

NATURE THE BEST DOCTOR

Less Faith Put in Drugs to Cure Diseases Nowadays.

DEPENDS ON THE SYSTEM

The Efforts of Physicians Directed in Many Cases Simply to Stimulate the Body's Power of Fighting Germs—Common Mistakes About Household Remedies.

The increase of exact knowledge regarding diseases and their causes often do more harm than good. Years ago, for instance, all sorts of remedies were administered to consumptives, and nine-tenths of the patients died. To-day little medicine is prescribed for consumptives and they recover.

It is the same with pneumonia, typhoid fever and a host of other maladies. The era of sure cures is past, and scientific physicians have learned that the best way to combat most illnesses is by the indirect method of stimulating the body's natural power of fighting and destroying germs.

It is a rule of nature that human tissues when disturbed or disordered exhibit a strong tendency to return spontaneously to a state of equilibrium. You strike your thumb with a hammer and a painful bruise results, with effusion of blood under the skin and much inflammation.

The tissues are mangled and many of the flesh cells are broken and die. But in the course of a week the wreckage is removed and new tissue is there. The dark, wasted blood is absorbed and carried away. The dead cells are carted off, too.

The inflammation subsides. New tissue takes the place of that destroyed. The pain disappears and your bruise is cured.

It is the same with more serious maladies. As soon as a germ of tuberculosis or pneumonia enters your body the white corpuscles in your blood begin to fight it. If it is but a single germ, making a solitary excursion, it is soon killed. But if instead of one germ, a million or a hundred million invade your tissues, the battle is more strenuous and it takes longer for your white corpuscles to do their police work.

Thus it is apparent that the seriousness of a disease may be measured by the effort the body must expend in getting rid of its germs. A pimple on the face usually cures itself within two or three days. That is because the staphylococcus, which causes pimples, is a germ which falls an easy prey to the anti-germ substances in the blood. But an attack of rheumatic fever lasts a couple of months, even when the patient is in good condition for fighting it, and that is because the germ which causes it is a tough one and puts up a hard battle against the blood.

Nevertheless the body always makes a hot fight and always has a chance of winning, albeit this chance is sometimes a very small one. All that modern medicine professes to do, in most cases, is to help the body in its good work and to surround it with the most favorable conditions.

A consumptive is ordered to sleep in the open air and is fed on rich milk and eggs in order that his blood may become clear and healthy and so be able to wage a successful war against the tubercle bacilli in his lungs. No effort is ordinarily made to combat the bacilli directly.

The same thing occurs in the case of pneumonia, typhoid fever, yellow fever and other diseases. The patient is well nourished and well nursed and whenever medicine may lend a hand—by reducing a fever or aiding in the removal of waste products—this aid is given. But the main fight—the actual war on the germs—must be conducted by the body itself.

Again, there is a universal tendency to exaggerate slight ailments into very serious ones. A man who has been confined to his bed for a week by some sort of self-curing inflammation in the air passages says that he had a "touch of pneumonia."

In reality it is impossible to have a "touch of pneumonia." One either has the disease or hasn't it. In the same way laymen often speak of a "touch" of typhoid fever or diphtheria or erysipelas or dysentery or rheumatism or scarlet fever or even of such diseases as malaria or yellow fever.

No human being ever had a "touch" of malaria. When this phrase is used the layman usually means that he had an attack of influenza or an extraordinarily bad cold, with fever and chills. A man who really has malaria cannot drag through his daily work with no other aid than an occasional quinine pill and the privilege of swearing at the office boy and of making himself generally disagreeable.

The success of a host of homely remedies for colds, bruises, sprains, etc., is based upon this error. A cold is a simple infection of the mucous membrane, and careful observation shows that in a man otherwise healthy it is certain to cure itself within a short time. But the victim of a cold almost invariably demands that "something be done for it"—and the result is a host of teas, lemonades, broths, rubbings, liniments, pills, etc.

BASEBALL STARS RARE

Few Men of the Thousands Playing Have All the Requirements.

The first appearance in the baseball arena of a great baseball player is to me like a draught of cool spring water on a hot day.

With a small army of clean cut athletes striving from boyhood to gain fame and big money as high class ball players, yet one great player a year is a good average. I doubt if the great game can today show two dozen players of the highest quality players who have youth, speed, the highest quality of nerve and staying powers, who can hit all comers and field brilliantly, who are strong throwers, can run bases, carrying a cool head and the keen perception of thinking of their feet. In the last thirty years of baseball I could not name thirty players who would fill the above requirements. Sherwood McGehee comes under the head of wonderful players. He fills the bill and, to my way of thinking is the most valuable outfielder in the game today. Only a youth, with a brief experience in the big leagues, he is without a rival as a factor in winning games.

He plays for the batman, can take a ball on either side, high or low, runs the bases with speed and judgment, can slide and is ever willing to take a chance. In fact, he is there to win, and when at the bat is almost a model for the late Edward Deleahanty, the greatest straightaway batsman the game has produced.

While the great Wagner can hit, he is an easy man to work for a clever pitcher. Lajoie is a free batsman, nothing finer when at his best. The big Frenchman will go after poorly pitched balls, but when it comes to the performances of Edward Deleahanty all pitchers were forced to put the ball over the rubber. With a free swing big Edward was a danger signal when a hit meant a run. He lived the opportunity for a winning hit, but never more so than young McGehee.

While the left-hand hitters have a big advantage for averages, give me the right-hander for clean work. Left-handed batsmen have a step the best of it in beating out infield hits, but too often they crouch and show weak form at the bat. Our greatest batsman stand erect and face the music. For example, Anson, Mike Kelly, Dave Orr, Joe Kelly, Tip O'Neil, Harry Stovey, Hugh Duffy, Tom McCarthy, Jim O'Rourke, Hardie Richardson, Jaul Hines, Buck Ewing, Roger O'Connor, Mike Tierman, Burdett, Lajoie, Wagner, Chase and scores of others. The batsman who crouches must be in fine form to hit effectively, as the position is not natural and gives a clever pitcher an advantage.

The one great left-hand batsman who planked himself solidly on the ground and hoped to gain first base only by a clean drive was Dan Brouthers. Brouthers was a slow runner, mastered on the ball coming over the plate, and then hit from two angles, smashing the ball to left or raising it far to right field.

Many of the best of the left-hand batsmen are continually stepping over the batsman's lines, and the great wonder is that something more definite than chalk lines have not been thought of. Those lines are soon rubbed out, and then it's a pure case of guesswork, with the catchers territory often invaded. This has gone on without the semblance of reform for the last fifty years.

It would be difficult to compare the batsman of twenty years ago and the men of the present time as formerly a man could call for either a high or a low ball, and there were men who led the league in batting who couldn't hit a low ball once in ten tries. Now the batsman must be prepared to meet anything from the knee to the shoulder, leaving the umpire with power to put any pitcher or batsman to the bad as he guesses at the size of each man and finds the left-hander who crouches a difficult problem. For this reason it wouldn't be a bad idea to force all the men at the plate to stand up until the ball was under way.

Knew His Business

"Seems to me a man of your standing in the community ought to drive a better looking horse," the summer-boarder said.

"I wouldn't trade him for the fastest roadster in the hull country," said Farmer Huckleberry. "That hoss knows just what to do when he meets an ottomobile. He cavorts around an' topples over an' breaks up a dollar's worth o' buggy shaft an' mebbe 50 cents worth o' harness, an' I'll bet I've collected much as 'leven hundred dollars from the ottomobile owners. The old hoss is all right."

Gnawed Way Out of Prison

A burglar named Schaarschmidt, in prison at Gera, deliberately set to work to gnaw through a thick oaken beam in front of his cell window. It was a work of seven weeks. The fragments of wood which were torn away with his teeth he replaced with chewed bread, until the beam was almost gnawed through.

A final smashing noise was heard by the wardens, but before they could appear Schaarschmidt had escaped.

Fish of the Black Sea.

The Black Sea contains less animal life than any other body of water. The lower depths are saturated with a poisonous gas which kills the fish.

BUSHMEN OF AUSTRALIA

Their Slow Business Methods and Mode of Living.

FIRE WITHOUT MATCHES

Burial Rites Similar to Those of African Tribes—Women Not Allowed to Speak For a Year After Being Widowed—Distinguishing Beauty Marks.

Anthropologists assume that there have been two epochs of immigration into Australia without being able to settle satisfactorily whence they came. They agree that the first race were inferior to the present race; that they gravitated to the south at a time; that there was continuity of land between Victoria and Tasmania; that the latter island became separated and Bass Strait appeared, leaving primitive race south of it. These savages knew nothing of shields or spears (spear-throwing implements), but they knew the art of making fire by friction between sticks of wood; had wooden clubs and spears with heads of same material as the shafts of flint or stone. They had rude stone axes of the so-called Paleolithic (earliest) kind, and their brains indicated a grade of intellect but little above the simian family. The vanished race of Tasmanians were their descendants, for the last man and woman died within a few decades, and their portraits are shown in the books.

It is an interesting thing to see the natives produce fire in a remarkable short time by the use of the fire sticks, says a writer in the Pittsburgh Dispatch. I have seen only two kinds of sticks and have read of another method which is said to obtain among the interior tribes by rubbing a woman's hair, which is always of hard and tough wood across the edge of a shield which is generally of wood which is softer. The shields are concave-convex always, and the friction across the edges produce fire in two places instead of one, which would have its advantages of course.

The bushmen apparently know or care but little about personal adornment. The women wear necklaces of shells. The men dab their bodies with ochreous paints and stick feathers and down to their bodies for their mystic ceremonies and both men and women decorate their skins with scars which are the product of incisions in the skin which are kept from healing for a certain length of time by burning with the end of a red hot stick or the insertion of foreign substances, causing a ridge-like effect supposed to be exactly the proper thing.

Men and women make long, parallel incisions clear across the abdomen, chest or around the shoulders. Boys after their initiation into the rank of manhood are scarred quite liberally. They have a kind of tattoo scarring also which consists of multitudinous short incisions arranged in groups in certain patterns and may be placed indiscriminately in several parts of the body.

When a married man dies his wife makes a long central incision in her scalp extending from the occiput to the edge of the frontal bone. This is generally done with a flint knife and the same course is observed as in other incisions to prevent a too-ready healing. Girls after marriage and boys after reaching man's estate tie their hair with braids around the head so arranged that the mass of hair will extend obliquely upward and backward. By being retained constantly in this fashion the folds or corrugations of the scalp become permanent and the appearance is bizarre.

In alluding to the burial customs of the bushmen and telling of their being interred in a sitting posture, exceptions are mentioned in the funerary habits of a very few tribes living far in the interior bordering the desolate waste known as Never Never Land.

One at least of these tribes places the body on a platform in a tree, much after the manner of some of our Indians of the West and Northwest.

They have a method for decoration which would not be recognized nor used in most countries and it is in use principally among the women and consists in the removal of one or two of the upper central incisor teeth. When at La Perouse I wondered why so many of the gentler sex had lost so many front teeth, but the authorities have made it quite clear. The dental operation is generally performed on the girl before marriage by another woman who causes the patient to lie on the ground with her head in a depression made for the purpose. She places a stick against one of the teeth and generally one hard blow on the end of the stick with a large stone is sufficient to remove the tooth and produce the requisite cosmetic effect.

They think it adds to their beauty and any one who has seen them will freely admit there is need to be desired in that line, but they also believe that it causes what they eat and drink to taste better.

Australian business methods do not all commend themselves to aliens. All retail places open at 9 in the morning and close at 5 in the afternoon.

RAZOR GRINDERS TESTY

Their Work is Trying and Dangerous and It Gets on Their Nerves

The brawny arms of blacksmiths and the ill temper of cooks are matters of common knowledge, but the man who grinds razors has a stronger arm than the blacksmith and a worse temper than the cook. All day he stands bearing his full strength against a razor held on a wheel which is whirling at the rate of several thousands revolutions a minute. He develops a grip of steel and an arm as hard as iron. His work is dangerous. A slip of a fraction of an inch and the razor may break in a thousand pieces and fly in so many different directions. Consequently the razor grinder's work gets on his nerves—hence the irritable temper.

In an upstairs room on lower Main street, says the Kansas City Star, two men are kept busy reducing heavy, old fashioned razors to the smaller proportions demanded by shavers of this generation. There is a little of the comic in their work. The ancient blades brought to them are styled "grandfathers" razors because practically every customer expects that the implement was used by his grandfather and uncle or other ancestor, and that the metal is of a very superior quality—"the kind you can't buy nowadays."

"Better razors are made and sold now than ever before," Louis Heckel said. "But I suppose that the mental suggestion a man gets in using a razor that his ancestors stood firm causes him to experience less pain when it pulls. We have to treat those grandfather razors with great reverence in the presence of the owners."

"Grinding razors is work at once delicate and strenuous. The few men who have mastered the art are an eccentric lot, so we are compelled to humor them in their oddities. They are highly priced and hard to find."

"The room in our shop where razors are ground has not been entered in years by a person other than a member of the firm of an employee. The grinders will not tolerate visitors."

"The razor grinding art is almost monopolized by Germans. There are not more than half a dozen American grinders in America. The grinders used in the work are nearly all made in France. They are a patient composition that absorbs water. This quality helps to prevent the razors becoming too hot. As an additional preventive a stream of water is kept flowing on the blades. Even then a razor is sometimes 'burnt,' and the temper of the metal ruined."

About fifty different sized grinders and leather rimmed wheels are used in reducing an old fashioned "bottleaxe" to a "hollow ground." The coarser work is done on grinders and the finishing on leather wheels all are fitted to the same revolving axis. A dozen razors can be ground about as cheaply as one, as the work is done in lots of one dozen. In this way labor is saved in adjusting the numerous sized wheels and stones.

Harvard House at Stratford.

The restoration has been completed of the John Harvard house in Stratford-on-Avon. This house is one of the most interesting of all the relics of Shakespeare's time. It stands in the High Street, opposite the Corn Exchange. It was built in 1596, and was the home of the mother of John Harvard, the founder of Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

The house will now be preserved as a public institution, but it had a very narrow escape from destruction at the hands of the vandals. It is really surprising that it has escaped for more than 300 years. Until recently it was used as an auctioneer's office and adapted for business purposes. Some former occupant had plastered over all the fine wood carvings of the interior, and the front in the ground floor was partly bricked up and a modern door made in the center. The building was fast falling into a state of dilapidation through neglected drainage and other causes.

In a few years time it would have collapsed. It was bought by Nelson Morris of Chicago who commissioned Miss Correll to secure it and to have it restored. The work of restoration has now been completed. The utmost care has been taken to preserve all the old fittings, the oak woodwork, the carvings which were covered up with plaster or painted, and the public can now form an opinion of what the house was like when it was built. A new door had to be made—one which harmonizes with the style of the house and looks quite Elizabethan. There are two rooms on each floor. Nothing has been added to the old woodwork except when it was absolutely necessary for safety and in providing missing articles. The woodwork has not been painted but only carefully cleaned. The fittings for gaslights in the house are from work such as might have been used for lanterns in the days of Shakespeare, and the furniture and fittings of the rooms will be appropriate.

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Germany's Labor Famine. Germany's labor famine, it is reported, has become so acute that it has been found necessary to impress peasant girls into railway service as plate-layers and repairers.

Oddity in Tombstones.

A tombstone to be erected in a Bath (England) cemetery to the memory of an engine-driver, who was an ardent geologist, is to be composed of the fossils he collected in his rambling

THEY ARE ALWAYS IN A HURRY

The Most Noticeable Characteristics of the American People.

"The average American is a person who wants to get somewhere by the most direct method and as quickly as possible," said Ernest Moore of London to the Washington Post reporter. "That, I think, is the principal distinction between the American and the Englishman," he continued. "The Britisher will go around the block in order to get somewhere and notice the scenes of interest along the way, but you people want to cut right through the block and think of nothing else but what you are going after. Everything is direct, whether it be in business, politics, or social affairs. For instance, if I make a proposition to an American business man he asks but one question, and when he gets the answer, if he intends to accept it, he immediately says so; and if he does not intend to—od—so," he replied that he will think about the matter. He says he will think about it in order not to hurt your feelings with a refusal. In England a man may have to wait a month to ascertain whether his proposition has been accepted or rejected."

"This is to be commended, but I doubt whether the tendency to exaggeration in everything in this country is so commendable. The other day I picked up a paper and read in big headlines that the naval review at Jamestown was the greatest display of ships in all the history of the world. The statement was ridiculous. I was there and saw the review and must say that I have seen far finer and larger displays of ship-head, England."

"This exaggeration pertains to everything American. You are so much interested in yourselves and what you are doing that you know little about England. You think that Englishmen have no sense of humor. Americans never made a greater mistake. We don't laugh at everything, but we enjoy a good joke or a lude situation just as much as anybody. And you Americans say we are pig-headed. The truth is, that you Americans are more pig-headed than we are. When you get an idea in your head nothing can sway you from it. It is that pig-headedness that makes the Anglo-Saxon race what it is; it is sure of itself. To show how insular you are here, an American woman, upon learning that I was engaged to be married, said a day or two ago that she was glad I had mingled with American men in order that I might see how they treated women."

"In my opinion, America is lacking in great permanent national ideas. You haven't found yourselves yet. When you do, you will become a great nation."

Marked Fish in the Sea. Catching fish, measuring and marking them and then returning them to the sea with the chance of retaking them later is part of the work carried on by the Marine Biological Association of Great Britain.

By means of a steam trawler the fish are caught in the usual way. Each haul is carefully recorded, the fish are counted and measured and all details of locality, time, number, species, sex and size are put down, together with accurate observations on the water, the depth and bottom of the sea, the kinds and quality of food available, etc. These data are subsequently tabulated and charted. The method has been attended with valuable results. The fish chiefly used during the few years the experiment has been in progress have been plaice, because the proposals which have been made to interfere with the catching of them were based on inadequate knowledge.

The fish are marked on the dorsal surface with a very thin convex metal disk bearing a number. This is attached to a fine silver wire which is passed through the thinner part of the fish near the fin and secured on the under side by a small bone button. The fish do not appear to suffer inconvenience and their growth is not interfered with in any way.

The thoroughness with which the North Sea is swept by the nets of the "Herring-Kaas" is demonstrated by the fact that out of 5,033 marked plaice of all sizes 932 were recaptured within a year. This represents 18.7 per cent, or nearly one-fifth, but for the medium sized fish the figures are far higher, ranging from 25.4 to 35 per cent for the whole of the North Sea and to 45 per cent in the more northern portions.

The men of the regular fishing fleet cooperate by forwarding to the laboratory of the association at Lowestoft all the marked fish they catch. At the laboratory reference to the records easily established how much the fish has gained in size and weight since the previous catching. Moreover, the distance between the spot where it was released and the place where it was again caught gives an idea as to its movements.

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