

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.]

About Breathing.

The majority of people don't know how to breathe; this may sound rather startling but it is, nevertheless, a fact. People fancy that when they draw in a little air at each inspiration, and then puff it out again they are doing all that is required of them, but, if the lungs could speak, they would tell their owners that they were not half performing their duty. Then again, people will breathe through the mouth instead of the nose. This is wrong for the passage of the cold air through the various ramifications along which its course would flow when taken in through the nostrils, becomes warmed before it reaches the lungs, whereas that drawn in through the mouth passes directly into them, along with whatever dust and impurities may be floating about, and is very injurious to weak chested people, that is to say people whose pulmonary organs are not in a perfectly sound state. As breathing is about the first thing a person does when he enters this world, and the last before he leaves it, it is evidently a very important act, and as such should meet with more attention than it does.

In the first place people do not, as a rule, take half deep enough inspirations; the air cells at the bottom of the lungs do not receive a sufficient amount of air, in many cases scarcely any: and in the next place they persist in ignoring the nostrils as the right channels through which the outer air should be drawn in its passage to the lungs. Although it does not follow that a large-chested man is necessarily more sound as to his pulmonary organs than one with a small chest, still his chances of being so are surely greater if his lungs have free room in which to work; and by paying attention to a few simple rules in respect to their breathing people may so materially increase the size of their chests that they will be astonished. These rules are very short, very simple and very few in number. They are, first, breathe through your nose; second, fill your lungs to their full extent, if you can, at every breath, and third, breathe as much pure air as you can. An excellent plan to strengthen the lungs and to increase the size of the chest at the same time, is to devote fifteen minutes or so, daily to breathing as follows: Go out into the open air; stand perfectly erect; and then fill the lungs to their fullest extent through the nose, retain the air till you begin to feel uncomfortable, then expel it and repeat the dose. In six months we will guarantee that you will be able to "hold your breath," as it is commonly termed, for fully two minutes, if your lungs are sound to begin with.

Athletes habitually breathe through their noses, and to this is attributed the fact of their remarkable freedom from colds and such complaints. People will soon become accustomed to keeping their mouths shut, though the difficulty of doing so will, of course, be greater with some than with others, especially females! But perseverance will do much, and the habit of breathing through the nose will soon become a fixed one.

This receipt for strengthening the lungs by supplying them with warm air, and

plenty of it, and by giving them room in which to perform their proper functions is so simple and so effective that those who fail to profit by it are very foolish; and when one reflects how great must be the effect of a right or a wrong mode of breathing on the general health, and how all important it is that people should breathe properly instead of improperly, it will seem strange that those can be found who will go to work the wrong way when they are told the right.

Sleep.

All the organs of life rest in some way or other. The heart has an interval of rest between each combined act of contraction and expansion, and the beginning of a fresh act. Between each expiration of the lungs and the succeeding inspiration there is a period of repose. Physiologists have calculated that the heart reposes during about one-fourth of life, and that the lungs rest one-third of the time.

Some of the other organs suspend their activity, in part, during sleep which is as necessary to existence as food. If a man does not sleep he exhausts his nervous power, becomes a maniac, and dies.

Shakespeare had noted these physiological facts, or he would not have called sleep "nature's gentle nurse," "sore labor's bath," and "chief nourisher in life's feast." Cervantes saw them as clearly, for he makes Sancho Panza say:

"Now blessings light on him that first invented sleep! It covers a man all over, thoughts and all, like a cloak; it is meat for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, heat for the cold, and cold for the hot."

Old physiologists supposed that sleep was caused by the pressure of blood on the brain. But modern physiology, regarding the blood as the origin of all force, and of all the functions in the body, affirms that sleep is caused by a withdrawal of blood from the brain.

As a rule, the larger the brain, the more sleep it requires. Webster went to bed at nine o'clock and rose at five. Gen. Grant used to say, during his campaigns, "I can do nothing without nine hours' sleep." There have been lawyers and generals who did with much less—but they did little during their wakeful hours.

Another trait marks men of large brain—that is, their power of sleeping at will. A great general or a great statesman, usually can lie down and catch "forty winks" at any time or place. Napoleon used to throw himself on the ground and in two minutes was sound asleep. Mr Pitt was a sound sleeper, and slept night after night in the House of Commons, while his colleagues watched the debate, and roused him when it was necessary that he should speak.

Once when the French army was manœuvring in Spain, Wellington, who was watching them, became very tired. Pointing out one of their corps to a staff officer, he told him that it was marching in a certain direction and would be seen by and-by at such a point. "When it is seen there call me!" he added, and wrapping himself in his cloak, slept soundly until called and told that the French had reached the point.

The Benefits of Athletics.

Both beauty and benefit accrue from the practice of athletics, if carefully and scientifically conducted. Athletics, if commenced in early youth, ensures a gradual induction of strength, and the growth of a well-built, shapely, and well-proportioned frame, a body, in fact, which will be as perfect on one side as the other, and perfect in lower as well as upper limbs, because no single group of muscles is exercised at the expense of others that have to lie dormant. A well-trained athlete will not even be left-handed. He will measure as much round the forearm or the biceps of one extremity as he does round the other, and he will therefore be as powerful and competent with the left as with the right arm, and experience when using it none of that nerveless relaxation which one who has not been

properly trained does when attempting to use his left. Left arm! Yes, it may well be called the left arm—it is left behind in the battle of life, and, as a rule, it is never much more than half alive, spending its existence in a state of semi-paralysis. Athletics gives to either sex a beauty of gait in walking or moving, and this is a very high and very desirable accomplishment. The benefits the true athlete enjoys, and the advantages he possesses over the untrained, are numerous. They are all included in one word, health. Health—bounding, vigorous health; health that can be seen in every movement, and felt in every nerve and vein; health that breeds happiness and contentment, and gives one not only the wish to do good in the world and benefit his brother man, but the power to do good without even feeling weary in well doing.

Premature Deaths.

Strong men lose their lives by imprudent acts, while the weak, compelled to take care of themselves, often live to old age. Few men live as long as they should, because few abstain from violating some law of health. The late Dr. Marion Sims, the founder of the W.-man's Hospital in New York, said that most men die prematurely, even when they die of old age.

Among these premature deaths he mentions that of Peter Cooper, who imprudently exposed himself at the age of ninety-three, took cold, and died of pneumonia. Capt. Labouche, who died a few years ago in New York at the age of one hundred and eleven, also died prematurely from a cold caused by imprudent exposure.

Dr. Sims says that his own father died prematurely at the age of seventy-eight because he did what he ought not to have done. One hot day in July, he rode thirty miles in the saddle. Having stabled his horse he began chopping wood.

Suddenly the axe dropped from his hands, and he was paralyzed. The long ride in the sun had over heated and fatigued his body. The violent chopping overtaxed heart and lungs, and threw the blood too forcibly to the brain. A blood-vessel in the brain gave way, letting out the blood, which, forming a clot, produced paralysis.

"As all this occurred as the result of an imprudent and unnecessary act," says Dr. Sims, "I am justified in saying that my father died prematurely at the age of seventy-eight; for I am sure that without this he would have lived to be ninety-five as his grandfather did before him."

The strength of the strong is often their weakness, while the feebleness of the weak is their strength.

Pure Air for Sleeping Rooms.

We cannot be too particular about our sleeping-rooms. They should be the largest and airiest rooms in the house. Oh no, we do not despise a handsome drawing-room, or a spacious dining-room; but we insist on an airy bed-room if we are to be healthy. Nothing can be more dangerous than rushing out into the cold raw air of a wintry morning without a breakfast, if we have slept for hours in what might justly be called "a closet."

How many of our workmen have unfortunately to run this risk? We cannot convince them that so much depends upon sleeping in a good atmosphere; and they often disregard every precaution, to insure a feeling of warmth and temporary comfort.

Do we consider the health of our servants? How frequently are their sleeping-places a disgrace to humanity. At times but cupboards at the top of the house, under the eaves themselves; at others, cellars in the foundation of the dwelling, devoid of light and ventilation. Depend upon it, no one can work without healthy muscular strength, and nothing destroys that so much as breathing a vitiated atmosphere, especially at night.

And one word more. Mothers, why do you cover up your babies' heads and mouths either with your shawl or the bed-clothes? Why, when the darling is sleeping, throw that pocket-handkerchief over the face. Infants breathe quicker than adults, and they need more and not less fresh air. They

are particularly susceptible to the evils of a foul atmosphere. Their lamp is only just lighted. Give it plenty of fresh air, and plenty of fuel, and it will burn briskly and brightly. It can soon be snuffed out by carelessness and neglect.

Cure for Biliousness.

First, on getting up and going to bed drink plenty of cold water. Eat for breakfast, until the bilious attack passes, a little stale bread, say one slice, and a piece of butter as large as your hand of boiled lean beef or mutton. If the weather is warm, take instead a little cracked wheat or oatmeal porridge.

For dinner take about the same thing. Go without your supper.

Exercise freely in the open air, producing perspiration, once or twice a day. In a few days your biliousness is all gone. This result will come, even though the biliousness is one of the spring sort, and one with which you have, from year to year, been much afflicted.

Herb drinks, bitter drink, lager beer, whisky, and a dozen other spring medicines are simply barbarous.—*Dio Lewis.*

MEDICAL QUERIES.

Notice.—Persons wishing to have medical questions answered in these pages should address the correspondence to the "Editor, Health Department of Truth." If this is not done their questions will be answered to.

Persons sending us questions to be answered should confer a great favor by stating their age and general habits.

F. S.—Hall's Journal of Health is published at Nos. 75 and 77 Barclay street, New York: at least the office is there.

ALVA BALMER.—A capital and at the same time simple cure for eczema is to wash the toe if that be the spot affected, in rag, which keeps constantly soaked with cod oil. In ten days or two weeks' time the callosity will disappear.

TINY TIM says: "I suffer terribly from chilblains, just now worse than I have done at any time during the winter. Can you give me a cure?"
Ans.—The most efficient measure, as one generally affording relief, is the employment of a hot and cold foot-bath every night before retiring. An ointment composed of ten drops of carbolic acid to the ounce of vaseline is also an excellent remedy.

S. J. B. Dundas.—Athletes, nowadays, do not conform so strictly to the old-fashioned rules for training as they used to do; the eat things that would have horrified trainers fifty years or so ago, but the fact remains that they bring themselves into good trim as men did in days of old. It is customary now for individuals to pay attention more to the diet that is found most suitable for their own system than to the which used to be deemed suitable for all.

C. A. Woodstock, asks:—Can you kindly give me the following information: 1. What is the best cure for nervous debility? 2. If advisable, can you recommend a reliable doctor in Toronto or elsewhere to treat the case? 3. Can the advertised medicines be relied on? Ans.—1. Nuxvom 2 drachms; dilute phosphoric acid, 1 ounce and a half; water, 8 ounces. A tablespoonful three times a day. 2. Call at Tiny Tim's office for further information. 3. No; if they are quacks.

CLARK, Cayuga, writes: "My appetite is very poor and seems to get worse. I do not eat with a relish. Can you suggest anything that would give me an appetite?" Ans.—Take plenty of open air exercise, and don't force yourself to eat if you don't feel like doing so. Take plain food not more than the times daily; drink a glassful of hot water half an hour before each meal. As you don't say what your habits are it is impossible to do more than give you general advice. The use of bitters and various tonics is not necessary to relieve these cases. We have frequently remarked a great increase in appetite and recovery from an aversion to food by a change from light seasoned food to that simply prepared consisting chiefly of fruits and grains.

A piece of borax the size of a pea dissolved in the mouth some ten minutes before speaking or singing strengthens the voice. Five grains potassium iodide taken in a warm solution before going to bed the previous night also helps the voice when extra effort is required.