

SANITARIAN

HEADACHES.

EMERSON says: "The first wealth is health," . . . which "has to spare,—runs over, and inundates the neighborhoods and creeks of other men's necessities." Now, just as wealth comes by saving the dollars, so is health gained by saving strength; but the woman who is careful even to parsimony in the spending of her nickels and dimes lavishes her strength, often, upon the pettiest trifles, undertaking herculean tasks with a prodigal recklessness in reference to the drain upon her physical strength which often amounts to criminal carelessness.

The penalty paid for every such violation of inherent laws governing all income and outgo is suffering of some sort,—Nature's check, as it were, to arrest the unwise expenditure before the culprit plunges into complete bankruptcy. The number of women who are chronic sufferers from headache of some sort are legion; but who of the number realizes that in most cases she is simply paying the penance for an overdraft upon her strength? A great deal of the suffering of this sort that afflicts womankind is self-inflicted; for although there are many kinds of headache, which arise from many causes, the real root of the difficulty, back of other immediately producing causes, is, oftener than not, overwork,—fatigue to the point of exhaustion.

Usually a headache is not to be regarded as a disease, but as a symptom of internal disorders,—a warning sent out by Nature of troubles which but for this arresting pain might pass unheeded till grave complications had set in. Both nervous and sick headaches arise from over-fatigue more frequently than from any other cause, and absolute rest must be part of the treatment in each case. The woman who persists in ignoring the racking pain of a nervous headache, and by the exercise of a strong will-power drives herself on to accomplish whatever duties or engagements lie before her, is heaping up for herself days of bitter reckoning. She should accept the pain as a danger-signal, and give the tired brain and body the care and rest they need. Many cases will find almost immediate relief from bathing with hot water. If someone can do this for you, all the better; but if you must be your own nurse, put on a loose wrapper, knot your hair high, out of the way, and, sitting in a low chair by the side of the bath-tub so the head can be bent over it, bathe the back of the neck with water as hot as can be borne. Rub the sponge up back of the ears, also, and across the forehead. Ten minutes of this treatment should afford relief; if it does, sponge the whole face and throat for a few minutes with hot water, then dash cold water over the face, and lie down for a half-hour, or, better still, sleep for an hour or longer.

Obstinate cases which are not relieved by the hot-water bathing must use also a hot foot-bath with mustard and salt in the water. This is also the first remedy to be employed for a dizzy, congestive headache, often produced by prolonged mental work, and greatly, aggravated by indigestion, constipation, and any disturbances of the

circulation. If the pain be increased by using the eyes, it is perhaps caused by eye-strain, in which case it is often confounded with bilious and sick headache, being frequently accompanied by nausea, restlessness, and sleeplessness. Of course, for this, perfect rest for the eyes is necessary; reading, sewing, etc., are absolutely forbidden, and if they be used at all it must be with frequently changing focus, as in looking at near and distant objects out-of-doors. When the weather permits, rest in the open air will be more beneficial than in a darkened room; and under no circumstances must it be a close room. An abundance of fresh, pure air is of the greatest importance in all cases of headache.

The liver is a greatly abused organ of the internal economy, and it frequently revenges itself for the ill-treatment by causing severe pain in the forehead and over the eyes; the skin and the furred tongue are yellow, and there is a bitter taste in the mouth; vomiting gives partial relief because the excess of bile is thus thrown off. Indiscretions of eating and drinking, causing a morbidly active condition of the liver, sedentary habits, want of exercise, insufficient sleep, and other violations of hygienic laws disturbing the normal and healthful action of one or all of the excretory organs, are producing causes of this form of headache, as also of sick headache, which closely resembles it.

A simple remedy which will often afford speedy relief when the headache is caused by any disturbance of the stomach is a half-teaspoonful of aromatic spirits of ammonia in a half-glassful of hot water. It can be repeated every half-hour till three doses have been taken, but often one dose is sufficient. A hot, close room is a frequent cause of keen suffering, producing a dull, heavy feeling over the eyes, and even a cracking, congestive-like pain in the whole top of the head. These cases are most apt to occur in the evening and in crowded auditoriums where not sufficient care has been exercised to provide for the combustion of air by artificial light. People who are subject to this form of headache should always have with them a vinaigrette with camphor or lavender salts, which afford temporary relief; and if they be wise they will avoid evening crowds as much as possible.

In all cases of headache attention to a careful diet is of the utmost importance. It should be moderate and of the most nutritious and easily digested food. Everything of a clogging nature should be avoided; whole wheat bread, plenty of fruit and green vegetables, with rare beef, well-cooked mutton, poultry, game, and fish afford sufficient variety from which to choose. Wherever it can be had the pomelo, shaddock, or grape-fruit,—as it is variously called,—should be eaten freely; and always that or an orange or apple should form part of the breakfast, with some well-cooked cereal, toast, and a bit of rare beefsteak or crisply broiled chop if there is any appetite for meat.

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