

Selected Articles.

ON THE CARE OF THE SKIN IN ITS CONNECTION WITH PHYSICAL CULTURE AND HEALTH.

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Simple as it looks, the skin, the case or envelope of the body, is really very complex, and is designed to serve a great many useful purposes in addition to its protection of the body from too rough contact with external objects.

Three layers of membranes enter into its composition; the outermost being the cuticle, scarf-skin or epidermis, so easily abraded or blistered by exertion; then, the soft mucous layer or coat, the seat of color, so dark in the negro; and, thirdly, the inner or cutis vera, the thick true skin, enveloping the whole body, and keeping every part in its place.

The outer skin, or cuticle possesses neither blood vessels nor nerves, so that when abraded it neither bleeds nor feels pain, so that it is in its proper place as the outer layer, and through becoming thicker from use, forms an admirable pad for the parts beneath, enabling us to walk and use our hands without pain. The laborer or blacksmith can thus carry on his work with the same ease with which the fine lady uses her needle. It is easily and quickly renewed, and, being perforated by many little holes or pores, it allows the hairs and perspiration to pass freely through. These pores are nearly two millions and a half in number. By preventing the perspiration passing off too rapidly by evaporation, it keeps the true skin in the moist and pliant state necessary for touch and sensation; the nails and hairs also belong to the cuticle and are consequently also insensible to pain, and are speedily renewed after being cut or otherwise injured. The functions of the cuticle, then, are to protect the body, and promote a proper degree of moisture and softness.

The mucous coat is the seat of color, and forms an intermediate coat between the outer and the inner skin, protecting the nerves and blood vessels of the latter, and aiding in their softness and pliancy. The occasional want of this middle coat gives rise to unusual frequency of bleeding from various parts of the body, cutaneous hemorrhages, produced by very slight causes, and may, according to medical accounts, have