

HEALTH HINTS FOR WINTER MONTHS.

By GORDON STABLES, M.D., C.M., R.N. ("MEDICUS").



ONCE upon a time, girls, there lived, far away up among the bonnie Highland hills and shaggy forests above Beaully (Inverness-shire) a beautiful old lady and her husband Ian (pronounce Zean, please). They belonged to the clan Dannachie, being Robertsons of Struan. They were not considered extremely aged by their neighbours, for the wife was

barely ninety-seven, and her husband was only a hundred and one, and Scotch folks, you know, who dwell among the heather and inhale mountain ozone and the sweet balsamic breath of the pine-trees, who eat plain wholesome food and all that, can live as long as they please.

And so one day, when Ian did not return from the forest in time for his frugal one o'clock dinner, and the ghillies were sent in search of him and found him, snuff-box in hand, seated at the foot of a pine-tree dead, it was only considered an accident. It was winter, and the beautiful spruce-tree branches were all pointing downwards with the load of snow they bore; but as the roses never left the dear old man's cheeks, he was kept near to the fire rolled in blankets and rubbed with whisky for six long days and nights before hope was given up. Then came the wake and the funeral.

Well, this was my maternal great-grandfather, and his wife, certain in her simple soul that she had only to die in order to meet her Ian once again on a happier shore, lived for many years after this.

I think that the secret of long life in this good and virtuous old couple lay in their love and respect for fresh air and cleanliness, and their mantle—or rather Highland plaid—has fallen on me, their unworthy great-grandchild. Not that I expect to have a long life, but just in order that I might preach yet awhile the doctrines of health to my GIRL'S OWN PAPER readers, I might, you know.

Cleanliness, however, was a craze with the old lady whom I have mentioned. No one, for example, dared ever to eat with the same knives or forks or from plates, etc., appropriated to her use alone. She had an easy-chair in which nobody ever sat but herself, a Bible that she alone was allowed to use, and, still more strange, a well of her own, with lid and lock and key, the water from which no one else ever drank. But I don't want my girls to be faddists, although as regards hygiene it is better to err on the right side than the wrong. Moreover, I wish my girls to be always fresh and happy because healthful, and to live to ninety or thereabouts.

SOME HINTS CONCERNING FRESH AIR.

Oh, I have no doubt that I have harped upon this string before now, and may again, just to keep it fresh in the memory of our regular subscribers, and by way of teaching the regiment of new girls that annually join our ranks.

Fresh air constantly renewed is quite as necessary to a healthful existence as food itself, and those unfortunate girls who are confined to office-stools or shops where this never exists soon deteriorate. They do not develop well; they become weakly, anæmic, and suffer from loss of appetite, backache of a wearisome character, restless nights and irregularities of every sort. I am sorry to add that the minds of such girls are usually on a par with their bodies, and that scarcely even religion itself suffices to keep them altogether in the right path. I assure you that my heart bleeds when I think of all that these poor lassies have to suffer and endure.

But many of those mercantile offices would like to have the windows open if their elders or superiors would only permit it.

In Government offices it is just the same, only for the most part worse. Some of our post-offices, for instance, are never ventilated, and when you enter one early in the morning, the air is of such a foul and ghastly nature that I verily believe blue-bottle flies would drop dead if they came

under its influence. Instead of getting fresh air to breathe all day long, as they ought to, these poor hard-worked girl-clerks, shopkeepers, seamstresses, etc., only manage to get a puff of oxygen as they hurry to or from their meals. Is it any wonder that— But there, I'm not going to preach!

If, however, girls value beauty of complexion and skin generally, bright eyes and a happy disposition, they will endeavour to obtain at night that of which they are bereft all day, namely, fresh air. Let them sleep in it, and this is easily done, as I will presently show you.

The lungs are, so to speak, a pair of bellows which keep up the fires of life. In them the blood, which returns from every part of the body vitiated by carbon or soot, is purified and sent back to the heart, to be pumped out again by that marvellous organ to supply all the needs of nature. Pure blood is supplied to the most minute and uttermost regions of the body, and these make use of it and its oxygen to warm the body and make up for waste of tissue. The blood, darkened now by carbon, returns to the heart, and is sent thence to the lungs to meet fresh air and be once more purified. You cannot see the red or arterial blood circulating from the heart because it is so light in colour, but you cannot look at hand or arm without noticing the veins in which the black blood is rushing backwards to heart and lungs.

BEDROOM DANGERS.

We often hear of people being found dead in bed. A man or woman does not appear at the breakfast-table, but this gives rise to no concern.

"She was rather late up last night," someone may remark. "Let her rest."

But when the forenoon slips away and there are still no signs of the sleeper, someone more anxious than the others goes to her bedroom door and taps. No answer. Then alarm becomes general and the door is forced, to find that poor Miss or Mrs. Blank sleeps

"The sleep that knows not breaking,
Morn of toil nor night of waking,"

and so the mourners go about the streets.

It is usually about three or four in the morning that such an accident occurs. This is the truth, but I have never heard anyone wonder why. If you ask a medical man, he will tell you that at this hour the powers of life are at their lowest ebb. This may be correct, but in all such cases as I myself have investigated, I have found the bedroom almost hermetically sealed, and believe that had the window been open and the pure air been circling in the apartment, Miss Blank would not have died.

You see that in a close room nearly all the oxygen is exhausted by four o'clock in the morning, and carbonic acid gas has taken its place. There is barely enough pure air therefore to keep body and soul together, and so the weakly one runs a very great risk. I think that the sleep one gets in such a vitiated atmosphere is of no account and very unrefreshing. It is a poisoned sleep or lethargy, such as that which Greenland bears and other hibernating animals obtain, and which reduces them to living skeletons before they emerge in springtime; but these wild animals are possessed of a strength and a *vis naturæ* that is not granted to human beings.

There is another bedroom danger to which I must briefly allude. If one has eaten too freely before going to bed, or of that which may create fermentation, the stomach gets distended and presses against the heart, causing dreadful nightmares, which, combined with the want of fresh air, may end fatally. Concerning nightmares, I have heard it said that if the wild bull you are chased by overtakes you, or if you do in that terrible dream reach the bottom of the precipice over which you feel yourself falling, you never wake again. There is doubtless truth in this.

It must be obvious, then, to the youngest girl who reads this paper that we cannot have health if we exclude fresh air from the bedroom.

I want you to remember, too, that fires in rooms use the

oxygen up, and so do lamps and even candles, and that for this very reason you are better to sleep in total darkness.

The dangers of bedrooms are very much increased by putting woollen list around the edges of the door, of making use of that awful and deadly sand or sawdust sausage-looking business either at the foot of the door or on the windows.

The want of ventilation in the bedroom is very apt indeed to engender colds and to render the lungs themselves ready for the seeds of consumption to be sown therein. You must understand the physiology of this. It is not so much, then, on account of the extra heat of the bed-chamber as that the vitiated air renders the system weak; so a girl that has passed the night in such an apartment is in a fit condition to be attacked by any microbe that happens to be afloat.

THE BEDROOM'S VENTILATION.

First I must inform you that the larger the apartment is the better, because the greater is the space for oxygen.

Therefore the less furniture there is in a bedroom the better, and no curtains should be hung either around the windows or bed, nor should dresses be hung up therein. These all harbour dust, and in the dust live the microbes of almost any disease you can name. But if the room you occupy is small and low in ceiling, it is ever so much more unhealthy, and ventilation is imperative. Ventilation is very simple. For instance, one pane of glass may be taken out and a jalousied glass-work substituted, or the window may be lifted about six inches, and the lower sash allowed to rest upon a board that quite fills up the open space. The air, you see, thus gets in only between the two sashes, and blows right up towards the roof, thus mingling with the rising gases, and rendering them pure and innocuous. Or the upper sash may be lowered and the space filled up with a piece of framed perforated zinc.

But in summer keep the windows wide open all the time, not a wee bit, mind you, for that would mean a roaring draught, but widely, generously open. Your reward will be

a total disappearance of all languor on first getting up, the rose tints on lips and cheeks, brighter eyes, and that calm contented feeling which is never experienced by any but the strong.

SAVING UP FOR A HOLIDAY.

Begin now at once to put by small sums for this. If you don't think yourself too old to put money in the savings bank, do so by all means, and little by little your fresh air fund will mount up, and how very useful this will be when you do get your summer or autumn holiday time will prove. Try this scheme. Mind that pennies saved result in pounds gained.

NERVOUS AND WEAK.

I am really putting the cart before the horse, because it is the weakness which causes the nervousness, and the symptoms of this trouble are far too numerous even to name. This ailment is called neurasthenia by medical men, a word compounded of two Greek ones, meaning absence of strength in the nervous. It usually arises from want of proper food, fresh air, and pleasurable exercise. Cycling girls who spurt or scorch are subject to it, because they weaken or stretch their hearts. Over-work won't induce it, but work and worry will. Eating more than enough at meal-times is a very common cause of neurasthenia, owing to the strain on the internal system to get rid of the superabundance. A girl who is fond of the table is always more or less in a state of fever, especially if she uses much meat, flour puddings, and sugar.

In cases of this kind the ignorant fly to physic, and dose themselves with tonics which are most pernicious. The meals should be, breakfast at eight or earlier, having taken a large glass of hot water half an hour before it. Dinner at half-past twelve to one, a small cup of tea with milk and sugar, but nothing to eat, at five, and supper at eight. A light biscuit or two before going to bed, and a glass of milk will do good if hunger is felt, or any gnawing sensation at the pit of the stomach. You may drink if thirsty between meals, but a mere mouthful of water with dinner is enough.

THE FIDELIO CLUB.

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CHOPIN, MAZURKA IN B FLAT MINOR, OP. 24, NO. 4.

The name Mazurka, or Mazurek, comes from Mazovia, one of the finest provinces of Poland.

In his Mazurkas and Polonaises Chopin was entirely Polish, and the keynote of all Polish music is melancholy. Even the gay Mazurka is not really gay; it has moments of despairing sadness. As Chopin has given it to us, it has moods as "variable as the shade, by the light quivering aspen made." The metronome mark which I give has therefore little value; it is only intended as a guide to the first steps. The vacillating movement of the first four bars is followed by a coquettishly graceful figure, gathering courage as it proceeds. After the first double bar, we have a teasing jesting phrase. A Polish poet, Brodzinski, says that the Mazurka is "the dance of lovers, whose passing sorrows are not without charm." So you can imagine that our Polish damsel is somewhat trying to the patience of her cavalier. At bar 17, after the double bar, he resumes his suit, becomes agitated, and a quarrel is imminent. There is another double bar—that means another phase of the situation. Our two lovers are very sorry for themselves, and they sit and sulk, *sotto voce*, through eight bars. After that the sun shines again, as it always should shine from bright young eyes, and the two dance away *con anima*. And so the little drama proceeds. The last page is exquisitely beautiful. Our tone poet goes off into dreamland, as he often does, the echoes of the music become fainter and fainter, and the last phrase is a sigh.



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Address.....

Age.—Under 12? Under 16? Over 16?

Pseudonym (if desired).....

Chief musical characteristic—

Mind? Emotion? Muscle?

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- "FIDELIA," Wandsworth (over 16) . . . Emotion.
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- "ANGLO-AMERICAN," Pimlico (over 16) . . . Muscle.
- "I. M. B.," co. Armagh (over 16) . . . Emotion.
- GERTRUDE CRAIG HOUSTON, Belfast (under 16) Mind.
- "CHERRY," Grantham (over 16) . . . Emotion.
- "SARDONIS," Southampton (18) . . . Emotion and Muscle.
- "AVRIL," Bute (over 16) . . . Emotion.
- "HOLLY," Holloway (over 16) . . . Emotion.
- "HONEYSUCKLE," Exmouth (14) . . . Mind.
- L. PHILLIPS, East Ham (Under 16) . . . Mind.