

Notes on Health and Sanitation

FIREPROOFING CLOTHING OF CHILDREN.

THERE is never a day in the year in which some child is not either killed or maimed by burning garments. Accidents of this kind are peculiarly likely to happen where there are gas stoves and open fires. And yet it is possible to make the child's garments absolutely fireproof by dipping them in a solution of a harmless chemical that may be obtained for a few cents at any drug store.

The chemical that gives protection is ammonium phosphate, which costs about 25 cents a pound, and should be used in the proportion of one pound to the gallon of cold water. Half a gallon is sufficient for a thorough dipping of the wash garments of an ordinary family of children; and the effect of the fireproofing lasts until after the next wash day.

An educational campaign on this subject is being carried on in New York at the present time. The demonstrator takes a strip of cotton gauze equivalent to the material in a child's dress or the popular Indian suit worn by little boys, and brushes it through a flame. It ignites and is consumed in less than four seconds. He then takes a similar piece of gauze from the same electric fan or iron, and holds it in the flame. It does not burn even when held in the flame for 30 seconds.

"Families should get this solution, keep it in the house, and dip the whole family washing in it," says the demonstrator. "It would cost about 15 cents a week for the entire family."

The chemist who discovered this method of fireproofing children's garments was stimulated in his search by the loss of his own little girl through accidental burning of her garments. When at last he fathomed the fireproofing secret he spread his discovery broadcast for the benefit of more fortunate parents.

Skin Diseases and Sulphur.

Sulphur has long been a staple household remedy for skin eruptions, because such eruptions were supposed to be the effect of impure blood, and sulphur was thought to be a "blood purifier." But many skin diseases are due to "impure" skin-surfaces rather than impure blood, and in any event, sulphur in the ordinary powdered form has little value in most skin diseases except as a local application.

There are certain sulphurous substances, however, notably sulphurous acid, which seem to act beneficially shortening the course of boils, in preventing their recurrence, and in aiding in the treatment of the kind of face pimples that have the appearance of miniature boils. The sulphurous acid (which must not be confused with sulphuric acid) should be taken in one-half teaspoonful doses well diluted with water after each meal, and the mouth thoroughly rinsed after each dose, preferably with milk of magnesia.

When boils or pimples appear on the trunk or limbs, a wash made of equal parts of benzine and grain alcohol is beneficial. And in this connection it is well to remember that squeezing a boil, or a large pimple, in the early stages, is about the worst thing one can do. Squeezing the inflamed spot at this stage simply spreads the infection, and is a pretty sure way to make a bad condition worse.

Hanging as a Remedy.

Hanging a man in order to cure him seems like pretty far-fetched surgery. And naturally this form of treatment is not recommended in medical works. Nevertheless, many cases of apparently incurable mental diseases have recovered completely after resuscitation from attempted suicide by hanging.

These results are explained by the tremendous change in the blood supply of the brain which is produced by shutting it off temporarily, and the resulting reaction, which causes an enormous increase in the amount of blood in the cranial vessels, which sometimes acts curatively. The same condition is sometimes produced by other injuries, such as blows upon the head, by sunstroke, and occasionally in poisonous doses of certain drugs, notably opium. The explanation of the curative effects is the same as that of hanging—a change in the circulation of the brain.

The tales of suddenly regained memory, and restoration to normal mentality after severe injuries, have been somewhat over-worked in fiction. Nevertheless, these stories have a foundation in fact.

BLACKHEADS AND PIMPLES.

THE importance of keeping the skin in a healthy condition can hardly be overestimated. Yet very few persons give much attention to intelligent care of this important organ. As a result, crops of pimples and blackheads make their appearance, with an occasional attack of more serious eruption which is much more easily prevented than cured.

Bathing is, of course, the sheet anchor of skin hygiene. But the good effect of the water may be more than counterbalanced by the bad effect of strong, irritant soaps. When skin that has hitherto been healthy, tends to be too greasy, or too dry, or if eruptions appear, it is well to investigate the kind of soap used. A good, practical test for reasonable purity in a soap is transparency, although many kinds of opaque soaps are of excellent quality. But if in addition to being opaque, the cake tends to "sweat" and form white, salt-like crystals on the surface, it should be condemned for use on the skin.

Blackheads and pimples are the result of over-activity of the sebaceous glands, which secrete an oily substance. This oil catches particles of dust that help to clog the openings of the little glands, which become congested and form blackheads. Sometimes they become infected as well as congested, thus forming the unsightly face pimples of acne. Frequent removal of this oily substance with soap and water will usually prevent eruptions, but particular attention should be paid to the forehead, chin, and angle of the nose, where the sebaceous glands are very active.

"Hobnailed Liver" in Wild Animals.

It has long been supposed that wild animals seldom suffer from diseases that afflict human beings, and are absolutely immune to most human afflictions. But a recent report of Dr. Herbert Fox, pathologist to the Zoological Gardens in Philadelphia, refutes this old idea. He shows that wild animals suffer from all manner of maladies common to the human race, one of these maladies, at least, supposed to be the direct effect of prolonged indulgence in ardent spirits.

This disease in question is cirrhosis of the liver, popularly known as "hobnailed liver," or "drunkard's liver." And yet Dr. Fox found this condition existing in such widely different animals as Texas skunks, clouded leopards and Indian elephants. It appears, therefore, that we must readjust our ideas somewhat about the usual cause of "drunkard's liver," unless it can be shown that the Quaker City fathers furnish a grog ration to their zoological pets.

Of course in the case of the Indian elephant due allowance must be made for the first half-century or so of his early life before he was captured and brought to Philadelphia. It does not appear that he was given to alcoholic indulgence during any of the 20 years spent in the zoo. Nevertheless, there is no proof that he may not have been a roistering blade in his early jungle years, leading a vagrom existence, which put the "hobs" in the hobnailed liver and finally killed him. But in any event he died of a disease hitherto supposed to afflict only human beings of somewhat questionable habits.

Strange Causes of Death.

Of the hundreds of death certificates handled annually by the Wisconsin State Board of Health in making its classification of diseases, many, as filled out by the local physicians and mailed to the Board, contain unusual comment as to the cause of death, says the Chicago Herald. Some of these found in the reports of L. W. Hutchcroft, chief statistician, follow:

A mother "died in infancy."
"Went to bed feeling well, but woke up dead."

"Died suddenly at the age of 103. To this time he bid fair to reach a ripe old age."

"Do not know cause of death, but patient fully recovered from last illness."

"Deceased had never been fatally sick."

"Died suddenly; nothing serious."
"Pulmonary hemorrhage—sudden death." (Duration four years).

"Kick by horse shod on left kidney."

"Deceased died from blood poison, caused by a broken ankle, which is remarkable, as the automobile struck him between the lamp and the radiator."



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