

NEGLECT OF THE EYE.

Whatever an ounce of prevention may be to other members of the body, it, certainly, is worth many pounds of cure to the eye. Like a chronometer watch this delicate organ will stand any amount of use, not to say abuse; but when once thrown off its balance, it very rarely can be brought back to its original perfection of action, or, if it is, it becomes ever after liable to a return of disability of function or the seat of actual disease. One would have supposed from this fact, and from the fact that modern civilization has imposed upon the eye an ever-increasing amount of strain, both as to the actual quantity of work done and the constantly increasing brilliancy and duration of the illumination under which it is performed, that the greatest pains would have been exercised in maintaining the organ in a condition of health and the greatest care and solicitude used in its treatment when diseased. And yet it is safe to say that there is no organ in the body the welfare of which is so persistently neglected as the eye.

I have known fond and doting mothers take their children of four and five years of age to have their first teeth filled, instead of having them extracted, so that the jaw might not suffer in its due development and become in later years contracted, while the eye, the most intellectual, the most apprehensive, and the most discriminating of all organs, receives not even a passing thought, much less an examination. It never seems to occur to the parents that the principal agent in a child's education is the eye; that though it gains not only in sense of the methods and ways of existence of others, but even the means for the maintenance of its own; nor does it occur to the parents for an instant that many of the mental as well as bodily attributes of a growing child are fashioned, even if they are not created, by the condition of the eye alone.

A child is put to school without the slightest inquiry on the part of the parent, and much less on the part of the teacher, whether it has the normal amount of sight; whether it sees objects sharply and well defined, or indistinctly and distorted; whether it be near-sighted or far-sighted; whether it sees with one or two eyes; or finally, if it does see clearly and distinctly, whether it is not using a quantity of nervous force sufficient after a time not only to exhaust the energy of the visual organ, but of the nervous system at large.—*Dr. Edward G. Loring.*

LIGHT IN THE HOME.

The eminent English writer, Dr. Richardson, produces in one of our contemporaries, an article called "Health at home," which is replete with wisdom. A most important point, and one on which he dwells, is the fact that so many people are afraid of the light. "In a dark and gloomy house you never can see the dirt that pollutes it. Dirt accumulates on dirt, and the mind soon learns to apologize for this condition because the gloom conceals it." Accordingly, when a house is dark and dingy, the air becomes impure, not only an account of the absence of light, but from the impurities which are accumulated. Now, as Dr. Richardson cleverly puts it, we place flowers in our windows that they may have the light. If this be the case why should we deprive, ourselves of the sunshine and expect to gain health and vigour? Light, and plenty of it, is not only a purifier of things inanimate but it absolutely stimulates our brains. It is in regard to sick rooms that this excellent authority is particularly impressive. It used to be the habit of physicians in old times to sedulously darken the rooms, and this practice continues to some extent even to-day. In certain very acute cases of nervous disease, where light, the least ray of it disturbs in over exciting the visual organs, this darkening of the room may be permitted, but ordinarily to keep light out of the room is to deprive the patient of one of the vital forces. Children or old people condemned to live in darkness are pale and wan, exactly like those plants which, deprived of light, grow white. Darkness in the daytime undoubtedly makes the blood flow less strongly and checks the beating of the heart, and these conditions are precisely such as bring constitutional suffering and disease. The suppression of the light of day actually increases those contagious maladies which feed on uncleanness. Dr. Richardson states: "I once found by experiment that certain organic poisons, analogous to the poisons which propagate these diseases, are rendered innocuous by exposure to light."

TO RESTORE OLD OAK.—Take oxalic acid 2 oz.; dissolved by friction in one quart of cold water. If the oak has been varnished, it must be scraped clean before using the acid.

WHY TEETH DECAY.

Upon a careful review of the opinion and experiments of our best investigators, says Dr. S. M. Prothro, in a paper read before the Tennessee Dental Association, it is conclusive that there are but two active agents in the process of dental caries, namely the action of acids and the development of a vegetable parasite, *Lep-tothrix buccatis*. By actual experiments it is demonstrated that it does not require strong acids to separate the phosphoric and carbonic acids from the lime contained in the tooth substances. Even water that contains carbonic acid will dissolve the calcareous salts. And it seems from a circumstance that transpired under the eye of Mr. Spence Bate, that water alone can dissolve the teeth.

A lady having two sets of artificial human teeth, placed one set in water to preserve it till she had worn out the other. At the expiration of seven years, the set that she had kept in the water was as much corroded as the one she had worn in her mouth. This case corroborates a statement made by Wedd and Heider, that at the end of ten days fungi had attacked the enamel and dentine of the teeth that had been kept in pure water, and that in a few weeks the tissues were pierced with holes like a sieve.

All mineral as well as vegetable acids, act promptly upon the teeth. "In forty-eight hours acetic, citric and malic acids will corrode the enamel so that you may scrape a great portion of it away with the finger-nail." Acid tartrate of lime, having a greater affinity for the lime of the tooth than for its base, will rapidly destroy the enamel.

Grapes in forty-eight hours, will render the enamel of a chalky consistence. Vegetable substances are inert till fermentation takes place and acetic acid is formed. Sugar has no deleterious effect, only in the state of acetous fermentation. Animal substances exert no injurious effect until putrefaction is far advanced.

SKELETON LEAVES.—The following method has been communicated to the Botanical Society of Edinburgh, by Dr. G. Dickson: A solution of caustic soda is made by dissolving three ounces of washing soda in two pints of boiling water, and adding one and a half ounces of quick-lime previously slaked; boil for ten minutes, decant the pure solution and bring it to the boil. During ebullition, add the leaves, boil briskly for some time, say an hour, occasionally adding hot water to supply the place of that lost by evaporation. Take out a leaf, put it into a vessel of water, and rub it between the fingers under the water. If the epidermis and parenchyma separate easily, the rest of the leaves may be removed from the solution and treated in the same way; but if not, the boiling must be continued for some time longer. To bleach the skeletons, mix about a drachm of chloride of lime with a pint of water, adding a sufficient acetic acid to liberate the chlorine. Steep the leaves in this until they are whitened (about ten minutes), taking care not to let them stay in too long; otherwise they are apt to become brittle. Put them into clean water, and float them out on pieces of paper. Lastly, remove them from the paper before they are quite dry, and place them in a book or botanical press.

—The London *Lancet* draws attention to the value of chloride of lead as a deodorizer. The manner of its use is to dissolve half a drachm of nitrate of lead in a pint of boiling water, and pour this solution into a bucket of water in which two drachms of sodic chloride (common salt) has been dissolved. After chemical action has taken place, the clear, supernatant liquid is an odourless, saturated solution of chloride of lead. If this solution be thrown into a sink, vault, or closet, from time to time, the disagreeable odours will be destroyed in a short time. Cloths wet with this solution, and hung in fever wards, are said to keep the atmosphere sweet and healthy.

ARROWROOT FOR INFANTS.—Dr. Routh says, in his *Infant-feeding and its Influence on Life*: "I cannot conceive of anything more injurious than arrowroot feeding. I believe that it is a cause of death of many infants." Dr. Davis says, in the *Virginia Medical Monthly*, that there is, perhaps, no error more common than that of administering to the infant arrowroot, corn starch, tapioca, or other starch foods. Not till after dentition is *diastase* secreted by the salivary glands, and starch food remains in the stomach and intestines non-assimilable as a foreign substance, only disposed to irritate the delicate membranes.—*Louisville Medical News.*

BLACK VARNISH FOR IRON.—A durable black and shining varnish for iron is made by adding to oil of turpentine strong sulphuric acid, drop by drop, stirring until a syrupy precipitate is formed.