, giving rise to corns and callous places.

One would suppose that to have shoes fit perfectly it would only be necessary to have them made to order. It is difficult to see why, but a fair trial of the best and most expensive boot-makers of Gotham resulted in the most dismal failure to secure a fit. In some instances the boots had to be cast aside entirely, in others they were worn to the detriment of the wearer's feet. Unless the feet are very unusual in shape, they can be fitted by the ready-made shoes which come now in such variety of length and width as to suit almost every one. The shoe dealer is a great imposer of deformities upon the walking public and he will have much to answer for in the final accounting for miseries inflicted upon fellow men.

#### BUNIONS, CORNS AND CALLOSITIES.

But to return to the troubles of those who have had the misfortune to wear boots the inside line of which was not straight but slanted towards the big toe, giving it too little space. This thrusting of the big toe out of position results in deforming the joint, giving rise to a bunion of greater or less size. The pain and trouble which arise from these enlarged joints make walking a positive penance. The foot, too, is deformed and unsightly. Another result of ill-shaped shoes is the in-growing toe-nail. The shoe holds the toe close and presses the nail into the flesh until it makes a new bed for itself, causing great pain. If the trouble has not advanced far, it can be obviated by lifting the nail and introducing beneath it a bit of cotton to keep it away from the flesh. If the condition is of long standing, a surgical operation will be necessary. The relief from such an operation is so great that no one should hesitate to have the offending portion of the nail removed—or even the whole nail, as is sometimes necessary.

When the boot rubs or presses upon the toes or sides of the foot, it causes the epidermis to harden and, after a while, corns to form. They differ from the callous places which come on the soles and sides of the feet in having a hardened center. If allowed to grow and harden, they cause great inconvenience and partially cripple the foot. It is extremely difficult to cure a corn after it has once appeared, but if after soaking the feet the layers of thickened skin are peeled (not cut) off, they can be kept under control and give little inconvenience. Protectors of plaster or chamois take off the pressure and give the skin a chance

to become soft and normal. Corns should never be cut, as it makes them grow more rapidly. Aside from thus promoting the thickening of the skin, one is liable to cut into the underlying tissues, causing bleeding and a very sore spot. There are many remedies for corns. The most successful is *cannabis indica*, ten drops to an ounce of collodion—this preparation to be applied daily to the corn with a brush or bit of cotton until it disappears.

#### FOOTGEAR.

To recapitulate in regard to footgear, the stockings should fit the feet as perfectly as do the shoes and be neither too long, nor, above all, too short. They should be gartered from the waist; the constricting garter about the calf or above the knee is an abomination. They may be of silk, if expense is not an object; it is the ideal stocking, but unfortunately its wearer must have a long purse or an ever-ready darning needle. Woolen stockings are advisable if one walks much or suffers from cold feet; cotton ones will do if the wearer is economical and engaged in the ordinary affairs of life. Lisle thread stockings, though much worn, are not as comfortable for walking or as warm in Winter as are cotton stockings, but they are admirable for Summer wear. The boot or shoe should not be too heavy, should be accurately fitted so as to allow the play of the toes and the foot without being so large and so loose as to rub up and down on the foot. Be very careful that the big toe is not crowded against the other toes. Of shoe heels a whole chapter might be written. It is not the height of the heel that makes trouble, it is its lack of proper proportion to the sole, or rather that part of it which supports the ball of the foot. The relation between the heel and the tap effects the arch of the foot. If both are too high, the curve will be too great and will force the arch of the foot upward. If the heel is too high, the foot is crowded down into the toe of the boot, and even if the shoe is large and long, the result to the foot is deforming and crippling. All that is said of the ill effects of high heels upon the various organs of the body is true. It throws them out of position, and the eyes and head suffer from the false poise thus given to the body and the constant strain of trying to readjust the equilibrium.

#### THE PROPER GAIT.

One seldom considers that gait is a matter of fashion, but it is. In the time of large hoops and farthingales a short, waddling step was the mode, and the affectation known as the "Grecian bend" will be remembered by most adults. Fashion and hygiene have never been so little at variance as at present, when an upright, straightforward gait is in vogue. An erect posture of the body according to the directions given military cadets, "chin in, chest out and stomach in," should be observed. The lower extremities should be swung forward from the hip joint freely and easily, the foot coming down on the toes first, then the rest of the foot, the heel reaching the ground last. There has been much discussion in regard to which portion of the foot should first be placed upon the ground in walking, but writers now generally agree that the toes should come down first; they are organs of feeling and give a sense of support to the body. The natural way of walking has been studied by observing Indians and Arabs and it has been found that those who walk best and most gracefully point the toes downward, stepping on them first.

Max O'Rell declares that an English lady walks with her arms hanging down, supporting herself on her heels, the French lady walks with her arms bent, supporting herself on her toes. It is said that French ladies actually practice walking on the toes with a slipper having an India-rubber ball beneath the heel. The ball squeaks when subjected to pressure, and the object is to move freely without eliciting this squeak.

The turning of the toes out in walking is not so much dwelt upon as formerly. The ungraceful toeing-in should, of course, be avoided, but the angle made by bringing the heels together and turning the toes out, military fashion, need not be practised so industriously as old-time precepts dictate. The study of the gait and of the best methods of walking is now prosecuted by means of prints of the soles of the feet made either by walking in soft clay or by chalking or blackening the soles. In this way many of the irregularities of gait, indicative either of nervous disease or impending deformities, have been discovered. The process has been equally useful in analysing the best methods of walking, the results favoring the straightforward swing from the hip and the frank placing down of the foot, beginning at the toes, not turning it at an angle, but letting it fall naturally.