

CONCERNING CHAPS AND CHILBLAINS.

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.



BLAIN" is an old English word meaning a sore; and a chilblain is a sore caused by cold. Chilblains are consequently much more frequent in the winter, when the weather is cold. They are seen in those whose circulation is feeble and, curiously enough, young

people under the age of twenty suffer more frequently than older people.

The history of a chilblain is very simple. In consequence of a feeble circulation, the nutrition of the skin is injuriously affected by cold, and slight inflammation ensues. On the parts most exposed to the weather (for chilblains affect the hands and feet, particularly the heel) an ill-defined redness becomes apparent. There is a good deal of tenderness, and when the part becomes thoroughly warm there is much itching and a sensation of burning.

If appropriate treatment is adopted at once, the inflammation subsides and the skin soon resumes its natural appearance; but if this early stage be neglected, and the part be irritated by a rough stocking or by the chafing of an ill-fitting boot, further damage to the skin results. A little blister forms, and when it breaks a superficial sore is left, which is very troublesome and heals very slowly.

In no case is the old proverb "Prevention is better than cure" more true than in the present instance. All that is required to prevent the occurrence of chilblains is to ensure a sufficiency of warmth. Warm gloves and warm stockings must be worn, and boots fitting easily and suitable to the season must be procured. The circulation must be promoted by friction, and encouraged by active exercise taken regularly. If all precautions fail, local treatment must be begun without delay.

At first a sedative lotion or soothing ointment must be applied to allay the inflammation, followed later by more stimulant remedies. Simplest, and perhaps as efficacious as any other application, is the use of resin ointment; or the part may be painted occasionally with a little tincture of iodine. It must always be remembered that warmth is essential for success—not toasting the toes in front of a fire and then letting the feet become cold again—but the warmth must be maintained by suitable clothing.

Frost-bite is a more extreme effect of cold; it chiefly affects the more exposed parts—particularly the ears and nose. Just as in the case of a burn, the injury to the skin is greater than is at first apparent. Careful treatment under medical advice must be adopted.

A chap is a longitudinal crack in the skin, and generally affects the hands and arms. Apart from the particular effects we have just considered, cold has a profound and more general influence on the nutrition

of the skin. This influence is intensified if the cold is combined with wet, more especially if the wet skin is allowed to dry spontaneously.

An eczematous condition is induced which manifests itself by the skin chapping. Washerwomen, laundresses, and others who alternately wet and dry their arms are particularly liable to suffer. Here, again, preventive measures are all-important. The hands must be kept warm, and when they are wetted care must be taken to dry them thoroughly with a dry, soft towel.

Several patent preparations are highly recommended; the old treatment of glycerine and rose-water dabbed on the skin occasionally is, however, very satisfactory. Many people, I would parenthetically remark, make the great mistake of applying pure glycerine to the skin, and thus defeat their own object—for pure glycerine acts as an irritant.

It ought to be diluted and this is best done with rose-water. If the chapping is very severe, it is best to consult a doctor, as much harm may be done by taking the advice of inexperienced people or even by following one's own prescription.

The skin of the face may also suffer; it is necessarily the most exposed part of the body, and the effect of cold upon it is very noticeable. The natural temperature of the body, as I explained at length in a previous article, depends upon a balance being maintained between the heat produced by the vital processes and the heat lost by the skin, lungs, etc. When a cold draught of air plays upon any part, the quantity of heat lost is minimised by a narrowing of the calibre of the blood-vessels at that spot, and blood-vessels are very numerous just below the skin. Comparatively little blood flows through the contracted vessels, and it flows slowly, so that it has time to lose its bright red colour more completely than usual. The bluish colour of the face and lips on a cold day is due to this cause, and I have already referred to the impaired nutrition of the skin which may result. A certain amount of protection is afforded by wearing a veil, but care should be taken that it should be suitable and contain no injurious dye. Drawn tightly under the nose, a veil may cause a little chafing and irritation; it is therefore better to allow it to extend below the chin. On entering a warm room an uncomfortable feeling of burning may be experienced, which is often allayed by the judicious use of a sedative application.

Closely allied to the foregoing conditions are fissures in the lips. These are very painful, and heal with difficulty. Promptly treated with lip-salve, they may be soon cured; but if they become at all deep, it may be necessary to touch the raw surface with a pencil of lunar caustic. The pain is only momentary, and healing follows rapidly.

There is yet another condition produced by cold. It

is very interesting to study, but it involves a consideration of the general influence of nerves on nutrition, so that we cannot pursue the matter far in this paper.

A slight eruption on the face near the lips is not infrequently seen. Pain is felt, perhaps towards evening, then the skin reddens, and by the morning a crop of little blisters closely aggregated together is developed. This affection is herpes, and when it occurs round the body it is commonly known as "shingles." It is a very curious affection, and is, without doubt, due to nerve influence. It soon passes away. All that is necessary is to avoid irritating the eruption; the application of a little zinc ointment is very grateful.

Finally, many people are troubled with coldness of

the extremities, especially during the winter months. Sometimes when they wake in the morning they may find their fingers numb and white, as if they were quite bloodless. The circulation is, however, soon restored by friction and warmth. This condition depends upon a spasm of the blood-vessels, and is generally due to nervous influence. It is seen in those who have a weak circulation, or in those whose blood is not in a perfectly pure state (it is often associated with an accumulation of uric acid in the system). Considerable alarm may be occasioned, and timely medical advice is desirable, especially if the numbness is of frequent occurrence. Very often a simple remedy is successful, and much perturbation of mind is thus avoided.

THE QUEER PASSENGER'S STORY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "NORTHWARD HO," "GOD BLESS THE CHEESE," ETC. ETC.



LOVELY summer's day an English yacht lay moored in the harbour of Bergen. Her skipper, with folded arms, leaned over the bulwarks, lost in quiet enjoyment of the scene. No ripple disturbed the glassy surface of the water, and in it was mirrored the town and its encircling mountains. Suddenly across his

range of vision floated a boat; two men were at the oars, and they were evidently making for the shore. Boats are no novelty at Bergen, but there was a peculiarity about this particular craft that riveted the skipper's attention, and effectually awoke him from his day-dream. In the bows, motionless, unfettered, stood a fully-grown and magnificent eagle. Surely such an extraordinary sight was never seen before in Bergen Harbour!

The boat drew nearer, and the skipper hailed her: "Boat ahoy! What are you going to do with that splendid eagle?"

The men stopped rowing; the queer passenger rolled its eye in the direction of the speaker, but otherwise took no notice of the interest it excited. Its master—the younger of the two men—replied in English that he was taking it to Bergen in order to present it to the museum there.

"What!" exclaimed the skipper. "Have the bird killed and stuffed? It would be a thousand pities. Would you sell it to me?"

The Norwegian considered, and then said—"If I sell, I ask of you two dollars."

"All right!" replied the Englishman, surprised at the modest sum asked; "it shall be a bargain. Will you please come on board?"

Shortly after the two were seated in the cabin at their ease, whilst the eagle, perched on the back of a chair, seemed to preside over the meeting.

"And now," said the skipper, "pray tell me why you are getting rid of this fine bird."

The Norwegian prefaced his reply by saying that his name was Carl, and that he lived at his foster-father's farm on a large island to the south of Bergen. The eagle was his own, and lived at the farm also; it was so tame that it would eat food out of his hand. It generally flew away to the hills in the morning, but always came back at night. Perhaps the Englishman would remember the very hot weather of a week ago? On one of the warmest days the eagle sat in the farm-yard basking in the bright sunshine, and thoroughly enjoying the light and heat.

Tempted, too, by the beautiful weather, into the farm-yard strolled Petersen, one of the hands; it was a holiday, and, like the bird, Petersen intended to make the most of it. It was so hot that he had discarded his coat and vest; his trousers were rolled up to his knees, and his legs and feet were quite bare. He found a plank, tilted it at a convenient angle, and half reclining upon it, closed his eyes and smoked the pipe of peace, contented with himself and all the world.

The eagle, that had been dozing on its perch, regarded the new-comer with amazement. Its sense of propriety was doubtless shocked at the sight of Petersen's bare legs. That they were white, and plump, and shapely, could be no excuse in the mind of this cultured bird! It began to chatter to itself; and the more it pondered the matter the more its indignation was aroused. From chattering it took to stronger language, until, in a sudden access of fury, it made a wild rush at those beautiful legs, buried