

BITS OF TALK WITH OTHER WOMEN.

V.

OF LIFE IN THE OPEN.

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NERVES and the American woman, unfortunately for her, have become synonyms. The robust and phlegmatic scoffers who still disbelieve in nervous prostration, insomnia and nervous headaches, grow fewer every year, convinced alas! by melancholy experience.

The American woman as a type has degenerated into, and not yet developed out of, a creature of high-strung nerves, keen sensibilities, immense energy and ambition, fragile frame and very negative muscular force. The life she leads rarely counterbalances her natural short-comings. Rather does it tend to exaggerate them and develop morbid tendencies into actual disease.

The number of nerve complaints grows alarmingly. Every day seems to add to the list. An authority on the subject, in a recent discourse on the species of disorder known as "house nerves," says: "The reason of house nerves are legion. Introspection is one. Let a woman sit at home day after day, week in and week out, and an analysis of everything and person within her ken naturally follows, herself included. A woman who studies herself, her wants and her desires, her ailments and loneliness, is on a fair road to an asylum, did she but know it.

"The cure is simple, but few follow it. Throw away your medicine and dieting. Patronize all the gayeties that your pocket book affords. Take long walks in the sunshine, and whenever a morbid thought comes think up a necessary errand, and it will dissolve like mist before the sun."

By a great many women fresh air is regarded as a more or less unnecessary luxury. Brought up in the school of self-sacrifice, as most of them are, ignorant of the laws

and requirements of health, taught to look upon the beautifying of home and the acquirement of the art of good housekeeping as the be-all and the end-all of their existence, the necessity of out of doors exercise never occurs to them. The benefit and the charm of days spent "in the open," to use a German phrase, are unknown to them.

Spring comes to these women as the season of house-cleaning, of house renovation, of the preparation of summer wardrobes, not as the time of the joyous upspringing of all living things, of the renewal of hope and energy.

The English woman, with her inherited constitutional strength, her placid temperament, her cultivated athletic tendencies, has a thousand advantages over her American sister. But, because the latter can never hope to enjoy, without exhaustion of mind and body, a daily ten-mile constitutional, is there any reason why she should not accustom herself to a walk every day of a mile or two, or five, if possible?

If we women once habituate ourselves to the exhilarating pleasure of a brisk walk every day, no matter what the weather, we shall find it an enjoyment, and rightly regarded, a duty not easily relinquished.

The cause of the wheel-woman needs no champion to-day. The bicycle speeds its triumphant course along, and the good it has done wheels with it, or rather diffuses to right and left through all the world. There are still, one must sadly believe, men and women of the never-to-be-exterminated old-fogy species, who shake their heads over the impropriety of cycling for women, over the woman-cyclist's short-skirted, sensible costume, over the injury to her health that is sure to result from such exercise.

To one who has ridden a wheel ever so little, the only answer to these critics—who are almost worthy of the venerable epithet