

## 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.]

### The Use and Abuse of Dumb-Bells.

Some fifteen years ago the surgeons in the British Army were astonished at the immense number of cases of aneurism which came under their notice, the sufferers being mostly young officers—though a few cases were found amongst the rank and file. The medical men set to work to discover the cause of this particular complaint and it was finally found in the use of heavy dumb-bells.

Now, we shall not say a word against the proper use of bells of a proper weight, the latter of course, being regulated in proportion to the weight and strength of the user, and it may be laid down as a pretty good rule that dumb-bells weighing an eighth of the weight of their user are quite heavy enough. This, however, would be far too heavy for a young man who had never had a pair of any description in his hands before. It is always the safest plan to commence with light bells and gradually take up heavier ones as the strength increases.

There can be no doubt, we think, that dumb-bell exercise taken in moderation is highly beneficial; it is the overdoing the thing that is injurious. A very good example of this was to be seen in the late Colonel F. G. Burnaby, who was at one time, in about the years from 1866 to 1870, considered the most powerful man in the British army. It is true that his muscular development was enormous, and when stripped, he appeared a perfect Hercules; but at that very time his physician told him that if he did not discontinue his playing with such toys as dumb-bells weighing 170 lbs. apiece, his life was not worth a year's purchase. He had, simply, developed his muscles at the expense of the rest of his system. The gallant colonel—at that time only a captain—being desirous of far longer than a year's enjoyment of life, followed the doctor's advice, gave up his favorite dumb-bells and sought consolation in all sorts of dare-devil feats, amongst which crossing the British Channel alone in a balloon on more than one occasion was merely looked on by him as a pleasant way of passing the time.

One of the most powerful men we ever saw, practised with the dumb-bells daily but never used those over 25 pounds each in weight. He measured 7½ inches round the biceps, his chest measurement being 45 inches; height 6 feet. A physician who had examined him in order to pass him for a life insurance policy, pronounced him sound as a bell. This was last year. Well, that man informed the writer that ten or eleven years ago his life had been almost despaired of and he had been looked upon as a victim to consumption. He had, however, conceived a fondness for long walks in the country, making a practice of breathing only through his nose and thoroughly filling his lungs at each inspiration. He found before long that his health was rapidly improving; he resolved to add light dumb-bells to his pedestrian exercise, and before eighteen months had elapsed he was about as unlike a consumptive man as can well be conceived. He commenced with dumb-bells seven pounds in weight and gradually took up heavier ones; he never made a practice of lifting immense-

ly heavy weights merely to say that he could do it and never used bells exceeding twenty-five pounds each. Now, this was a case where a judicious use of dumb-bells resulted most happily; doubtless the long walks in the open air and that habit of taking deep inspirations were half the battle; that is, half the secret of this man's restoration to sound health, but we think the dumb-bells had much to do with it.

Col. Burnaby was an example (or would have been if he had not stopped in time) of the injudicious use—that is, abuse of dumb-bells; he "went in" for the cultivation of muscle merely to enable himself to say that he was the strongest man in the army; well, he succeeded, but he nearly ruined his health completely.

We cannot say too much in favor of the practice of drawing into the lungs deep breaths of pure air. We have known men to increase the girth of their chests from 38 to 43 inches in six months, simply by making a habit of doing this; and certainly the more room the lungs are given in which to perform their function the sadder they will be. Regular dumb-bell exercise, if properly taken, has also the effect of increasing the size of the chest, but there is a right way and a wrong way of using dumb-bells and if the wrong method is adopted the would-be athlete were better if he had not touched them at all. Full instructions may be obtained in William Blaikie's little book "How to get strong and remain so," and this little volume should be in the hands of all intending dumb-bell practisers.

It is not the muscles of the arms alone that are to be benefited by the use of dumb-bells. Every muscle in the body should feel the effects of a half-hour's practice with them. No man should aim at developing any one particular muscle, as that one will be developed at the expense of the rest, and a man with two large biceps muscles looks ridiculous if his lower arm or leg muscles are not developed in proportion. Now proper dumb-bell exercise will give every muscle of the arms, legs, chest and back something to do, and they should all get their fair share of attention without any favoritism being shown to any one in particular. Another important matter is regularity in practice; it is useless to "pitch in" heavily one week and do nothing the next, through this is a plan often adopted by young men. The best way for any one wishing to derive benefit from the use of dumb-bells (or any other gymnastic appliances, such as parallel and horizontal bars, rings, &c.) is to set apart a certain period of time for this practice each day, and faithfully adhere to his rule to exercise regularly—and in the open air whenever practicable. Obtain a few instructions at the commencement, from some competent person, and then go ahead, and we shall be surprised if you do not feel the better for it, but always bear in mind that it is better to have nothing whatever to do with dumb-bells than to use them to excess, for your health will certainly pay for it, and you will be worse off than if you had never touched them.

### MEDICAL QUERIES.

**JACK, Bass River.**—Tincture of Iron. Dose from ten to fifteen drops three times a day in a wine-glass of water after meals. The best plan to take this is by sucking it through a quill, as the iron, otherwise, has a very bad effect on the teeth.

**Box 14, Durham.**—If your health and appetite are good, you need not despair of recovery. Bathe the part affected with cold water frequently, and take fifteen or twenty drops of tincture of iron daily, in a wine-

glassful of water. If your habits are such as to produce the disease with which you are affected, you should change them at once otherwise you will never recover. Any competent physician you like to consult could deal with your case. Avoid quacks.

**S. J. H., Omamee.**—From the description of your symptoms, there does not appear to be much the matter, and probably a gargle of two cents worth of chlorate of potash, dissolved in a tumbler of water, and used frequently, will end your trouble. A flannel bandage should be worn round the throat, and be careful to avoid sitting in a draught.

**ANXIOUS, Port Hope.**—There is no telling how long it will be before your ankle regains its strength, but one thing is certain and that is that the more perfect rest and quiet you give it, the sooner you may expect to get about. An excellent plan to strengthen it is to sit with it under a tap of cold water falling from as great a height as possible, two or three times a day, for half an hour at a time. This often works like a charm.

**Tic, Port Credit.**—No good. Have the tooth out. It's much the shortest way. Any other treatment will only be putting off the evil day a little longer, and you will have to lose your tooth at last. Screw up your courage and have it out now.

**FACTORIA, Hespeler.**—Try the effect of a good, brisk walk in the open air daily. Walk as if you meant it, and no slouching. Begin with a couple of miles or so and gradually increase till you can do ten with ease; breathe only through the nostrils. Inhale deeply, being careful to fill the lungs at each breath. If you have no organic disease this treatment with generous diet will effect a cure. Drink plentifully of fresh sweet milk, or fresh buttermilk if you like it.

**A. McG., St. George.**—Put a few drops of castor oil into the ear every night, followed by cotton-wool saturated with diluted camphor.

The address of S. Saltingrove, is wanted by Thos. A. Rupert, Essex Centre P. O., Ont.

**R. H. F., Mount Forest.**—Are you sure you are suffering from congestion of the liver and weak lungs? It is possible that all your trouble arises from the stomach and that the blood comes from there. It would be impossible to give you any advice without obtaining more information from you on many points. Your symptoms are such as often arise from the too free use of alcoholic stimulants, though of course we don't say yours are of that nature. If, however, you are in the habit of indulging too freely in spirituous liquors, leave off that habit and you will soon feel the benefit of having done so.

**A SUBSCRIBER, Hamilton.**—Your simplest and probably most efficacious plan would be to try hot applications, as the cold ones have failed to produce the desired effect. Wrap out a large flannel in boiling water and apply, having another hot one ready to take the place of the first as it begins to cool. Inflammation may run into an abscess and it is quite possible that you are suffering from one; if so an early and free incision should be made. At any rate you should let a physician see you and there are a number of good ones in your city.

**OLD SUBSCRIBER, Port Arthur.**—One of the best preventives of cholera is not to be afraid of it. Amongst the many recipes recommended, the following has been found very effective: Hoffman's anodyne, 2 ounces; essence of peppermint, 2 ounces; tincture of ginger, 1 ounce; tincture of opium, ½ ounce; spirits of camphor, ½ ounce; tincture of capsicum, ½ ounce. Dose from a tea to a tablespoonful according to symptoms.

**LLEWELLYN, Shediac Bridge, N.B.**—Your case is apparently similar to that of "Box 148, Durham," whose questions are answered above. The same treatment will apply to your trouble. Nothing will cure you unless you help yourself.

### Spring Winds and Colds.

Our early spring weather is peculiarly trying to delicate persons, and no one who has any affection of the chest, or bronchial tubes, should expose himself to high winds, especially those that blow from north or east. As a rule, still, cold weather will never hurt anyone, if properly clothed, but

if moderate weather is accompanied by cold winds, then beware. Nervous people usually find a headache, and general depression of the whole system, to be the result of a walk on a cold, damp, windy day. But there are many whose business calls them out in all weathers, and to these we would say, take the greatest pains to tone the system so as to resist cold, and protect the body against sudden changes. Chest-protectors of silk, chambray skin, or even layers of newspapers, should be worn both behind and front, for the lungs lie nearer the shoulders than the chest. It is the food which is digested that supports life. It is a good plan, too, to dash the neck, chest, and arms, every morning with cold water, rubbing them vigorously afterward, with a rough towel dipped in alcohol. Hot baths should only be taken at night, and cold ones in the morning. When a creepy, chilly sensation is felt, and the first symptoms of a cold appear, three or four drops of camphor on a lump of sugar, or in water, will often produce a reaction, and frequently ward off the threatened attack. Healthy sleep is Nature's great restorer, and this should always be procured, but by rational means alone; narcotics, except in extreme cases, are always to be avoided. A bowl of oat-meal porridge, or glass of warm milk, taken on retiring, will aid in drawing the blood from the brain, and produce sweet, healthy drowsiness. Bedrooms should be well ventilated and comfortable, and the bed-clothes warm, but not heavy. It is said that colds are often contracted in bed, and those with weak chests will do well to wear the lung-protector at night, as well as by day, as the portion of the frame most frequently unprotected is that between the shoulder blades.

### Value of Bran as Human Food.

Bran is rich in albuminoids and fat; it therefore becomes a question of expediency whether economically it is better to spend the bran in the manufacture of flour and use it as food for cattle, or to employ for human food flour prepared from the entire grain, or "whole meal" as it is called. As the result of his researches, published in the *Biol. Cent.*, 1883, M. Rubner finds that the amount of whole-meal bread digested in the body is less than that of bread made of medium or of the finest flour; yet that in the former case there is a quantity of nutritious matter utilized in the intestine, both from the whole meal and the bran contained in it. So far, therefore, no objection can be raised to its use, but the author observes that, if it is so used, it should be ground much finer than is usually done. From an economic point of view, however, the use of whole meal is not to be recommended, as thereby animals which consume the bran much more completely than human beings would be deprived of it; less would therefore be derived from it.

### Walking.

Every healthy person, man or woman, should be a good walker, able at any time to walk from six to twelve miles a day at least, and for double that distance when gradually brought up to it. The points to be attended to are—see that the walk be brisk and vigorous, not of a loitering or dangling kind; that there be no object in the walk besides its being a routine "constitutional" (it is not like the staid promenade of the orthodox ladies' school), and, if possible, that it be in pleasant company; that there be tight clothing, whether for the feet or body, which will constrain or impede the natural movements of the limbs and trunk; and that the walk be taken, if it be possible, in the fresh country air.

### How to Avoid Colds.

To avoid catching cold requires some little thought and care. Wet feet are sure to produce bad results. A boot which lets in water lets in the doctor too. Thin-soled boots are equally bad. So sitting over a fire and then going out into the cold air. Many severe or fatal "chills" are caught after dancing parties. Always rest awhile before leaving such an assembly for the streets, and, if possible, take a little hot soup or coffee. But individuals must never forget to sturdily their own idiosyncrasia, for what gives one person cold may not affect the other.