

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.]

Lodging Houses and Lodgers.

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(Concluded.)

It must also be remembered that the capacity of the lungs increases or decreases eight cubic inches for every inch of increase or decrease in stature. Another, and a very obvious test of oxygen starvation is the color of the lips, inside of the eyelids and skin and the general bearing of languor which accompanies it. When oxygen is insufficiently supplied for the wants of the body what occurs is this, the oxygen is all consumed in the large vessels and never reaches the surface of the skin at all, consequently it becomes pale, leaden, flabby and badly nourished. Contrast this with the ruddy lips and cheeks of the rural lass, where the healthy blood courses to the very surface burning off and carrying all the used up and worn out debris in the form of carbonic acid and other hurtful material to be thrown out of the system by the proper organs. If the oxygen starvation is merely temporary, as for example in an overcrowded theatre or church, the manifestations of organic poisoning are more apparent, ladies faint or suffer from headache and lassitude while robust men become hot and drowsy and feel suffocated, but in the lodging house bedroom what occurs? There the enemy is still more dangerous, since its presence is unnoticed and the work of death insidious. Now an overheated room, though it may be inconvenient and unpleasant, provided the air is pure, is not dangerous, and until the air becomes vitiated cannot through mere heat become so, and it is a popular error to ascribe to over-heating the effects which are purely those of overcrowding. During sleep or indisposition when we are most probably in our bedrooms the system is not in such a vigorous attitude of opposition to the invasion of disease as during health and all the energies awake, and it is just this point which I would call the attention of the people in general to, to the end that proper and sufficient sleeping accommodation may in all cases be secured, or the insufficient space at once rejected.

One of the first things which we notice on going into a badly ventilated room is the stuffy smell and it should be sufficient to warn us against sleeping there, at least till the room is thoroughly cleansed and properly aired. Again we should choose a bedroom with a free admission of daylight and if possible of the direct rays of the sun and one with the sun shining into an open window during the day. Sunlight is the great vivifying agency which reaches us on earth and without it organic life becomes depressed or abnormal. It is well known that places and rooms where the rays of the sun do not reach are by no means so healthy as those where they do. Sunlight itself is a powerful oxidizer and purifier of the air and therefore it should be always fully admitted to our rooms. But what is pure air? and what air is fit to support robust and healthy life? That air is generally considered wholesome which does not contain more than four parts of carbonic acid in ten thousand parts of air, and from five to eight degrees of moistness or humidity as shown by the difference in the registering of temperature of the wet and dry bulb thermometers; and which of course does not otherwise contain injurious gasses or effluvia. The chemical composition of air is somewhat as follows in about one hundred parts. 21 of oxygen, 79 of nitrogen, .04 of carbonic acid and a variable trace of watery vapour, ammonia and oxygen. Let us now note the changes which the inspired air undergoes in the lungs before it is expired. First then

we find, that however dry the external air may be, the expired air is saturated with watery vapour, or nearly so; second no matter what is the temperature of the external air, the temperature of the expired air is always the same as that of the blood, or about 98° Fahr.; and third, we find that the oxygen of the inspired air has been reduced from about 21 per cent. to about 15 or 16 per cent. and that the carbonic acid has been increased from .04 per cent. to about 4.7 per cent; or in other words that air which has once been breathed has gained 5 per cent. of carbonic acid and lost about 15 per cent. of oxygen. In addition to these substances the expired air contains a considerable amount of animal matter, which speedily decomposes, and when allowed to accumulate in a crowded room becomes very offensive and injurious, and let me here remark that it is not always the number of persons in a room, who crowd it in the above meaning—it is the number of persons in proportion to the space and ventilation accommodation allowed to each person; so that actually one person might overcrowd a room. The amount of nitrogen taken into the lungs remains almost unaltered. Expired air, therefore, contains about 400 parts of carbonic acid to each 10,000 parts of air, or one hundred times more than pure wholesome air. If then a man breathes sixteen times per minute and inhales thirty cubic inches each time, he will in the short space of one hour consume 28,800 cubic inches of air or between 16 and 17 cubic feet.

One thousand cubic feet should be the smallest allowance per individual but few of us enjoy so much. What then can we do? Why simply this, see that the smaller the room is the better must it be ventilated, that is the air must be changed in it more frequently by the proper use of doors, windows, chimneys, etc.

All windows should open at both top and bottom, and to the open air, not on a staircase or passage, and all should open near the ceiling. In the morning the bed-clothes should be thrown down and the windows opened wide so that the fresh air can get about every part of the room and cleanse it. In lodgings where servants are often overworked and careless a great many little details fall on the shoulders of the lodger, if he or she would keep the bedroom fresh and healthy.

"Many a man becomes restless and sickly, complains of headache, malaise and parched throat, from no other cause than sleeping in a vitiated atmosphere. The effects may be very gradual, but they are none the less certain." And lastly, never on any account sleep on the floor.

Treatment of Infants.

It has been stated that one-third of all the children born in New York die before they attain to their fifth year. This large mortality is doubtless owing to some species of mismanagement. Young mothers are usually so ignorant of the wants of their babes, and old nurses are frequently so prejudiced in their old-time ways, that they will not give the requisite attention to fresh air, proper food, &c. And thus the death rates are increased, and "Rachel mourneth for her children, and refuseth to be comforted."

Pure, fresh air in the nursery is one of the chief requisites; and yet many nurses appear to think that a young lady can almost live without any fresh air, and so they shut all the windows at night, and burn a light to decrease the oxygen; and in the morning a person accustomed to pure air will be nearly suffocated in the atmosphere in which both mother and babe are supposed to gain strength. The effects of confinement and want of pure air will surely make themselves known by the lack of color in the face, the dullness of the eyes, the flabbiness of the muscles, and the slight increase in weight and growth, and will also bring in its train the numberless disorders to which all flesh is subject.

The nursery-room should be the most airy, sunny, and the largest room in the house. It should be well aired every day by opening the doors and windows, carrying the child into another room while the operation is performed. A window should also be left open at night, but so arranged that no draught falls upon the child. A movable screen is an excellent piece of furniture for

a nursery, because it can be placed around the crib or cradle, and shield the baby from draughts and lights; for while an abundance of fresh air is a necessity to the child's life, it should not be exposed to a strong current of air.

When a baby is a month old, it should be carried out every day, when the weather is bright; and noon-time in autumn and winter is the best seasons for this exercise; but earlier or later during warm weather. All children enjoy this airing exceedingly, and manifest their delight in it at a very early age; and this is an indication of a need of fresh air and bright sunlight to their health and well-being.

Cradles and cribs should never be covered with thick curtains to exclude the air. A drapery of lace is not objectionable, however, but rather desirable, because it shields the child from flies, and also from too much light. But their little heads and faces should not be covered with even a linen sheet; for any covering will force them to inhale the air impregnated by the exhalation from their bodies, and tend to decrease their strength and vigor. Nor must their faces be smothered up in shawls, when they are taken out to walk, for fear they should inhale too much cold air. A slight veil can be thrown over their face in a cold day—but even this a healthy child will often resent as an indignity. And if bright, pleasant days are chosen, and due heed paid to wrapping up their legs, feet, and arms, there is little danger of taking cold when out of doors.

Avoid over-feeding at all times. Regular intervals should always be observed even with the youngest child. For the first month, feeding once in two hours will give sufficient nourishment during the day; and twice at night is quite enough.

Dr. Hammond on Baths.

Much of the literature on the subject of the Turkish bath owes its origin to those who are financially interested in the success of the baths. As such it is, of course, to be regarded with a certain degree of scepticism. In order to get the opinion of high and disinterested medical authority in the matter, Dr. Wm. A. Hammond was called upon. In response to the question: "Is the Turkish bath always beneficial in its effects?" Dr. Hammond said: "The Turkish bath is generally beneficial to a person in good health. Always is a word which never occurs in a physician's vocabulary. Thus the layman might say that strawberries were always healthful, but the physician knows that the generally harmless strawberry, when eaten by certain persons will produce a most violent eruption of the skin. I am justified in saying then that the Turkish bath is generally beneficial, although I have known cases in which a serious derangement of the body's functions has resulted from a single bath."

"In what cases is the baths most injurious?"

"In all cases where there is a tendency to heart disease. Men have died in the bath from aggravation of this trouble produced by it. No one should enter the hot room for the first time without having had his heart examined by a physician."

"Are you a patron of the Turkish bath?"

"I used to frequent them," was the reply; "but of late have contented myself with a cold bath every morning. I find that the best both for health and cleanliness."

"Would you recommend that for a person of slight physique?" asked the reporter, with a glance at the doctor's stalwart figure.

"I would recommend it for every one with whom it agrees. That is the test of common sense and medical science. If you remain blue and cold after a bath don't take it again while in the same state of health. If, on the other hand, your system reacts, the effect is entirely beneficial. If you pin me down to generalization, I should say that the tepid bath is most beneficial to the majority of the people. The hot bath should never be taken in one's house."

When handed a long newspaper clipping in which it was laboriously proven that the curio of this age was a too free use of soap and water, the people of the temperate regions growing weak and short-lived

under its application, while the natives of the north lived to a good old age, encased in dirt and train oil, the doctor characterized it as "an elaborate argument built upon false premises."

"A person should wash once a day," he continued, "with soap; for without soap the skin will shed water like the plumage of a duck. Indulgence in a Turkish bath should not be so frequent, owing to its weakening tendencies. It is preposterous to say that the inhabitants of the north outlive those of the south. The Esquimaux are a very short-lived race, while the negroes are at the other extreme. Witness the number of colored nurses who dandled the father of his country upon their knees, and still live to tell the tale.—[New York Tribune.]

Health of Women.

A well known physician, whose practice lies in the direction of the fashionable uptown and avenues and is largely among women, was talking about health matters generally with a reporter of the New York *Mail and Express*, when the conversation turned upon the ill-health of women as compared with that of the sterner sex.

"The principal cause of woman's ill-health," said the doctor, "is that they ignore the old saying: '*Men's sana in corpore sano.*' The majority of women who have passed their 20th year know next to nothing about the exertion of mind and body. To begin with, woman is moulded with of finer clay than men, and is, of course, more susceptible to injury. They do not observe the rules of hygiene so uniformly as men do."

"Explain matters a little more in detail, doctor."

"Well, women do not eat, drink or dress with reason. They nibble too much. Their stomachs are constantly at work. It is almost impossible for that organ to secrete any chyle—that is, the juice which acts as a solvent to the contents of the stomach—so long as that organ is at work. By this too frequent eating a rational appetite is spoiled. Only one thing then can follow—an impaired digestion and dyspepsia."

"The greatest cause of the poor health of American women, however, is the lack of invigorating employment. They loiter too much. Their brain and whole muscular system becomes sluggish, and at last incapable of sustaining any strain at all. The need of American women is not doctors and medicines, but advice and more out of doors exercise, more useful employment in the house, and more interchange of ideas and opinions. Woman instead of being made inferior, and the weaker of the two, is intended by nature to be the greater and stronger."

The Training of Children.

Infancy is the only time when it is nature or right to be wholly recipient. Between this time and full maturity giving and taking should be wisely alternated and one becomes as essential to the happiness of the other. It is not kindness but cruelty to neglect this training in responsibility to allow youth quietly to appropriate everything and contribute nothing. It is simply a training in selfishness, which quickly breeds ingratitude as one of its chief fruits. Children who are honoured by their parent's confidence, and accustomed to add their share of assistance, and to bear their share of self-sacrifice whenever the good of the family requires it, will rarely be guilty of ingratitude. They are not opposed to, but quick sympathy with, their parents, because they are gifted with specially sympathetic natures or are in any way superior to ordinary young people, but simply because they have been made sharers with their parents in the cares and hopes, responsibilities and labours of the family.

R. U., PORT PERRY.—Q. What is a good thing to stop the pain of toothache? A. A few drops of camphor and laudanum dropped on a piece of lint and put into the hollow of the tooth will stop the pain immediately. But this relief though certain is only temporary. If the tooth is decayed, it should be extracted.