

"It is far prettier on canvas than in reality," he said, glancing over the artist's shoulder.

"That is what an artist should do, soften down the ugliness and bring out unsuspected beauties," said Miss Laing, lifting her soft lazy eyes to David's face. "I want it to be pretty; it is for the old gentleman."

"How pleased he will be," ejaculated David, feeling that the girl was as good as she was beautiful.

"It's an order," she said, rather coldly. "I'm an artist by profession, or hope to be one day. I study in London for more than half the year, and in summer I come down here. What made you say you knew me? I very nearly exposed you on the spot?"

"I said we had met before, and so we had," said David, laughing. "There is a very fine line of distinction between veracity and truth. I repented on the

spot, however, but honestly I felt as if I knew you already. Hullo! Deborah, where are the fircones?"

"In the box," replied Deborah soberly.

"Aren't you going to play at anything? I thought, perhaps, you'd run a race with me. I feel sure somehow you'd beat me."

For a moment Deborah looked inclined to desert her post.

"We could run it when she goes in to tea, couldn't we?" she asked. "I don't want to go away just now."

The child's devotion was rewarded by a smile from the object of her adoration.

"I wonder what made you come here? Do you want a quiet place for reading," Miss Laing asked David, presently.

"No, I'm running away from books. I've just finished my last exam. for the Indian Civil Service. I'm out in search

of—amusement, I think," with a quick glance.

"You'll take your pleasure sadly here then. There is absolutely nothing to be done."

"You won't mind if I watch you at work then?"

"Not in the least," said Miss Laing calmly, "but you'll find it pall after an hour or two."

"Deborah does not seem to find it dull," said David, looking after the child as she ran off to the house for something.

"Deborah! she's infatuated about me," and Miss Laing laughed; "but that will not last either."

"Won't it? I'm not so sure, the child has such true eyes."

David was late for tea that afternoon, and came in hatless and breathless, having lost his race.

(To be continued.)



BATHS AND BATHING.

By "THE NEW DOCTOR."

WHAT is more delightful than a cold bath on a hot morning in August? How exhilarating is the cold water, and how soothing is the reaction which follows! What can be more pleasant, when the midday sun is pouring down his sultry rays on one of the three hot days that are said to constitute an English summer, than to lie in a hammock under the shadow of a thick tree and dream after having indulged in the morning tub?

What is more miserable than trying to bathe in freezing water filled with needles and sheets of ice on a dark morning in the middle of January? When the soap refuses to lather and the towels are frozen hard—and if you succeed in melting them they are scarcely less wet than your shivering body. After this to go to work still shivering from the morning tub which has not produced a reaction, to try to make an effort with hands blue, nose red, and teeth chattering, with an aching body and a torpid mind, and to believe that a cold bath in the morning should be taken by every one, always and everywhere.

One hears from nearly every source that a cold bath in the morning makes you warm by reaction, heightens the appetite, whips up the energy, and produces a healthy body and a

clear mind. So it does, *usually*. Nothing is better than this daily bath for the old country gentleman who eats and drinks too much, who can live in the fields all day long, whose only exertion is riding or hunting, and whose mind is not fraught with care. But is it equally good for an anæmic girl, working twelve hours a day in a factory, whose food is insufficient, who is compelled to live where fresh air is unobtainable, and who can never take a proper amount of exercise?

"Oh, yes, it should be indulged in by every one!" says the hearty sportsman who never felt ill in his life.

I know better. Would it surprise you to hear that yesterday I attended a man who died from the effects of a cold bath? Yet it is true. The man had a fatty heart, and the bath brought on an attack of angina pectoris, in which he died.

"Oh," says the sportsman, "I did not mean that a man who was not healthy should take a cold bath! I know nothing about that."

"Then would you advise that the factory girl should take a cold bath every morning?"

"I don't know anything about factory girls," he replies.

"Then why did you say that every one 'should take a morning tub'? Perhaps you do not include factory girls in 'every one'? They are ten times more numerous than sportsmen and of far more consequence to civilisation. If they are not so healthy as you are, it is not their fault!"

This man is quite right from his point of view—a cold bath will never do him any harm; but, like most healthy people, he cannot understand that some of us are feeble and have to live in unhealthy surroundings. Few citizens can obtain sufficient air or exercise.

I do not want you to think that I disapprove of a cold bath every morning. On the contrary, I take one every day myself, and think that for most people it is an excellent practice, for some almost indispensable. I only wish to insist upon this fact—that a cold bath is a powerful agent, that it can do good, but that it can also do great harm.

Let us briefly review the "physiology" of the morning tub, and then we can understand more clearly how and when it should be indulged in.

On jumping into a cold bath and squeezing a spongeful of water down your back, the

breathing is momentarily checked—this every one has experienced. The blood-vessels of the skin contract, and the blood pressure is raised; this slightly embarrasses the heart and congests the internal organs. On getting out of the bath a sense of warmth and comfort is experienced. Now the vessels of the skin dilate, flushing the surface of the body and removing the congestion of the deeper organs which occurred during the bath. The heart is relieved. The bath has acted as a stimulus, and as a very powerful stimulus, to the brain and heart. The bodily vigour is increased, the mind rendered more active, and the appetite sharpened.

We all know that healthy people who take a morning tub eat a large breakfast. The effects of the bath last for a varying time—sometimes for the whole day. But you will often notice that “tubbers” tire more easily than others. Nothing can stimulate either the body or the mind for more than a short period, and all stimulation must be paid for afterwards by depression.

If a bath produces the above symptoms, it does undoubted good, and should be taken. But it does not always produce these results. If the water is too cold (of course some can stand much lower temperature than others), if you remain too long in the bath, if you are delicate, or if from any other reason you are unable to withstand the shock to your system, one of two things will happen: either the reaction will not occur and you will remain cold and semi-torpid all day, or the result of the bath will wear off and in the afternoon, or perhaps before lunch-time, your whole energy will go and you will be fit for nothing for the rest of the day—often with a splitting headache to boot.

Many patients, chiefly young women, have consulted me complaining of total inaptitude to work after lunch, and I have often found that stopping the morning tub has effected a cure. If your appetite is not excited by a bath, that bath does harm. There are many people whose nervous system cannot stand a severe shock.

Now you will ask me, “Ought I to take a cold bath in the morning?” It depends upon yourself, try it and see if it agrees with you.

Most people can stand a cold bath in summer; few can stand it in severe frost. The other day a woman was boasting to me that she always made her children take a bath summer and winter. She thought as so many think that there is a special virtue in a cold bath, and that the virtue increases in the same ratio as the coldness of the water. She stated with pride that the water was often frozen and that her children used to slide on the ice before rubbing themselves with the icbergs.

“But, madam,” said I, “surely you don’t think that this will improve the health of the children?”

“Oh, yes, I am sure of it; and, besides, cold baths can do no harm. No one ever took cold from a cold bath.”

I wonder where she got this notion from? Nothing in my experience has been more fertile for producing “colds” than a cold bath!

“Madam,” I retorted, “do you take a cold bath every morning yourself?”

“Well—a—no—not always.”

“Did you take one to-day?”—a freezing day during the great frost of 1895.

“No, I did not; but my children did.”

“Well, madam,” said I, “take an ice bath to-morrow morning and come and tell me how you like it.”

She took the bath and came to me.

“Well, doctor, I don’t think a cold bath suits me.”

“I well believe you. An ice bath suits

very few people. If you take my advice, you will substitute a warm bath for your children in place of ice.” Which she did, greatly to the benefit of her offsprings.

If you cannot take a cold bath, you may raise the temperature a little by adding hot water—not sufficient to make the bath warm, but just to take the chill off.

There is a new way of taking a cold bath, which does not produce so much shock and of which I have heard that it is very pleasant and efficacious. It consists of standing in a bath of warm water and sponging the body with cold water contained in a vessel by the side.

Whether you should take a sponge bath, a plunge, or a shower bath, or a combination of two or more of these, is a matter of taste; but the plunge is the most severe.

The most important action of the bath is to clean the skin, but this seems to be entirely overlooked by some people.

The cold bath necessitates the use of a sponge. Sponge, as most of you know, is the skeleton, or rather the earthy part, of a colony of gelatinous animals. It consists almost entirely of silica—in other words, it has the same composition as flint.

When you buy a sponge, do not get one of enormous size, as besides being very expensive cumbersome and difficult to manœuvre, it is almost impossible to keep it clean. When you have bought your sponge, soak it in warm water for twenty-four hours. If it is gritty, soaking it in a solution of hydrochloric acid (spirit of salt) (1 in 20) will remove the grit and render the sponge soft.

After a sponge has been in use for some time it usually becomes slimy and offensive. To prevent this, always wring out the sponge after use and hang it up to dry. If it has become slimy, soak it in hydrochloric acid for twenty-four hours. Wash away all traces of the acid, and leave it till it becomes quite dry. On using it again you will find that all the sliminess has gone. It is the presence of funguses and bacteria of various kinds that causes a sponge to become slimy.

A cork mat in the bath-room is a great luxury. Cork, being a non-conductor of heat, prevents the cold creeping up the legs.

Another luxury for the bath-room is a fire or stove of some sort. A bath is much more likely to produce a healthy reaction if the room is warm.

The chief external agent for producing a thorough reaction and for stimulating the circulation is the bath towel—let it be rough, large and dry, and use it energetically.

Ice baths are very useful in some diseases; in fact, for reducing a high temperature there is nothing to equal them. If you are nursing a patient with fever, you may be told by the physician to give the patient an ice bath if the temperature rises above a certain point (it may be 103° F., or whatever he thinks best).

To give a person an ice bath, let the bath be filled with tepid water, and when the patient is placed therein, gradually add lumps of ice till the temperature is lowered to the required degree. This way gives less shock than placing the patient at once into ice-cold water.

Warm baths seem to have been grossly neglected of late, yet they are really of more importance than cold baths. In cold weather a bath of about 60° to 65° F. may well be substituted for water somewhere below 40° F. with advantage.

A warm bath is a far more useful agent both in health and sickness than a cold bath. Children and elderly persons should never take any other than a warm bath.

The warm bath is a time-honoured remedy for infantile complaints, especially for fits occurring during dentition. The treatment

of infantile complaints, however, has been considerably altered since we were in that condition of existence, and now a warm bath alone would not be considered sufficiently active treatment for fits. Still it may be used with benefit if no other remedy is at hand; and sometimes it gives good results, whereas it can do no harm.

The temperature of a warm bath must not exceed 100° F. If you dip the tip of your elbow into water at 100° F. it will feel fairly hot. Never take a bath at a higher temperature than this—unless you wish to emerge like a boiled lobster—not that in itself it is dangerous, but because the danger of catching cold afterwards is very great.

The “physiology” of the hot bath is very different from that of the cold bath. On getting into warm water the blood-vessels of the surface are relaxed and the skin is flushed so that the amount of blood in the internal organs is reduced.

On getting out of the bath no reaction follows. If, however, you stand in a draught, a reaction does occur and the internal organs become congested, and many serious affections may be started in this way. Many inflammatory diseases of the gravest kind can be traced to “catching cold” after a bath.

Everybody knows that a hot bath should not be taken after a big meal, but it is not every one who knows the reason for this. After a meal all the blood in the body, that is not absolutely necessary for the other organs, goes to the stomach and other digestive apparatus. The blood is withdrawn from the skin. If now you flush the skin, the blood with which to flush the skin must come from somewhere. Where can it come from? Either from the stomach (in which case digestion will be seriously impeded) or else from the other organs, when the brain may be rendered anemic and fainting occur. So you must not take a bath after meals for the same reason that you must not work or walk after eating; all your energy must be given up to the process of digestion.

Whatever form of bath you take, always dry yourself well afterwards with a good rough towel, and be very careful to keep out of draughts.

Sea-bathing is a delightful way of taking a bath, and when at the seaside for a holiday sea baths should never be neglected by those who are strong enough to stand them. They are best taken when the sun is on the sea.

A lady once told me that it was impossible to catch cold after bathing in the sea. I do not know where she got her information from, it certainly does not agree with my experiences.

Sea-bathers are very liable to overdo it and remain too long in the water. The proprietors of bathing machines at fashionable seaside resorts are greatly to be commended for limiting the time allowed for the dip.

If you cannot go to the seaside, you can get a fair substitute for sea-water by dissolving sea salt in the water of your bath. In London you can have sea-water delivered at your house, but I do not think that it has any special advantage over the salt.*

A footbath is a very useful thing in certain complaints. Washing the feet with hot or cold water will often relieve certain forms of sleeplessness and cold feet at night. The mustard footbath is very useful in cold in the head, bronchitis and other inflammatory affections. A footbath of boric acid (half an ounce to the quart) at bedtime will relieve excessive perspiration of the feet, and act as a preventive from chilblains.

* Remember that you cannot use soap with sea-water.