

hero suddenly go wrong and become a villain for a short time; or I make the villain perform some act of extraordinary self-sacrifice and virtue; and these expedients get me out of the most serious troubles without running counter to Nature and probability."

A sudden revelation flashed upon me.

"Then, is it possible," I said, "that these visitors staying in your house are simply your victims, whom you inconvenience in this horrible way just to—"

"Oh, pray don't put it in that uninviting way!" said Mr. Penbury. "It is true that these ladies and gentlemen are the models from whom my novels are written; but I assure you that their experiences here form a pleasant distraction from the humdrum monotony of their lives. They enjoy the excitement immensely, and will return to their virtuous family life greatly benefited by the temporary change. I have my suspicions that they have made away with several persons in the neighbouring villages; but there is no absolute proof. Of course, one has to be careful.

"You perceive that gentleman who has just passed the window. He is reading Watts' Hymns, and is a person of the most scrupulous integrity and virtue: you will scarcely credit that he was formerly a speculative builder, who showed himself at chapel three times every Sunday. But he was: there is no change

of character, however diametrical, which is impossible to this system."

He had completely carried me away with him. I was amazed and delighted. I saw at once the potentialities opened up, not only to novelists, but even more to dramatists, for this great system rendered possible and natural, at a single stroke, two-thirds of the dramas which had ever been produced.

Shortly after my visit to Mr. Penbury, the novelist, I decided to call again and enjoy a further conversation about his excellent method. On arriving at the house, I was disappointed by finding it desolate and for sale. I inquired of the caretaker about Mr. Penbury.

"Ah!" said the man, "that was a sad affair, that was. He was careless enough one day to leave off the armour he always used to wear under his clo'es, and went to sleep on a gardening seat, and them two old gents as was stayin' here found him. There's a widder and a large family; but they do say all the money he left 'em 'll be swallered hup by the actions as a lot o' ladies and gen'lemen is bringin', to show cause why they shouldn't 'ave their moral constitooshuns put right—wich it's all Greek to me."

J. F. SULLIVAN.

THE ART OF KEEPING WELL.

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.



"HOW do you do?" is a universal question, to which, from mere thoughtlessness, an answer, almost universally incorrect, is

given. But the ready reply, "Quite well," may be given in ignorance.

Few people have ever

considered what is meant by being in good health; indeed, a body in a condition of perfect health is almost unknown among civilised men. The wear and tear of modern life, depending upon increased competition as well as upon over-indulgence in compensating pleasures, together with the insanitary condition of our crowded cities, tends to undermine even the healthiest constitution.

All of us exhibit in some degree the effect of this high-pressure in those minor ailments to which too little attention is often paid. The American man of business is dyspeptic because, in his hurry to make money, he cannot find time to eat his meals comfortably; and the American woman, in her pursuit of culture, takes so little exercise that her nervous system suffers. But England is not free

from like evils, so that we may with advantage consider how personal health is to be maintained.

The science of health, or hygiene, may be divided into two parts: public hygiene cares for the health of communities, and deals with such matters as water-supply, drainage, the removal of town refuse. It is the work of the State acting through proper officials. But personal hygiene cares for the health of individuals, and it is the duty of every person to apply its principles to his own individual case. We are only concerned in this paper with personal hygiene, which has two great objects—the preservation of health, and the prolongation of life. To attain these objects it is necessary to make use of every beneficial influence possible, as well as to avoid injurious influences. It is owing to a strict adherence to the principles of personal hygiene, modified for particular cases by the doctor, that many people who suffer from some complaint, such as a weak or even a diseased heart, live useful lives and even reach old age.

Many of our ailments are due to faults of omission or commission. It is unnecessary to give illustrations, as most people can recall plenty in their own experience. Sometimes ill-health follows the fault immediately, as when we take cold from wet feet; sometimes it is more difficult to trace the connection between the fault and its consequences, as when gradually-increasing corpulence follows long-continued though trivial errors in diet.

It is important to begin to take care of health early in life. During infancy, either from neglect or ignorance, many preventable diseases are allowed to occur which often do irremediable mischief. Improper feeding is due in the great majority of cases to ignorance, and causes the death of thousands of infants. It has been estimated that fifty per cent. of the deaths of infants are due directly or indirectly to improper feeding. It has further been stated on good authority that about thirty per cent. of the blindness which exists in the United Kingdom is due to preventable diseases of the eye occurring in infancy, the majority of these cases being due to mere want of cleanliness and care. In early life the body is growing, and is therefore more profoundly and permanently affected by good or evil influences. This is acknowledged to be true in the case of moral training, but it is equally true as regards future bodily health.

The personal care of health is equally important at the other extreme of life. With advancing years the digestion becomes enfeebled, the secreting organs become less active, and the tissues generally have less power to resist injurious impressions from without. These facts are made obvious by the slowness with which old people recover from illness or even from excessive fatigue. In old and young alike, it must be remembered that definite general rules of conduct cannot be laid down to meet every case. Constitution has to be taken into account, for individuals are often very differently affected by the same influences; so that for the preservation of health it is essential to know what are the conditions a person tolerates best.

There are five great factors concerned in the preservation of health. First and foremost must be placed education, using the word in its widest sense to include physical development, moral training, and mental culture. Too little attention has hitherto been paid to education from the point of view of health, but recently the importance of hygiene has been more fully recognised. A right system of education so trains the mind that it is eager to occupy itself with some pursuit at all times; and thus people are prevented from falling into idle habits which not only waste time, but give the imagination opportunity to conjure up all sorts of fanciful disorders. We all know the hysterical, nervous, delicate girl, who is so only because she has neither work nor occupation. Educated girls who lead useful lives do not suffer from hysterics, nor do workmen's wives, in general, because both these classes have their time fully and profitably occupied. An interesting point worthy of notice is that the criminal class, taken as a whole, is uneducated; and it has been shown that a distinct relation exists between ill-health and crime. Hence the importance of the preservation of physical health for the preservation of moral health, and we thereby recognise that health itself has a distinct moral value.

The second factor in personal hygiene is the regulation of food and drink—the regulation not only of the quantity but also of the quality. This last point is often neglected, but it is important, especially so in children.

A common mistake is to force children to take food which is distasteful to them. It must not therefore be inferred that children are to have whatever they like best; but when a child shows a great distaste for, say, mutton fat, the best way is to make the fat into a suet pudding, which in all probability will be readily eaten. Violent prejudices which are conceived in early life, owing to want of thought on the part of parents or guardians, often remain fixed, and cause trouble and annoyance in after-life. The quantity of food we take ought to depend greatly on our work. A man when he is resting needs about half as much food as when he is engaged in laborious work.

Thirdly, the functions of our different organs require to be exercised and encouraged. It is not necessary to do more than mention the value of mere cleanliness and care of the skin. A dirty skin means that more work is thrown upon delicate internal organs, especially the kidneys, and the working power of the whole body is thus lowered. In this connection the hygienic clothing of the body must be mentioned. Regularity of the action of the bowels must be secured—many dangerous illnesses arise from want of care in this respect. The importance also of a suitable amount of sound sleep cannot be exaggerated, for however important regular and sufficient exercise may be, ample time for rest and recuperation is equally important.

This brings us to the next point to be considered—exercise, the essential requirement of which is regularity. It is surprising to note how all our organs become accustomed to regular and habitual exercise and rest. Regularity in the time of going to bed conduces to sleep; regularity in meal-times conduces to most efficient digestion; and regularity in the amount of exercise is attended with less fatigue and more benefit than exercise of varying amount taken irregularly.

Lastly, there is the question of occupation. Certain occupations are necessarily unhealthy; others are unhealthy on account of the badly-ventilated rooms in which they are carried on. The delicacy of many shop-girls is often rightly attributable to this cause, especially when the lungs are affected. Personal hygiene teaches the precautions which must be taken by those engaged in unhealthy occupations, the scrupulous cleanliness to be practised by workers in lead, the outdoor life which, as far as can be, must be adopted by those who work in confined rooms and offices. It also teaches that want of occupation is also unhealthy and leads to premature death.

The laws of health embody principles which admit of universal application; but, as we have already seen, these laws need modification in their application to individuals. It is the duty of all to make themselves acquainted with the general principles of hygiene. They owe it as a duty to themselves and to the general community; for, after all, the health of a city depends upon the health of every individual citizen, and the many may suffer needlessly from neglect by the few.