

THE FAMILY CIRCLE

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HEALTH AND DISEASE.

Beware of Impure Water.

Most people are as carelessly indifferent concerning the character of the water they drink as of the air they breathe, though these two articles are of greater importance to life than any others, and when impure, are more productive of harm to the human system than impurities received in any other way. Few, however, have reached such a state of indifference to dirt as that of the Vienna professor, a Dr. Emerich, who drank daily from the dirtiest ditch accessible to him, and declared that he was benefited, healthwise, by so doing. Such foolhardy experiments prove nothing except that the experimenter is tough or lucky. Modern science has established the fact that dirt is an inveterate foe to health, and in no form is it more dangerous than in drinking-water. Inorganic or mineral dirt is of little consequence, as it is seldom productive of disease unless long used; but organic filth is the well-known cause of many serious and often fatal maladies, even when used in the most transient manner.

Among the most useful discoveries of modern chemistry are reliable methods for testing water for these poisonous organic impurities. Two of the most simple and useful are the following:—

Dissolve in a little pure water a few crystals of nitrate of silver. Add the solution to a tablespoonful of the water to be tested. If a milky appearance is produced, the water contains chlorides in considerable quantity, which is very unusual in inland wells or springs, except in salt districts, the most likely source being contamination with human excreta from a privy vault or a cesspool. The more dense the milky appearance, the greater the quantity of chloride contained in the water, and the greater its unfitness for use. If it is in any degree marked, the water should be considered dangerous.

A second method which is still more reliable is the permanganate of potash. One drop of this solution should be added to a glass of water to be tested. A delicate pink tint will be produced if the water is pure, and will not disappear for several hours. If the water is impure, the color will speedily disappear. The solution should be added one drop at a time, as the color disappears, until the pink tinge

remains. The number of drops added indicates the degree of impurity. It may be taken as a safe rule that if the color produced by two drops of the solution disappears in fifteen minutes, the water is too impure to be safely used.

The danger of contamination of water is so great that no one should think of using water from any source, without occasional testing to determine its purity.

Relapses in Typhoid Fever.

Some people depend wholly on domestic treatment in typhoid fever. They seem to be successful; for, in the large majority of cases—eight out of ten—the system usually throws it off wholly apart from medicine, especially if there is a strong circulation of pure air in the room, and the body is frequently sponged with cold water, or better, with a weak solution of common soda. The fact, however, that one cannot know beforehand the character of the case, makes it always safest in the hands of a faithful physician who can watch it and care for it according to the symptoms.

This seems the more important in view of the discovery recently made by the late Dr. Irvine, of England, respecting relapses of typhoid fever, of which the *London Lancet* says, "To most of us it must come like a revelation."

He has shown that these most troublesome contingencies are much more frequent than is generally supposed by the profession; that in fact, there are often several, the first predisposing to a second; that a real relapse may set in without any interval of convalescence; and that many cases of the disease, when they first come under the notice of the physician, are relapses, following upon a mild primary attack.

The fever normally lasts twenty-eight days. A first relapse, where there are no complications, lasts twenty or twenty-one days; subsequent relapses are each shorter than that immediately preceding. The interval of convalescence, between the first attack and the relapses, averages about five days, during which the temperature is natural, or nearly so.

The onset of the relapse is marked by a sudden rise of temperature, which reaches its height by the fifth day, maintaining a high level until the eighth or ninth, when it falls decidedly, but again rises and gradually declines to the end on the twentieth or twenty-first day.

The Feet.

Of all parts of the body, there is not one which ought to be so carefully attended to as the feet. Every one knows from experience that colds, and many other diseases that proceed from the same are attributable to cold feet. The feet are such a distance from the "wheel at the cistern" of the system, that the circulation of the blood may be very easily checked in them. You see all this, and although every person of common sense should be aware of the truth of what we have stated there is no part of the body so much trilled with as the feet. The young and would-be genteel-footed, cramp their feet into thin-soled, bone-pinching boots, in order to display neat feet, in the fashionable sense of the term. Now this is very wrong. In cold weather, boots of good thick leather, both in soles and uppers, and large enough to give free circulation of the blood in the feet, should be worn by all. They should be water-tight, but not air-tight. It injures the feet to wear an air-tight covering over them. India-rubber shoes or boots should not be worn except in wet and slushy weather, and then taken off as soon as the exposure to it is over. No part of the body should be allowed to have a covering which entirely obstructs the passage of the carbonic acid gas from the pores of the skin outward, and the moderate passage of the air inward to the skin. There is one great evil against which every person should be on the guard, and it is one which is seldom guarded. We mean the changing of warm for cold boots or shoes. A change is often made from thick to thin-soled shoes without reflecting upon the consequences which might ensue. It is a dangerous practice, and many an individual has suffered hours of illness because of it.

Prudence in working, temperance in eating and drinking, and as much sleep as possible—these are three main conditions of health and vigor in the hot season.