

Notes on Health and Sanitation

MUSCLE-BOUND FEET.

WEAKENED arches are responsible for much discomfort in city-dwelling civilization, as well as being a great source of revenue to an army of "arch-support" manufacturers. But weakened arches may be the result of another condition, a condition called "muscle-bound feet."

A muscle-bound foot is one that cannot be flexed upward upon the ankle joint more than 90 degrees because the muscles of the calf, or the tendons connecting them with the heel, are too short. The person thus muscle-bound cannot lean forward when the legs are stiff without raising the heels. As a result, he is unable to take long steps without bending the knees; and even when short steps are taken he soon tires. Indeed fatigue from walking, with pains in the back of the legs, is one of the indications that a person is muscle-bound in his feet. And if the condition is not corrected, a type of flat-foot may be produced, or peculiarities of gait, sometimes with slight deformities.

The condition, which is by no means uncommon, is frequently mistaken for other complaints, notably "rheumatism." But the pains and fatigue of rheumatism usually become less in walking, whereas in this condition both pain and fatigue increase with exercise.

In the early stages it is possible to obtain permanent relief by massage and proper exercises; and properly-fitting plates often relieve the muscle strain and keep the foot at a better angle. In these cases high-heeled shoes are much more comfortable, and sometimes relieve the pains entirely. But of course they do not cure the condition.

In severe cases of long standing the condition cannot be relieved permanently except by lengthening the tendo Achillis—the great tendon of the heel.

Artificial Light and Eyesight.

Exhaustive investigations made recently to determine the effects of artificial light on eyesight reveal the fact that too bright a light may be as harmful as one that is too dim. Thus long-continued exposure to bright light exhausts the retina (the nervous membrane of the eyeball) so that it will not react except to powerful stimulation. In other words, it is temporarily blind except in very intense light.

It is not advisable, therefore, to attempt to work with a bright light of any kind shining directly into the eyes, or reflected from any polished surface. If bright lights must be used, the eyes should be shielded with an eyeshade of some kind.

Curiously enough, workmen suffer from accidents in brilliantly-lighted factories almost as frequently as in those where the light is poor but diffused, and frequently the brilliancy of the lights are responsible for the accidents. Exact photometric measurements show that the light from an ordinary incandescent bulb concentrated at a point a few inches away, is several times the intensity of daylight. The eye of the workman becomes accustomed to this, but when he looks up from his work he is practically blind, and if he is working in a room full of moving machinery, he is sometimes injured during this temporary blindness.

What is needed in such systems of lighting, or for individual reading lamps, is less intensity and better diffusion of light.

GOOD ROADS NEEDED.

By Samuel Hill, President Home Telephone Company.

Unless we can put people on the land and keep them there, our form of government will not last. To put them there and keep them there, we must give them good roads, good schools, good telephone service, good free rural delivery, and then find a paying market for their products.

The farmer is vitally interested in highway improvement. If he will take a piece of paper, a pencil, and sit down and figure that it costs him on the average 30 cents to haul every ton a mile in hauling his products to the market, while it only costs his European farmer neighbor 10 cents per ton per mile, he will see he is losing 20 cents per ton per mile. Knowing as he does the total tonnage and mileage, he can readily figure the amount in dollars and cents it costs him annually for bad roads.

DIET AND CANCER.

DR. L. DUNCAN BUCKLEY, physician to the New York Skin and Cancer Hospital, has recently called attention to some observations upon diet and cancers. His observations indicate that there is some positive, although as yet inexplicable, relationship between meat-eating and cancer.

Thus he is able to show that the increase in frequency of cancer has practically kept pace with the increase in luxurious living, particularly as regards "meat eating and alcohol and coffee drinking. The increase in the consumption of meat has been startling in many localities, and in England it has reached a yearly total of 130 pounds per capita for men, women and children, in addition to large quantities of fish, game, poultry, rabbits, eggs, cheese, etc. Among the well-to-do the meat consumption has been estimated at between 180 and 330 pounds per year; all this is much more than double the amount consumed 50 years ago, and in the same time the deaths from cancer have increased over fourfold."

Meanwhile, the Orientals show a striking contrast, both in the consumption of meat and their freedom from cancer. "During a rather extensive trip through the Far East," says Dr. Buckley, "I was unable to see or even hear of any cancer, although I met a large number of medical men and made inquiry regarding the same, and visited hospitals with a total of many thousands of patients; in Japan, Corea, China, the Philippines, India, Siam and Egypt I met the same response, that cancer was rarely seen among these vegetarian peoples."

Infected Foods.

Many of the ills of adult life may be traced to the infected foods of childhood. Bassler has recently outlined the manner in which such infections take place, and the results that follow in later years.

As stated by Professor Bassler, early in life the intestinal canal is infected from food and drink. The infecting germ quickly acquires the power of living with the harmless bacteria in the intestines, and finally it becomes a permanent resident in greater or less abundance. As middle life comes on, the vicissitudes of the individual, his habits and dietetic indiscretions, his artificial existence in the cities and even elsewhere, bring their train of added factors which influence the bacterial development unfavorably to him. Finally the absorption of the bacterial products affects the walls of the intestines, accompanied by errors in secretion by the pancreas, liver and stomach, and followed by dilation and elongation of the intestine, with chronic constipation and its attendant effects.

It follows, therefore, that proper correction of digestive disorders in childhood is imperative, not only on account of their immediate ill effects, but to safeguard health in later years.

The Bulgarian "sour-milk bacillus" is believed by Metchnikoff to render the intestine uninhabitable for this type of germ.

Consider Fresh Air.

The great white plague, consumption, or tuberculosis, has little chance to gain a foothold in a person who sleeps in fresh air. During the day most homes have sufficient fresh air admitted by opening doors, as the people go in and out, but at night too many shut the bedrooms up tight and give disease a chance.

It is easy to open a window and check the draft by a light board or a muslin curtain stretched tight across the window casing. This will prevent the wind from blowing directly upon the sleepers. Put on plenty of warm blankets and make liberal use of fresh air in sleeping-rooms.

The barns, hen houses, and hog houses must likewise be provided with plenty of fresh air. Better have pure air than a warm building full of stale air.

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