

## WHAT WE PAY FOR OUR BOOTS.

By "THE NEW DOCTOR."

## PART I.



**O**f all parts of our bodies the feet are the most frequently deformed. If we were speaking of London alone, we might have said that of all parts of the body the foot is the only one that is always deformed; for it is strictly true

that you cannot find a normal foot in the metropolis.

There are many reasons for the frequency of affections of the feet, and it does not do to lay all the blame upon the cobblers, though truly those gentlemen are responsible for most of it. The foot has naturally a most laborious and thankless part to perform, and it naturally suffers a good deal in the performance of its duty. It is indeed the slave of the body, and since it comes but little under the master's observation, it is subjected to the worst ordeals of servitude.

How carefully do you all look after your hands! How often do you wash and wipe and scent and caress them! And how mindful are you of any slight defect or injury to them! And when you go out how carefully do you cover them with soft and yielding gloves! And how much attention do you give to your feet? Are you careful of every blemish and every injury that may affect them? And why do you enclose them in rigid prisons in which they have not even room to move? Yet at your birth your feet were in very much the same condition as your hands, and if you took as much care of them as you do of your hands, you would be equally well repaid for your trouble. Of course as the feet have more "manual" labour to do, they will always be less gainly and more coarse than the hands which are intended chiefly for finer work.

But the feet can be educated to do a great deal more than merely to form a base on which to stand; and though in civilised countries it is not much good educating our feet to perform the work of the hands, yet they will well repay being properly treated, for they will then last longer to do their ordinary work.

The sole of the foot is a most elaborate piece of anatomy, and it contains no less than five layers of special muscles for the movements of the toes. And what use do we make of these muscles? Are we to believe that they are there for no purpose? It seems as though civilisation had answered this question in the affirmative, and had instituted a law to prevent any use whatever being made of them.

Have you ever seen a monkey steal a nut with its foot? If you have not, it is well to see it as soon as you have an opportunity, for it is really very wonderful. The quiet way in which the foot is protruded towards the coveted object; the stealthiness with which it is slowly advanced towards it; the refinement of sensation which enables the foot to feel the nut; the elaboration of the delicate movements of the toes; the quiet indrawing of the foot with the nut tightly grasped, and the expression suggesting, "It wasn't me, but the monkey in the next cage," when he thinks he is suspected, are really most admirable.

Although boots are responsible for the great prevalence of deformed feet, it is only fair to say that for persons who live in towns and continuously walk on hard, level paving-stones, some form of rigid foot-gear is necessary. The great

fault which we have to find is not with the custom of wearing boots at all, but with wearing boots of the absurd shape and make which we all wear.

The faults of modern boots are many, and each produces its special deformity.

All new boots, whether tight or loose, tend to produce blisters on the feet. The formation of a blister above a part which is being chafed is an excellent example of the way by which Nature accommodates herself to adverse circumstances and the way that we mistake her efforts and thwart her. For a blister is a water-cushion which protects the part from the pressure which is galling it. Nearly everybody will prick that same blister as soon as she discovers it, and so again expose the part to the pressure of the boot. Apart from this obvious reason for not pricking blisters is a very much more important one, and that is, that if you prick a blister you allow germs to get into the space where the fluid was.

And there is nothing that disease germs like better than a nice warm moist protected spot, such as the raw surface underlying a blister. It is easy to get the germs in, for it is absolutely impossible to keep the feet clean in the surgical meaning of the term. But it is impossible for them to get out, for the hole which admitted them is much too small, and, moreover, it is quickly obliterated. And now what was once a protective blister is an unhealthy abscess, and often leads to very serious trouble.

There is a weird tale, which we have all heard in our childhood, that lockjaw is produced by cutting the web between the thumb and forefinger. Lockjaw, or tetanus, is an infectious disease due to an organism which is frequently found in road dirt, etc. It is not produced by the classical cut between the thumb and forefinger, nor is there any evidence whatever on which the myth could have been founded. Tetanus is far more common from wounds on the feet than from wounds on every other part of the body. Fortunately it is a rare disease, for it is one of the most terrible of human ailments.

If by any chance your feet become blistered, do not prick the blisters, but keep your feet scrupulously clean, and, if possible, remove the offending cause. If, however, the blisters are so large that they become a serious inconvenience, then the whole of the skin covering them may be removed with scissors that have been previously boiled, and the raw surfaces dressed with some mild antiseptic ointment or gauze. They will then heal in a few days.

Where the pressure of the boot is of a less acute but more continued character, a blister does not develop, but a more deeply situated collection of fluid, called a bursa, occurs instead. These bursas are chiefly found over the joint of the big toe, and are the first stage of that most important disease known as "bunion."

There are few affections which are so important and so common as bunions, and as they are produced by badly-fitting boots, and as their cure depends mainly upon attention to the boots, we will consider them at some length.

If you look at the foot of a monkey, you will see that the great toe is placed almost at a right angle to the other toes, just as in man the thumb is opposed to the other fingers. In man the great toe should not form a right angle with the other toes; but the inner border of the foot is a straight line until the joint of the great toe. The great toe itself should bend away from the other toes and point inwards towards the middle line of the body.

In most modern boots the inner border is pointed in the opposite direction, and so the great toe is forcibly flexed towards the other toes and away from the middle line of the body. In consequence of this, the joint is wrenched open and projects as a distinct mass exposed to all forms of injury.

The joints are delicate structures, and cannot stand pressure in abnormal positions, and so the joint of the great toe is handicapped, and is eventually greatly injured. To protect the exposed joint from injury, a bursa or deep-seated blister develops over the point of pressure, and this acts as a water-cushion to the joint. If at this period properly-shaped boots are substituted for those that caused the original deformity, all goes well, and the process advances no farther.

But, as a rule, the pressure of the boot is merely increased, and the bursa itself becomes inflamed and eventually converted into an abscess. If the offending boots are still worn this abscess may burst internally into the joint, causing complete destruction of the joint and a very grave condition, or it may burst externally, causing a troublesome sore, very likely to produce a great deal of trouble, or it may burst both internally and externally, which is the worst of the three.

When once the joint itself has become inflamed, the bunion becomes a grave surgical affection, and one for which active operative treatment is requisite.

The proper treatment for bunions varies greatly with the stage to which the affection has advanced. In the early stages simply wearing properly-shaped boots will prevent the affection from progressing. Between this state and that in which the joint has become destroyed, rather more rigorous treatment is required, the patient having to take to her bed and hot lotions, etc., applied to her foot. When the bursa has become an abscess, it is necessary to open it without delay.

The later stages of bunions require very active treatment, for the condition is one which not only cripples the subject, but may even destroy her life. Various forms of operation are performed for the condition, and though it cannot be said that any one is perfect, the results obtained by certain operations are very satisfactory. The one most commonly done now is to excise the joint altogether. The procedure is not very difficult, and there are no special dangers in connection with it.

In all cases of bunion, in whatever stage, attention to the boots is imperative, and no form of boot or shoe which presses upon the joint should be worn on any account. There are several places in London where boots shaped more or less like the human foot can be obtained.

Massage is often useful for bunion in the early stages, but later on it is useless. Hot foot-baths are very serviceable in this, as in every other disease or injury to the feet, strict cleanliness being the first essential of all surgical treatment.

People do not think enough about bunions, and allow them to drag on for years without treatment. But the condition is one which is not only very painful, but is also really serious, and it should always be attended to as soon as possible.

It is not often that a bunion develops upon any toe except the great toe, and the reason for this is fairly obvious. But now and again an exactly similar process occurs on the little toe or the last joint of the second toe.

Another very tiresome trouble which often



arises from wearing badly-fitting boots, is ingrowing toe-nail. In this complaint the end of the toe-nail grows into the pad of flesh at the extremity of the toe. As the result of this a chronic sore or crack develops a short distance before the end of the toe; and at every step or movement the nail is driven into the sore place, thus aggravating the trouble. Ingrowing toe-nail is one of the most painful affections of the feet, and one for which relief is necessary.

Not only is the disease exceedingly painful, but the crippling produced by it may be so severe as to render any movement of the feet or toes almost impossible. Like most other diseases of the toes it is more common on the great toe than on all the rest; and its cause is the same as the cause of bunion, namely, pressure of the boot forcing the toe inwards. Consequently it is more common in persons who wear pointed boots than in those who wear square-toed boots. The milder varieties of ingrowing toe-nail may often be remedied by

keeping the nail very carefully trimmed, the greatest possible care being taken that there are no angles or irregularities along its edge. Where there is a definite sore or crack this treatment is not sufficient, but must be combined with antiseptic lotions or powders to keep the crack clean. If any dirt gets into the crack—and we have told you that the germs of the most virulent diseases readily find their way into cracks and abrasions about the feet—very serious trouble may occur, which may require months of rest before health is restored. A method of treating ingrowing toe-nails, which is now very much in vogue, is to insert a small piece of cotton-wool under the edge of the toe-nail to prevent the nail from digging into the flesh. This simple procedure is readily done after a few trials, and gives most excellent results.

When an ingrowing toe-nail is really very bad and is interfering not only with comfort but also with the general health, as it does when it produces much crippling, by far the

best treatment is to have the nail removed. This can be readily done by any medical man, and produces about the same amount of pain and occupies about as much time as drawing a tooth. It can easily be done under cocaine, or, in very nervous patients, under nitrous oxide gas.

Producing symptoms not unlike ingrowing toe-nail, and being liable to much the same dangers and complications, are the small punctures which are produced by wearing boots with nails sticking up in them. We need scarcely have mentioned anything for which the remedy is so absolutely simple, except that most severe mischief may result from these small places if they are not immediately seen to. The boots are always swarming with germs, and every wound of the foot, however trivial it may be, is liable to become the door by which the most serious and fatal of the microbic diseases enter the body.

(To be concluded.)

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

## STUDY AND STUDIO.

WOODSIDE.—Your friend is so young we feel reluctant to criticise her work harshly. "Seem" and "mien" do not rhyme. Lord Byron's words, "Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll," are recalled by the first line,

"Roll on, roll on, thou mighty deep."

"Splash" is too insignificant an expression after this exhortation. All these are faults of inexperience, and the poem will quite pass muster among those we receive.

ETHEL W.—Your brother's lines show appreciation of Nature, and we should not consider it waste of time for him thus to practise metrical composition if he is so inclined in leisure moments. It will probably do him good to cultivate his powers of expression and observation. There are many technical errors. "The sun has passed the mid-region of heaven" is a faulty line, and in "Dawn" the metre is incorrectly attempted. "June" is the best of the four specimens.

CHESTNUT BURR.—As there is a "leaving scholarship" of £30 for three years in connection with the school where you are at present, we should strongly advise you to compete for it. You might also write to Frank Spooner, Esq., Shire Hall, Bedford, for particulars of County Council Scholarships. If you wish to obtain the B.A. of London, you must first pass the London Matriculation, then the Intermediate Arts, then the Final B.A., and it will take you three years. The Registrar of the University, South Kensington, London, S.W., will give you all information. You can be prepared for these examinations either by correspondence (University Correspondence College, 32, Red Lion Square, W.C.), the University Examination Postal Institution, 27, Southampton Street, Strand, W.C.), or by personal tuition, and we are sure in the town you mention you will find abundant opportunity for the latter.

Our interested reader, WINIFRED AYRTON.—Write to Miss Millard, Teddington, Middlesex, asking for what price she can procure you a second-hand edition of some book on heraldry. We are inserting your request.

TYPIST.—Your first sentence should read, "If I were she." Your second is quite correct.

MUSICUS (self-taught).—One question is our limit (*vide Rules*). We think that the book for which you are inquiring must be Charles Hallé's *Practical Pianoforte School*, for teaching the piano from the very beginning. It consists, as you say, of five parts, and is published by Forsyth Brothers, 267, Regent Street.

## OUR OPEN LETTER BOX.

NERINA asks the name and source of the hymn in which the following lines occur—

"While to the Cross I cling,  
Rest is sweet at Jesu's feet,  
While onward faith  
Keeps winging."

IRENE asks for the author and title of an Italian song in which the name "Margherita" frequently recurs. IRENE has heard it sung by Italian gipsies in the streets.

ELOCUTIONIST (Putney) inquires for the words of a poem entitled, "If You Only Knew."

E. K. W. asks for the author and composer of a song she heard twenty-five years ago. It contains these lines—

"You ask me where I found my ditties,  
I go seeking now, you know;  
It was down by von church steeples  
In the land of long ago."

Can anyone tell TOBY where to find an old hymn, "Owe no man anything but love"? The last line of one verse is—

"Content to owe it yet."

ARTA inquires for a poem by Austin Dobson, of which two lines are—

"I longed that, rather than sever,  
The train should shriek into space."

AMELIA M. P. says the piece she wants, "Incomplete," begins—

"I think the words that are sweetest  
Are the words that are never said."

Can any reader help her?

RÉSÉDA (Genoa) will be grateful for the full title and the name of the Editor of *Plays for Girls and Boys*, published more than twenty years ago in pamphlet form.

SPERO MELIORA is anxious to know the composer of a song entitled "A Winter Love Song."

MISS ASHDOWN thanks A. O. A. for so kindly sending a copy of "The Sailor's Grave."

ELIZABETH J. HARRIS answers E. H. SCOTT by referring her quotation to a poem by Lydia H. Sigourney, entitled "The Funeral at Nazareth." It is published in a little book entitled, *Scenes in My Native Land* (dated 1844). Our correspondent kindly sends us a copy of the poem.

HEARTSEASE inquires for the whereabouts of a quotation, which strikes us as not very poetical or grammatical—

"I often think in my own heart,  
When it lies nearest me,  
That the worst man I ever knew  
Was a better man than me."

ELOCUTIONIST asks where she can obtain the words of "The Game of Life."

"HELIOTROPE" is informed that "The Two Church-builders" is the title of a poem by John G. Saxé. It is printed *inter alia* in an accessible collection of *Legends and Ballads, Tales and Sketches, Moral, Religious and Didactic*, edited by Alfred H. Miles, and published by Hutchinson & Co. If, however, "HELIOTROPE" has any difficulty in procuring it, "W. J." will be pleased to send her a typescript of the verses if she will publish her address in the "G. O. P." A CORNISH GIRL also offers a copy of the poem, and says it is to be found in the July number of *Mothers and Daughters*, 1894, edited by Mrs. G. S. Reaney. ELIZABETH J. HARRIS refers it to the *A 1 Reciter*, part 3.

LETTICE inquires where the following verse is to be found, and who is the author—

"From vintages of sorrow are chiefest of joys distilled;  
And the cup that's held for healing is oft at  
Marah filled.  
God leads to joy thro' sorrow, to quietness thro'  
strife,  
Thro' conflict unto victory, thro' death to endless  
life."

STELLA inquires for the author and publisher of a story called *Self and Self-sacrifice*.

AMABEL McDONALD suggests to C. WINIFRED JAMES that the tale she wants is "John Grumlie," to be found in any good collection of Scotch songs. The opening verse is after this fashion—

"John Grumlie swore by the licht o' the moon,  
And the green leaf on the tree,  
That he could do more work in a day  
Than his wife could do in three."

R. M. L. inquires for a recitation called "Sweet Watercrests."

MARIANNE inquires for a book called *Rainbow Stories*, containing "The Giant's Grave"; also a book called *The Mysterious Marriage*.

ELSPETH CRAWFORD asks for the source of the following lines—

"Children, think how, when the nations gather  
round the mighty throne,  
He who gave His life for others will claim  
Johnnie as His own."

JANE STIRLING suggests to DORA BOLTON, St. Petersburg, that the complete edition of *The Old Story* ("The Story Wanted," "The Story Told") was published by Hatchards, 187, Piccadilly, London, W., and our correspondent, whom we thank for her information, believes that the edition, with author's music, costs sixpence.

DAPHNE is answered by MISS NORAH POLKINGHORNE, who refers the quotation to Charlotte Yonge. The complete verse is as follows—

"Whene'er you speak of those that are away,  
Suppose them listening to all you say;  
And if you cannot well with truth commend,  
By silence prove yourself to be their friend."

E. H. N. is again answered by M. E. B., IRISH SHAMROCK, VIOLET, M. A. OSBORN, MATILDA RUTLAND SMITH, ROSAMUND, HELEN PRICE, MOLLY B. The author of "Sir Evelyn's Charge" is Margaret Isabella Arden, and it is published by Hunt & Co., 12, Paternoster Row. An anonymous correspondent says that it is published by Hodder and Stoughton.

## INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE.

SNOWDROP, c/o Miss Watters, Old Derrig, Carlow, Ireland, aged 18, would be glad to correspond with GOLDEN ROD.

"ULSTER GIRL" would like a French correspondent of about 14, each to write in the language of the other, and return the letters corrected.

MISS NATALIE GORAINOFF, Russia, St. Serge St., St. Petersburg, No. 24, Log. 4, would be grateful if any nice English girl would write to her.

JEANIE CARMICHAEL, Netherton, Greenock, N.B., aged 14, wants a correspondent who, like herself, collects and presses wild flowers, and would exchange them.

Would some French girl send her name and address to this column as a correspondent for MARGUERITE, aged 18, who writes us a pleasant letter, and has studied French for several years? BELONA (who does not say if we may print her address) also wishes for a French correspondent, aged about 17.

"KHAKI" wishes to correspond with an Irish or English girl, living in Italy, interested in art.

FLAVIA wishes to correspond with a "nice French girl" of her own age (14).



## WHAT WE PAY FOR OUR BOOTS.

By "THE NEW DOCTOR."

## PART II.



THE most important of the deformities which are caused by wearing boots is undoubtedly flat-foot. So common is this affection that it is present in more or less severe degree in the majority of those who have

worn boots from infancy.

When walking, the only parts of the foot which should touch the ground are the heel, the pad over the balls of the toes, the pads of the toes themselves, and the outer border of the sole. When the feet are flat, the surface which comes in contact with the ground is increased until, when the arch has completely given way, the whole sole rests on the ground.

The complex arch of the foot is most important, and serves many purposes for which a perfectly flat foot would be inappropriate. For by its elasticity it prevents the shocks which would occur every time the foot touches the ground, and it adds lightness and ease to progression.

The foot is made up of a number of small bones, twenty-six in all, and where any of these bones touches its neighbour there is a joint. These joints allow of a certain amount of gliding movement in most directions, but most of them do not permit very extensive movement. The bones which enter into the formation of the arch of the foot are not intended to move upon each other to any great extent, but are arranged to form a fairly rigid arch which allows of a certain amount of settling to occur when the weight of the whole body is brought down upon it. The parts of the foot at which considerable movement is allowed are the ankle joint and the joints of the toes.

When we walk without boots the ankle and the toes move freely with each step, but the centre of the foot is practically fixed. And if we wear boots, they should be of such a pattern as to allow movement at the ankle and toes, and not at the arch or waist.

But the boots that we do wear limit the action of the ankle, almost entirely prevent the movement of the toes, but are readily flexible in the waist. In other words, they completely alter the natural movements of the foot. Is it any wonder that we are nearly all flat-footed?

The form of boot which is especially likely to produce flat-foot is that in which the waist or part between the heel and the sole is flexible. This part of the boot ought to be absolutely rigid, allowing scarcely any movement at all. The sole of the boot, on the contrary, should be as pliable as possible, so as to allow free movement of the toes.

Some persons consider high heels to be very important causes of flat-foot, but we much doubt whether high heels are themselves injurious; but if the boots are high-heeled as well as flexible in the waist, the deformity produced by the latter will be greatly augmented, as the heels will help to wrench open the arch.

Flat-foot is unquestionably most common in those whose occupation necessitates a great deal of standing about; but standing of itself will not produce the condition: it is constant standing in ill-fitting boots which does the mischief. Indeed, apart from what is caused by boots, flat-foot is a rare deformity.

Besides excessive standing there are many

factors which may help the arch of the foot to give way, but they are all of very secondary importance, the great cause of the affection being boots which bend at the waist.

There are few conditions which vary so much in the symptoms that they produce as does flat-foot. Very often—usually, indeed—it produces no trouble except slight aching pains in the front of the leg or foot after exertion. Some cases, on the other hand, produce most severe pain whenever the patient attempts to walk.

The common symptoms which flat-foot produces are pain and swelling of the feet. Besides these two chief symptoms there are several others which would scarcely be noticed unless attention was called to them.

The pain, as we have said, varies extremely, and apparently bears no relation whatever to the degree to which the condition has advanced. It depends to a large extent upon the nervous susceptibilities of the patient. In some cases, where the arch has given completely, pain may be entirely absent; in other cases a very slight degree of flatness may cause great suffering.

The pain is of various kinds; usually it is a dull aching in the front of the legs and knees. In children the pains of flat-foot are usually put down to "growing pains"—a term which embraces any form of pain due to any cause. In some cases pain in the great toe occurs, and it is often of a very severe character. The aching of flat-foot are always increased by standing and also by walking, especially if the ordinary boots are worn. Running or jumping does not cause pain.

In most cases of severe flat-foot swelling of the ankles is not uncommon. The chief interest in this symptom is that it is liable to be misinterpreted.

The other signs and symptoms of flat-foot are less obvious, but they are nevertheless extremely characteristic, and are usually very puzzling to the persons themselves. When the feet are flat, walking is ungainly, and the feet are stamped down upon the ground. Men with flat feet always get their trousers splashed with mud when the streets are dirty. Women may notice the same thing with their skirts. There are numerous other little details like this which occur from flat-foot.

In the treatment of any abnormal condition the first thing to do is to discover the cause and then to remove it. If you can remove the cause of any disease, the condition will usually cure itself or, at all events, remain stationary. Unfortunately in only very few conditions can we discover the cause, let alone remove it.

But of flat-foot we do know the cause, and we can remove it. In the milder grades, wearing boots with very rigid waists and flexible toes will prevent the condition from getting worse. Boots can be obtained in which the waist is strengthened with a steel plate, and in bad flat-foot these boots are certainly the best form of treatment.

There are supports made for flat-foot; these consist of pieces of wood or cork made to go into the boots and support the arch of the foot. Our experience of these supports is that they often do harm and rarely do good. If they fitted perfectly and were comfortable, they might do good, but, as far as our experience goes, they are always uncomfortable and simply add to the symptoms of the original trouble.

Exercise is most important in flat-foot. The arch of the foot is mainly supported by muscles, and exercise strengthens these

muscles and renders them far more competent to perform their most onerous duty.

Tip-toe exercise is the best of all. Dancing, jumping, walking on tip-toe, skipping, etc., are the forms of exercise for the flat-footed. An excellent form of exercise is to walk round a room on tip-toe ten or twenty times a day without boots or shoes on. In every case the exercises must be carried out in boots with rigid waists or without any kind of shoes, exercise in ordinary boots merely making the condition worse.

For the relief of the pain and for increasing the "tone" of the muscles, massage of the legs and feet is exceedingly useful. In flat-foot the rubbing may be pretty vigorous, but the general rules of massage must be attended to in all cases. The relief which follows massage is most striking. Anyone can massage the feet without special training.

Rest is very important. Flat feet require to be rested a great deal more than ordinary feet do. The rest must be in the reclining position, sitting down with the feet on the ground merely aggravating the flat foot.

When the pain of flat-foot is very severe or rebels against the ordinary treatment which we have just considered, the surgeon has to be called in. Various operations are done for the condition, but the results of all are disappointing in the extreme; and considering the severity of some of the operations which are occasionally done for the condition, it is extremely rarely that operation is advisable.

One method of treatment which is not unfrequently used, is to encase the feet in plaster of Paris splints for several months. This treatment has not met with any favour in our eyes, the plaster of Paris splints being inferior to well-made boots.

Still more common than flat-foot, corns are the very commonest of all troubles in connection with the feet. Scarcely anybody passes through her life without suffering from corns at one time or another. It is one of the first laws of pathology that intermittent pressure causes increase of growth, and so the pressure of boots, which is intermittent because the boots are only worn for a portion of the twenty-four hours, produces increase of growth, where it bears upon the foot.

Corns are overgrowth of the outer layers of the skin. They are usually horny in character, and produce great pain from transmitting the pressure of the boot to the sensitive skin beneath them. Ordinarily they produce no danger to life, but they may be the source of extreme discomfort and produce a great deal of crippling.

Occasionally a small bursa or blister develops under a corn, which for a time acts as a water-cushion and prevents the corn from hurting; but too often this bursa inflames and becomes an abscess, in which state it is not only exquisitely tender but constitutes a formidable danger to life.

The ordinary variety of corns is chiefly met with upon the toes, especially the little toe; but there is another variety—a large flat corn which usually occurs upon the sole, and is more tiresome and less easy to cure than the common kind.

Although corns of themselves do not shorten life, amateur attempts to remove them are very prone to produce fatal results. It is indeed an awful thing to contemplate that merely cutting a corn may end fatally. The public has never been sufficiently warned of this danger, and in most cases when any warning whatever has been given, it has been of a most chimerical and often perfectly untrustworthy kind. Most persons believe that the



danger of cutting corns lies in bleeding to death. It has been said, and it is perfectly true, that if you cut a corn too deeply, you cut through certain vessels which do not readily close, and so troublesome bleeding may result. But the bleeding from a corn is never severe, and it is almost inconceivable that it could ever end fatally.

There is no excuse whatever for anybody dying from external bleeding due to any cause and least of all from such an absolutely trivial proceeding as cutting a corn.

But the real danger in cutting a corn is twofold. The first only occurs among old persons. When the body gets old, the arteries degenerate, and the further away from the heart the poorer is the blood supply, so that the blood supply of the toes is the worst of all. When the arteries are old, very slight injuries are capable of causing clotting of the blood in them, and blocking of an artery in an old person may cause death of the part of the body which should be supplied with blood by that artery. In this way death or gangrene of the toes may result from cutting corns in old persons.

The other danger is the same as that which is ever present in wounds of the feet, namely, the entrance of micro-organisms into the wound. Many diseases, notably lockjaw, have developed from cutting corns. Of course, under aseptic precautions, this danger does not exist. And so it is distinctly inadvisable to cut corns. To scrape or rasp them away is certainly worse. The best treatment is to dissolve them, and this may be done by painting them with solvine.

Solvine consists of twenty grains of salicylic acid and seven grains of extract of Indian hemp dissolved in an ounce of collodion of three-quarter strength. It can be obtained from any chemist. It must be kept in a closely corked or stoppered bottle, else the ether will evaporate and the whole become solid. If it should become solid, it may be dissolved by a mixture of ether and alcohol.

Now how to use the paint. Soften the corn as much as you can by thoroughly soaking the foot in warm water, using plenty of soap and a scrubbing brush. Then, having dried the foot, place a little vaseline on the toe surrounding the corn. This protects the skin from the

action of the solvine, which is a caustic. It must not be put upon the corn itself, for the solvine will not act through vaseline. Now apply the solvine, painting the corn all over with a camel hair brush, using the paint pretty thickly. In a few minutes it will be dry. This proceeding may be repeated every evening or every morning and evening until the corn is dissolved or drops off. This treatment is sometimes tedious, occupying a fortnight or more, and it is occasionally somewhat painful, but if persevered in it never fails, and it is absolutely safe.

Many other caustics, etc., are used to cure corns, nitrate of silver (lunar caustic) being one of the most popular. Many of them are very efficacious, but none is so certain as the solvine, and none is so absolutely safe, though as a matter of fact the danger of most of them is very slight.

Most persons complain that although the solvine removes corns for a time, they return. This is true of every form of treatment; corns always do return, unless you remove their cause, which is tight boots.

[THE END.]

## CYNTHIA'S BROTHER.

By LESLIE KEITH, Author of "A Little Exile," "Lisbeth," "The Mischief-Maker," etc.

### CHAPTER XIX.



HE smiled upon him radiantly, her looks going eagerly beyond him and, finding nothing there to arrest them, coming back to his face with a shadow upon her own. "Frank?" she asked, and, with the pronouncement of the name, a sudden,

deadly realisation of calamity reached her brain. Somewhere within its recesses there beat a thought that she had known this moment would come, and that she had always prepared to meet it. After a silence that seemed to both illimitable, though it was only a moment of time, she went forward to meet him.

"Tell me," she said.

He forced his dry lips to utterance.

"He wants you," he said. "That's why I'm here to-day—of all days."

"He is ill?" she questioned, and across the dreariness of her young face he read a gleam of relief. It cut him to the heart to quench it.

"In trouble," he said heavily. "He's well enough in health. I promised I would tell you. So I had to come. How soon can you be ready, Cynthia?"

"In five minutes," she said, stemming the barriers of emotion. "Not now, not now, not now!" was her inward cry, "not while he wants me," as she flew upstairs and flung off her finery. There was no one in the upper part of the house, the servants being

engaged below. The dress she had worn at breakfast lay upon the bed; the sheet spread for the protection of her satin train had not been removed; hair-pins, ribbons, discarded gloves, scattered upon the toilet table, spoke as if across a century of pain, so remote, already, looked this morning's careless joys. Forcing her fingers to obey her, Cynthia changed her dress for a walking one, her white slippers for buttoned boots; and selecting such things as she might need, packed them in her travelling-bag. She did it all within the space she had allotted, and wondered to find herself so calm. So far, all her thought had been to reach Francie without a moment's loss, but when she had rejoined Colquhoun, and he had taken her bag, she remembered the explanation due to Mrs. Winstone.

"Go to her and tell her," she besought him. "No, wait! I will tell Marston to ask her to speak to you in the library—I'll wait for you in the cab."

Archie was detained longer than he expected. Though he said as little as he could, Mrs. Winstone was deeply shocked. "Is there no way of tiding over the disgrace?" she asked. "If money—"

He stopped her with a lifted hand.

"He has been advised to send in his resignation," he said; "that will spare them at home; I pray God it may spare Cynthia too! She shall never know if I can help it. I have telegraphed for Sir James, and expect him to-night. Colonel Bullock is an old acquaintance of his. But for that—"

But Mrs. Winstone would not let him go till he had promised that Cynthia should return to Belgrave Square that evening.

"I insist upon it," she said. "Her brother's illness—will explain her running off like this, but she *must* return to my care. If I hadn't this ridiculous

erection on my head I would go out and tell her so myself. Her brother's disgrace can be kept quiet; it must not touch her. Remember, I know best, Archie, and I expect you to obey me."

"Do you think," he said, "if I could have kept her away from him I'd have let her go?"

"Now!" said Cynthia, turning to him as the cab rattled off.

Her grey eyes were full of sorrow's self, but they commanded him.

"Cynthia dear"—he laid his hand firmly upon hers—"I want you to listen, and to ask to know no more than what I am going to tell you. You trust me, don't you?"

"Yes," she said faintly.

"If I can't explain everything," he said rather huskily, "it is because—you wouldn't understand, and because there are some things best left untold if—a fellow is to have another chance, as I pray God our Francie will. He has got into difficulties (if only men would not play cards for money!) and his Colonel—who has been awfully kind—has advised him to leave the Army. It is the right thing for him to do, Cynthia; bear that in mind, dear; but Frank loves his profession, and he's awfully cut up about it. He's here, in rooms, close by, so that you can see him every day, and I want you to cheer him up, and encourage him to think there's a long future before him in which to make good the past. God knows," he said simply, "there's many as fine a battle fought outside the Army as in it!"

When they reached the door of the lodgings Colquhoun had taken, Cynthia turned upon him a face that had recovered its courage, though it was deadly pale.

"Let me go to him alone," she pleaded.

He opened the door of the sitting-room silently, and as softly closed it