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EDITORIAL

Science, Superstitions and Customs

(Continued from page 28 of the Feb. 1940. issue of 'HEALTH'.)

LAST month, we dwelt, at some length, upon the evil eye and the scientific background thereof. The superstition regarding the evil eye was not confined to the Orient alone. Even the occidents dreaded the evil eye. For instance, the King's evil required the kingly touch and in England from the time of Edward the Confessor down to the days of Queen Anne, the royal prerogative was indulged. Patients were housed and fed by the ruler and bore around their necks a medal known as an "angel". We in South India are all familiar with the term "பாஜதிரும்படி", the King's (evil) eye. A man of wealth and affluence, if, suddenly, he should become a pauper, 'often the surfeit of his own behaviour' used to attribute his misery to "பாஜதிரும்படி", especially when it so happened that he had some influence in the King's Court or held some appointment

under the King. A diabetic boil which is generally a disease of the wealthy and those fed with rich foods, having no active habits was given the superior nomenclature, "பாஜகட்டி" and the superstition that it is the effect of the King's evil eye is still believed in. Many diseases were attributed to the evil eye in the West in olden days and like the protective amulet, there were protective substances to ward off those diseases. A person used to carry in his pocket a potato as a cure for rheumatism; a spider used to be hung around one's neck in a nut-shell for the cure of malaria. As Science advanced, electric belts came to be thrust on the public, as the panacea for all ills and evils.

In India, diseases were and still are attributed to certain evil-minded goddesses. In our last issue, we have alluded to "Plague and Small-pox".

With regard to small-pox, some practices are being observed, which, though coming under the category of superstition, are still preventive measures and have a scientific bearing. A bunch of neem leaf adorns the front roof of a small-pox infected house. This is an indication to show that the house is infected and none should enter it. Neem is now scientifically known to be a deodorant and a disinfectant and the neem leaves kept by the side of a patient and kept in the roof in front of the house therefore, serve a double purpose, as a warning to the healthy and a deodorant and a disinfectant to the sick. The neem serves a different role at child-birth. It indicates the birth of a child and is intended to warn the sick and the unhealthy not to enter the house lest they should be the cause of spreading infection to the mother and the child. A crude and undesirable method to indicate the birth of a child is to tie a torn unserviceable shoe at the entrance of the room. This practice is perhaps prevalent among the lower strata of society but the neem leaf is generally in vogue among the higher classes. A confined woman is said to be polluted for 10 days and no one except those in attendance on her should enter her room. The idea is to prevent infection from outside. It is an admitted fact that a woman after delivery is easily liable to catch infection and it is to prevent such a contingency that this practice has been devised.

Now, to revert to superstitions about small-pox, if the patient is a married man, his wife is not permitted to see him or nurse him and his wife's parents and relations are prevented from entering the house. The former is intended to see that the patient does not become suddenly emotional which is likely to happen when he sees his wife thereby aggravating the disease and the latter certainly to prevent the infection from spreading.

It is more difficult to oust near relations, which the parents-in-law are, than friends and distant relations. Hence this special injunction on them. No chillies, mustard or such pungent things should be fried in the household. As the pungent odour, if inhaled is likely to cause inflammation, this is prohibited. No articles should be sold to or purchased from outsiders during the period of infection. This is another preventive measure. Thus we find that every superstition connected with this disease can be scientifically explained. So, there is no harm in sticking up to these superstitions.

Feeding the crows with freshly prepared food before partaking of it is an old superstition which is fast being discarded. We notice this practice even now in the Hindu temples. A morsel of food that has been prepared for the deity is scattered first to the crows before it is served to the devotees assembled there. Crows are susceptible to any poison even in small quantities and they soon succumb to it. This is a test for food-poisoning, though crude, and this is really a means of saving many deaths from that cause.

There are some common superstitions which we like to mention here. In the case of eye diseases if only one eye is affected and while treating for it, the other sound eye also should be similarly treated. The superstition about it is that the sound eye will get angry if it is not also treated. It is easy for infection to travel from one eye to the other and the treatment for the sound eye is certainly a prophylactic measure and therefore scientific.

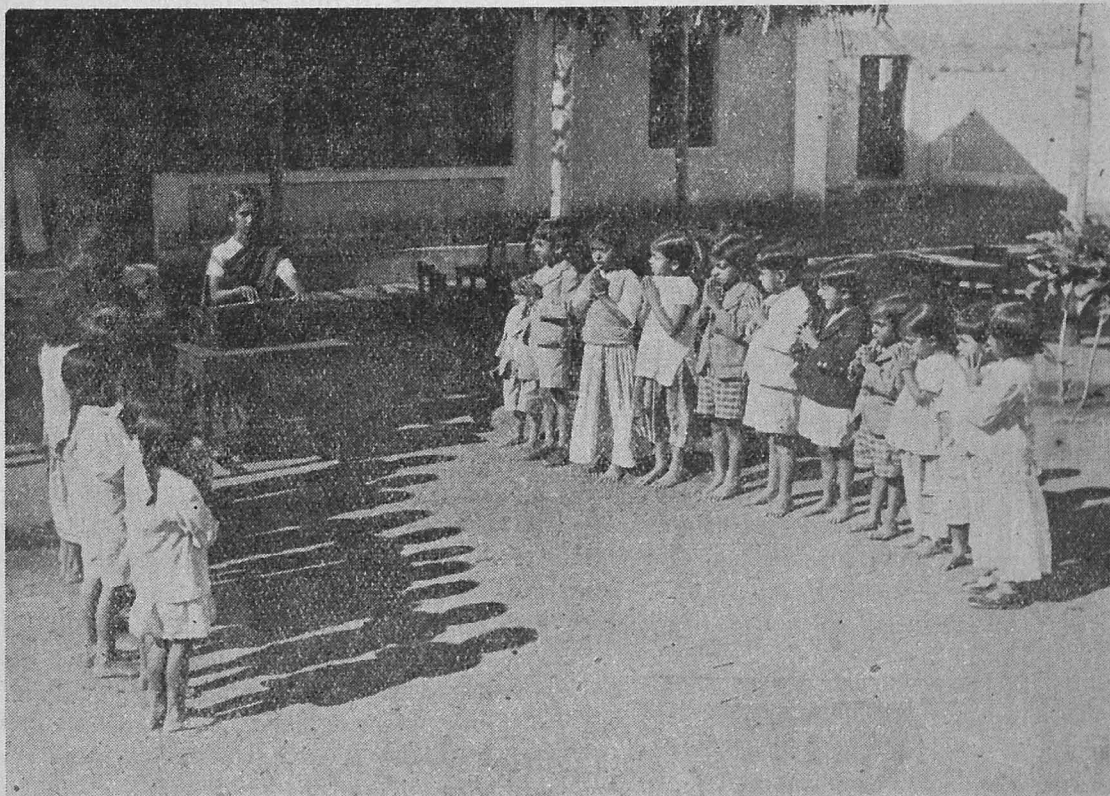
The Diksha (or growing of beard, mustache etc.), during the latter part of pregnancy of the wife or for one year after the death of one's parents is another Hindu superstition. Cohabitation during these periods is not desirable and therefore one makes

himself ugly and loathsome to the wife and at the same time makes a vow not to approach his wife, which it may be hard to break on pain of divine curse. Here the well-being of the infant to be born and the one unborn is aimed at and can, therefore, be scientifically upheld.

Let us lastly take some of the customs which were in vogue in good old

to prevent rickets. The comparative immunity of Indians to rickets may be attributed to this custom. This is in accord with the modern practice of sun-bathing.

3. **Observance of ten days' pollution after death.**—This a very wholesome hygienic custom. The sons and daughters-in-law of the deceased who have been in constant attendance



Prayer gives strength, solace and salvation to the body, mind and spirit of an individual.

In the above picture are seen pupils offering prayers set to music, before commencing their class work,

Hindu India and briefly discuss them here :—

1. **Women in confinement chewing betel leaf often.**— This is to replenish the calcium salt of which she has been depleted during the period of confinement and which is necessary for maintaining her body metabolism.

2. **Rubbing infants with oil and exposing them to sun's rays.**—This is

during their illness are liable to catch infection and they are, therefore, not allowed to mingle with others for a period of 10 days. This is a religiously imposed period of isolation and segregation.

4. **Taking sea-baths on eclipses and other festive days.**—We all know the tonic effects of sea-baths, and unless they are religiously enforced, there is no prospect of ignorant people taking sea-baths even once in their

life-time. We see it is being done now, under religious sanction on all these occasions.

5. **Offering morning, midday and evening prayers to the Sun.**—This is virtually daily sun-bath, which modern science has endorsed as conducive to health and longevity. Unfortunately, these daily prayers, 'sandyavandanams', as they are called, are seldom being done now-a-days.

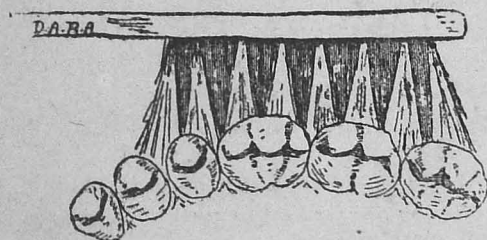
6. **Avoiding shaking hands.**—Shaking of hands as a form of greeting

was unknown to ancient Hindus. It is the cause of many infections spreading and therefore harmful. Our greetings or Namaskarams with both the hands are both graceful and sanitary. Modern science has condemned hand-shaking and still we persist in it, because Westerners adopt this form of greeting!

We think we have given enough instances to substantiate the scientific character of our ancient superstitions and customs and trust that our readers will follow them and profit by them.

Datan Versus Tooth Brush By An Old-Fashioned Doctor

THE heading of this article would appear to be a little too old-fashioned in this modern age. It need hardly be said that the tooth brush, as we commonly understand it, is a relatively recent introduction in this country as compared with the West where it may be said to have originated; whilst the "Datan" or "Miswak" or the country tooth brush as it may aptly be termed in contradistinction



Cleaning the teeth with a tooth brush.

to the manufactured bristled brush has been in use at any rate in this country since times immemorial. It would, therefore, be not out of place to briefly consider the points for and against these two types of brushes.

Before setting out the points of comparison and contrast, it is necessary to acquaint the reader with what is implied by the word "Datan". By "Datan" is meant the green twig of certain plants, of suitable length and

thickness, one end of which is chewed to produce the "brush" from the fibrous structure of the central or the woody portion of the twig, whilst the outer "skin" or the bark is gradually crushed and removed during the course of chewing, but which through its chemical constituents serves a useful purpose of inducing a copious flow of saliva which contributes to the detergent or cleaning action of "Datan". Different trees are used as sources of datan twigs in different parts of the country, but in the Punjab the twigs of the following trees are most commonly used:—

Serial No.	Vernacular name.	Botanical name.	Natural order.	Remarks.
1.	Kikar or Babul	Acacia arabica	Leguminosae	Generally found in the plains.
2.	Phulahi	Acacia modesta	do	do
3.	Neem	Azadirachta indica	Meliaceae	do
4.	Timber or Tirmir	Xanthoxylum alatum	Rutaceae	Restricted to the foot of Himalayas from Indus eastwards ascending to a height of 4000 ft.

It need hardly be added that these trees grow in the wild state, and are to be found all over the country; and their twigs can easily be obtained free of cost and with practically little labour in the countryside, whilst in the towns, especially in big ones and industrial centres, these can be had at a nominal price of one anna per month per individual. The very idea of the sale of twigs would excite ridicule in the villages where they are considered, and rightly so, the free gifts of Nature which has provided lavishly such amenities of life, at any rate in this country. There are other trees which are sometimes used as sources of Datan twigs, but these need hardly be mentioned here as the above noted ones are sufficient for the purpose of this note. It may, however, be added that a twig is generally used once and thrown away after use, and is thus free from aesthetic objections.

The modern tooth brush is too well known to need description. It is used over and over again till the bristles wear out and it is no longer fit for use. A tooth powder or paste is generally used on the brush which is washed or rinsed in water after use and put away till required again. Many prefer to wet the brush before use by dipping it in water, whilst others use it dry.

It is not perhaps generally realised that the human mouth is teeming with all sorts of germs some of which are pathogenic or disease-producing whilst others are innocuous. The ordinary tooth brush, in the way it is kept after use, is loaded with a charge of these germs all of which are not destroyed or removed by the dentifrice or the subsequent washing or rinsing to which it is subjected after use. The germs thus "planted" on the brush in the spaces between the roots of bristles go on breeding i.e., multiplying during the interval of rest so that their original number is increased

manifold before the brush is brought into use again. The dentifrices commonly used are hardly potent enough to kill the germs and, for argument's sake, even if they are they do not get an opportunity of penetrating into the "hidden" spaces between the roots of bristles where the germs find a safe nidus to lodge and multiply. Perhaps an orthodox dentist would retort by saying that the tooth brush should be suspended in an antiseptic solution after use, but I ask the reader how many of the innumerable users of the brush at the present day know of this salutary rule, much less follow it. The result is that a fresh charge of the germs is introduced into the mouth with each use of brush. Moreover the bristles, however fine, "streak" the surface of teeth and are at times liable to abrade the mucous covering of the gums and the minute abrasions thus produced on being infected with septic germs occasionally give rise to serious trouble. It will thus be seen that the "bristled" brush instead of contributing to the cleanliness of the mouth adds its quota of germs. The loosened bristles get detached from the brush and some of them are swallowed. Having sharp ends and being composed of a hard chitinous material insoluble in alimentary juices they tend to cause irritation of the alimentary tract giving rise to intestinal concretions or enteroliths and even appendicitis as is borne out by the fact that the bristles have been found in the lumen of Appendices removed surgically.

A word at this stage about the dentifrices generally used will not be out of place. Tooth powders and pastes commonly used have a basis of chalk and calcium phosphate in which is incorporated soap or other foam-producing material along with some antiseptic such as thymol, menthol, phenol, oil of gaultheria, boric acid etc. The pastes contain glycerine which

prevents evaporation of the water and helps to keep them in a pasty condition and reinforces the action of the antiseptic. Most of the dentifrices have an alkaline reaction, whilst a few are mildly acidic (Pepsodent, an American preparation is an example of the latter class). As regards the disinfectant or germ-killing power of the antiseptic contained in the various dentifrices it would suffice to say that for all practical purposes their value is hardly more than sentimental and their use tends to create a false sense of security, as the antiseptic drug is hardly present in a concentration sufficient to exert a positive germicidal action, and even if the germicidal power be adequate the stay of the dentifrice in the oral cavity is so brief and its penetration into various "hidden" spaces so doubtful that the germ-killing action is practically negligible.

The secretion of the mouth i.e. saliva is normally alkaline in reaction and its viscosity varies according to the preponderance of secretion from the two sets of glands one of which secretes thick viscid saliva, whilst the other produces watery secretion. The role of the latter in the detergent action of saliva is important. It may be noted that the introduction of an acid into the mouth produces abundant watery secretion which is alkaline in reaction. This character of the secretion is maintained for several hours afterwards if the contact of the acid with the tongue and lining of the mouth has at all been of some duration. The value of this fact in keeping the mouth "Sweet" and clean will be considered at a later stage. It, however, appears necessary to state that the introduction of alkali into the mouth has the opposite effect in as much as it excites a flow of thick viscid saliva which exerts little or no detergent action. It is, therefore, evident that if the dentifrice used has an alkaline

reaction, the resulting flow of scanty viscid saliva will not materially assist its detergent action, whilst the acid dentifrice in view of the nature and amount of secretion produced acts as a powerful cleaning agent.

Let us now consider the modus operandi of the action of "Datan". The bark of the twig contains tannic and other organic acids and bitter substances which in the course of chewing come in intimate contact with the tongue, gums, and mucous lining of the oral cavity and induce a copious flow of watery alkaline saliva which mechanically aids in the dislodgement and removal of particles of food from the mouth. The presence of acids in the bark is of importance in as much as their action in influencing the character of salivary secretion alluded to above continues for some time after the use of the "Datan." After the bark, the woody portion is chewed to form a fibrous brush which is then used to clean the teeth and gums. The tannin and other beneficial constituents of the bark and the central portion of the twig are incorporated in the "brush" which thus acts as an effective detergent of the oral cavity including the teeth, gums and tongue. After the brush has been used for some time, to obtain the required degree of cleaning effect, the twig is split lengthwise so as to provide a sharp scraping edge with which the upper surface of the tongue is "scraped" clean as far back as the fauces. The process of chewing provides exercise for muscles of mastication and indirectly tends to make gums and teeth firm. The fibrous tuft formed at the end of the twig serves as an excellent polishing agent for teeth thus materially assisting in the inhibition of deposits on them and keeping the mouth sweet.

We are now in a position to compare the use of the conventional tooth brush vis-a-vis the "Datan." The tooth

brush suffers from the disadvantage of its ability to harbour harmful germs which are introduced into the mouth with each fresh use. Its bristles are more apt to cause abrasion, not only of the gums and soft parts but of the teeth as well. The detached bristles are apt to be swallowed and give rise to gastro-intestinal complications alluded to above. The fibres of the twig too are likely to be swallowed but in view of their comparatively soft nature and harmless composition (cellulose), they do not give rise to any untoward effect. Secondly a dentifrice in the shape of powder, paste or lotion has to be used with the brush to produce a semblance of satisfaction after use. The dentifrice, if it is alkaline in reaction tends to make saliva scanty and viscid and thus minimise its normal cleaning effect. Lastly, the use of tooth brush in the usual manner tends to cause recession of gums and leaves the tongue unattended to with the result that its coat of "fur" rich in germs of all conceivable kinds, is left intact enabling it to liberate a charge of germs to be swallowed from time to

time and to impart a noxious odour to breath. The tooth brush and its accessory *i.e.* the dentifrice are much more costly than the "Datan" which can be had in villages for the trouble of breaking a twig from a tree and in towns for a trifling sum. It can be and is used as such without the addition of a dentifrice as its normal constituents especially those of the bark possess antiseptic and astringent properties and promote a flow of watery saliva which continues for some hours after use and thus helps to keep the mouth "Sweet". Its brush is a better cleanser and stimulant of teeth and gums and its cleaning action on the tongue (after it has been split) is especially valuable. It would therefore appear to be a pity that "Datan" is being rapidly ousted from its field of useful activity by its modern compeer, I mean, the bristled brush, much to the detriment of cleanliness of the mouth and teeth of the present-day population especially in urban areas. The interests of health and welfare of the community require that the use of "Datan" should not be abandoned but popularised.

ROUND - WORM

BY Dr. S. JOSEPH S. KHAN, L.C.P.S.,

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ROUND-WORM is found in all parts of the world, and in India no Province is free from round-worm disease. It is very common in the Central Provinces. From the investigations made in my laboratory last year, the highest incidence was found between 3 to 10 years of age. (85%). Out of 630 specimens of stools, 322 were found positive for ova of round-worm, a little over 50%.

Round-worm resembles the common earth-worm. It is brownish-yellow in

colour, with both ends cylindrical and pointed. It has a glistening surface when alive. The female worm is larger than the male, and they measure 8-15" and 4-8" respectively. The female lays enormous number of eggs, that have a thick wall, and are only visible under the microscope.

Eggs and worms are passed in the stools of the infected person. From the eggs develop embryos. The eggs are taken into the stomach with water and food. In the stomach the embryos develop, which work their way into the liver, and from there into the lungs through blood stream. In the lungs these embryos travel into the

alveoli, then into the bronchi, wind-pipe and gullet, and may be swallowed back into the stomach, and then into intestines, where they develop into

They also cause anæmia, because they live on the blood of the host.

Santonine is the best drug to get rid of round-worms. It is given generally before the child goes to bed at night. viz :

℞ Santonine } āā ... gr. 1
 Calomel }
 Soda bicarbonate ... gr. 11
 Mft. Pulv.

followed by Magnesium Sulphate one teaspoonful, for a child, or two teaspoonsful of Castor oil. For infants and adults the dose may be decreased or increased proportionately.

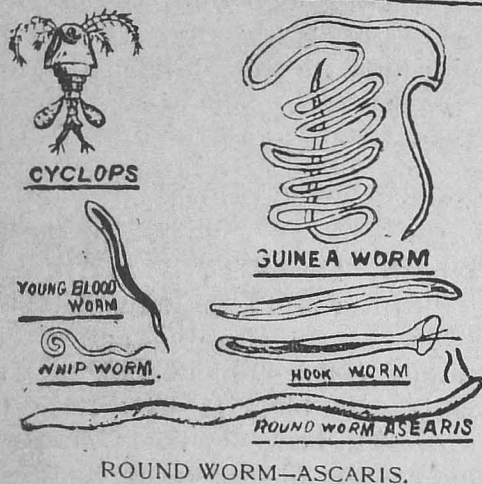
Oil of Chenopodium is another good drug, and m. i for each year of child's age is the usual dose. This is to be mixed in Castor oil, or in solution of Magnesium Sulphate. It is good to mix the drug in purgative than to give a separate dose, as it is hard to give separately in rural practice.

This treatment should be continued weekly till the stools are negative for round-worms.

The eggs are passed in the stools of infected person. Infection occurs through contaminated drinking water or food. The systems of water supply and sewage disposal in the villages and small towns is so inadequate that it is hard to eliminate this disease. Here again, sanitary education of the public plays an important part. Boiling of water is a wise prophylactic step. Clean habits and clean food play an important part in protecting one from this disease.

PARASITES

WORMS (BLOOD & INTESTINAL) PARASITES OF MAN.



ROUND WORM—ASCARIS.

adult worm. It takes about one month for these embryos to develop into adult worm.

A few parasites may cause no disturbance. In children they cause many irritative symptoms, restlessness, crying, irritability, pricking at the nose, grinding of teeth, and even twitchings or convulsions. In adults, colicky pains are common, possibly due to toxins, which the worms excrete.

The worms are migratory in their habits. They may be found in the common bile duct and cause obstructive jaundice. They may block up the intestines and cause intestinal obstruction. They may migrate into the appendix and cause appendicitis.

Unbidden Guests.

".....The life of the round-worm is fairly complex. The eggs are laid in great numbers, some say 200,000 a day. They are almost round and are decorated with little knobs and bumps that make them look like microscopic English Walnuts. Once outside the host, the eggs are extremely resistant to heat, cold and chemical agents. Inside the shell, the eggs develop into tiny worms or larvæ. After a larvæ has developed, he may lie asleep for months, waiting for some one to adopt him. When he is swallowed by a suitable host, the little fellow breaks out of his shell in the host's small intestine. This is his natural home where conditions are ideal. There is warmth, darkness, moisture and food.".....—Hygeia.

WALKING FOR HEALTH

BY S. K. GUPTA, B.D.Sc., B.O. (Pb.),

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WALKING is the simplest and the best form of exercise. If I had to choose one exercise and could take no other, walking would be my selection.

It is a slow, definite form of stimulation for all the functions of the body. It increases the digestion; the purifying organs are made more active.

Walking is the one form of exercise that is with us at all times throughout our entire lives. It begins with the toddler and although the automobile and other forms of transportation have caused walking to be considered tedious, and to a certain extent unfashionable, it is still the best exercise for the sedentary worker and the one form of activity that not only builds health generally, but insures more years of life and more life during these years.

Walking is the one exercise that will prolong the possession of the spirit of youth.

When he was in his seventies, Edward Payson Weston broke walking records made in his twenties. He was the youngest of men at sixty-five that I have ever seen. At that time he stated that he walked twenty miles a day just for exercise. Doubtless he considered it necessary also to keep in training for his favourite hobby.

Walking will keep you young. It forces out the dead cells to replace them for the new tissues, and supplies live cells. It takes the old age out of your bones and tissues, brightens the eyes, clarifies the complexion.

If some of our school boys and girls,

were to gradually acquire a habit of walking five or ten miles a day, they would have but little use for cosmetics.

Beauty is more than skin deep, and what we call sex appeal does not depend entirely upon symmetrical outlines or a clear complexion. It is much deeper.

The sun-brown complexions of the walkers at the end of the hike from plains to the hill stations indicated the possession of abundant vitality, and they well earned the vigor that was evidenced by radiant smiles and springy steps.

It is easy to understand why their high spirits caused them to break forth in joyous songs of health and happiness at frequent intervals. It is not at all an exaggeration to say that in walking we have found the fountain of youth.

Many people visit various resorts, spend thousands of rupees on hill trips, searching for health in vain which is within their easy reach.

Walking, the distance gradually increased each day, will accomplish the desired results far more satisfactorily than the complicated procedures which you find in many foreign spas. And it costs no more than the physical effort required.

More than one hundred walkers who finished the last Dansville hike were exultingly joyous in their enthusiasm, and when it was suggested that the next year the hike be continued for thirty days instead of two weeks, more than half agreed to join this longer hike.

THE HINDU WAY OF

EXAMINATION OF THE PULSE.—FOR EXAMINING A PATIENT

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(Concluded from the August 1939. issue of 'HEALTH'.)

should hold the pulse of the patient in the right hand below the root of the thumb. The physician, calm, firm and composed in mind, should touch the pulse with the fingers and know it in the right hand. Generally it is clear in the left hand of woman and right hand of man; this examination becomes clear without pressure (stiffness) of the hand with the fingers spread (not closely touching), in the arm slightly drooping (or loose, not stiff). In the left side of the hand, the elbow slightly loose (and bent to form an angle with arm) the fingers spread and steady, the pulse should be examined near the middle and behind the root of the thumb, in the morning. One should examine it three times, having taken it, leaving it. Feeling it in many ways and with intelligence, one should make clear the nature of the disease. Touching with three fingers one can decide gradually the nature of pulse caused by derangement of the three humours—as slow, moderate and rapid; due to wind, bile, phlegm, derangement of two humours or all the three or *sannipatha*; the pulse shows everything of a disease as curable or not. Snayu, nadi, hamsi, dhamani, dharani, dhara, tantuki, jivanagnana—are the names of the pulse. The pulse is not clearly felt (and diagnosed) of the one who has just bathed, who has just taken food, who has just bathed with oil, who is hungry, thirsty, sleeping; which is at the root of the thumb is dhamani, the witness of life,—by its movements, the wise know the health

or otherwise of the body. The physician should, with efforts, know in the left hand of woman the same according to the science, custom (or system — sampradaya-school — and one's own experience. Examination of this comes only by practice like that of gems. The *vata nadi* (pulse due to wind) is Brahma, the *pitha nadi* (due to bile) is Sankara, the *sleshma nadi* (due to phlegm) is Vishnu; the three gods are in the pulse. First is the pulse carrying wind, the middle one is bile and the last is due to variations in phlegm, so should the wise ever know. The wise say that the pulse in wind has the movement of a serpent (wavy), leech (deep below the skin and flesh and slow), etc., by bile it has that of a crow (jumpy), cutter, frog (hopping), lightning (sharp and oblique); the pulse with phlegm has that of a flamingo, the pea-cock, the turtle-dove, the pigeon or the cuckoo (that is coming in spasms—not steady and continuous). When the pulse shows movement of a serpent first, then that of a frog, then the wise say that it is due to wind and bile. The movement of a serpent and a swan shows the pulse to be due to wind and phlegm. That of a lion (steady and deep) and swan—the pulse is due to pitha and sleshma. Just as the wood-cutter cuts the wood sharply and forcibly, so the pulse in *sannipatha* is fast and forcible after being inaudible for some-time or beats fast. From *Vridhdharita*: When the pulse beats or beats thirty times in a unit of time from

its place, then the patient lives, not otherwise. That pulse which beats after intervals is to be known as destructive of life. Very, very slow, very loose or languid, very agitated (rapid), very stationary or beating very feebly, becomes clear on the shoulders and then touches the fingers; by these ways the patient is incurable of *sannipatha*. One should know his death if the pulse is as above. Find the movement of *pitha*, then that of wind, bearing *sleshma*, very unsteady, often shaking like a part on wheels, frightful, falling on the digits, very deep (inaudible), such a pulse is incurable, say the sages who are proficient in the pulse beats. That pulse of flesh (flowing deep below flesh) is majestic (steady and perfectly audible). The pulse overcome by fever is hot and fast. Pulse is fast in anger, passion, weak in anxiety or when overcome by fear. Pulse is feebler in dyspepsia and in wasting disease. Full of blood it is heavy and warm, in flesh it is heavy, feeble in impaired digestion and also fast. It is lightning-like in the hungry; in the satisfied (after taking food), it is steady. Of the *damaruka*, it is death in a day. Shakes too much, vibrates much, touches the fingers of the holder, such a pulse is incurable, one should know this and leave it at a distance. When pulse is steady or stationary his life is for a day (or he dies within a day), or if it appears like lightning (oblique and fast), his death is certain. Quick or cool pulse due to indigestion shows death on the second day, so should the wise know. When in the mouth (first or beginning) it is sharp, sometimes cool, sweat comes smeary, the patient does not live for a week. When there is coolness in body, breathing in mouth, pulse sharp and burning (hot), he lives for half - a - month, so

tells the pulse. When there is no beat of pulse in the mouth, coolness in the middle, sweat outside, when pulse is feeble, he does not live for 3 nights. Under very feeble, very fast, cool pulse the physician should know the patient is nearing his end. If falling like lightning (oblique), seen and not seen, the patient goes to his death as if struck by lightning. If slightly warm, like serpentine gait, fast, (middle) neck full of phlegm, his surviving is very difficult. When not perceptible as if covered with cloth in breathing, (the pulse becomes so when the patient is breathing), cool, it gives death in a *yama* (*ghati*, about two hours). When pulse is visible in foot, not seen in hand, face bright, the doctor should abandon him at a distance (death is certain). When the three—wind, bile and phlegm—are balanced, the expert physician says it is difficult to cure or incurable. The pulse is crooked, lightning-like and cool to the touch in fever due to wind. Quick, straight and long in fever due to cold and *pitha*—slow, very steady, cool and slimy in phlegm. If crooked, slightly lightning-like in the hand, it is due to wind and bile. If slightly seen when touched, and slow, it is in *sleshma* and *vatha*. If subtle, cool and steady, the pulse is due to *pitha* and *sleshma*. Whose pulse is like the swan's motion, (as also like the elephant's measured steps and so beats), face clear, his health is ever assured. If one after having touched the hand of the patient, washes his own hand, all his illness vanishes just as dirt is removed by washing. Much of the above is akin to modern science. Where there is a difference or where something new or unknown to modern medicine is given, it should be tested by the Indian doctors and the truth or otherwise of the statements proved.

Some Social Aspects of Tuberculosis

IT is an undeniable fact that out of the total deaths annually, one-fourth is caused by this 'White

Plague'. It is in recognition of the heavy toll that Tuberculosis takes annually that Her Excellency's Tuberculosis Fund was started and subscribed for on All-India basis. Provincially also schemes are afoot in the form of Tuberculosis Sanatoria, clinics, dispensaries etc., to stem the growing tide of this fell disease. It is all good in its own way. Side by side with this there are certain social aspects of the problem which must be taken into consideration and measures adopted by the public at large and social service agencies if we desire to achieve some tangible and lasting results.

Food.—The one great factor which counts in building the body resistance against any disease and much more against this slow insidious enemy of humanity is good, balanced food. It is, so to say, making the soil invulnerable and impregnable to the seed of tuberculosis. Such body-building foods like milk, butter, ghee, eggs, fresh green vegetables, fruits, whole-wheat bread, etc. must be supplied to enable the body to carry on its life processes and store up vigour and vitality to resist the onslaught of any disease germs. This is all the more necessary at the growing period of life in childhood and school age. It is in childhood, in large majority of cases, that germs of tuberculosis get a footing in the system. They only flare up at later stages of life whenever the vitality of the body is lowered through lack of proper nourishment or through diseases like pneumonia, typhoid etc.

By
Dr. Parmanand Ahuja, M.B., B.S.,
Karachi.

In a poor country like ours, it is again a mooted question whether the general mass of the people can

afford to have enough quantity of food to keep the body and soul together, leave alone the quality of the stuff to build up resistance. This economic aspect of the problem cannot be lost sight of. The research in the nutritional value of the various foods, that is now being done extensively, will solve the difficulty to some extent by bringing within the knowledge of the people the nutritional value of some simple and cheap food materials within the purchasing power of the poor and the middle classes. The Local Bodies and social services and affluent classes can also share responsibility in the matter by starting milk depots etc., to supply the indigent children, in primary schools at least, with milk etc. That in large number of cases it is the ignorance of the food value of the various simple eatables that is responsible for this malnutrition is borne out by the fact that even the well-to-do section of the society are not free from the inroads of this deadly disease though their children and adults waste away a good bit of money in purchasing things whose nutritional value is next to nothing.

Some Social Customs.—Purdah is the most pernicious social system which makes its victims vulnerable to tuberculous germs by shutting out light and air. Certain sections of the Mohammedan community who observe it strictly and rigidly show greater incidence of the disease and are the fertile source of its propagation in the family members and the community. The sooner this obsolete custom is

done away with, the better for the community and the country. Lack of fresh air and light combined with poor nutrition bring in a chronic state of poor health, with anæmia (bloodlessness) pale sallow complexion, loss of appetite etc. which, in course of time, provide suitable soil for the seed of tuberculosis to implant itself and grow.

Early marriage and premature motherhood are other social customs

Evil social usages, habits of drinking and gambling, expensive social customs like dowry etc., which mean a great strain on the meagre family budget with curtailment of essential family amenities like good food, milk etc., lead to chronic state of malnutrition which is a short cut to tuberculosis.

Housing Conditions.—In towns and cities where large masses of the people are crowded together violating all laws of space accommodation,



Indian women must discard their purdah, come out in the open, and breathe pure air, bask in sun-light and do brisk exercise daily to avoid Tuberculosis.

Here are seen some female members of the Maharashtra Mandal, Poona, who swam in a flooded river recently. They must serve as an example and a source of emulation and inspiration to their purdah-sisters.

which are responsible for high morbidity and mortality from tuberculosis. To marry girls and boys at tender age before they are fully developed and expose them to the stress and strain, physical mental and material, of parenthood, are sure invitations to ubiquitous tuberculous germs which they eagerly take advantage of. Rapidly recurring pregnancies tax and exhaust the constitution of the mother beyond repair and make her predisposed to the disease.

ventilation, air, light etc., tuberculosis finds a congenial soil to flourish. The slums of the cities serve as centres for the spread of the disease. Families of 4 or 5 live in these dark, dingy hovels in narrow lanes or alleys where sun-light and fresh air are absolute strangers, with one door for entrance and exit. In these one-room-tenements which serve as kitchens, sleeping and sitting rooms in one etc., the younger generation of the nation grows up. The sanitary arrangements are of the

most primitive type, at times none at all. No wonder under the circumstances that a disease like tuberculosis finds easy victims by the hundreds in these squalors.

It is again a matter for consideration how far these deplorable conditions can be improved and better housing accommodation provided for the labouring and middle classes under the present economic order. But much can still be done by clearing up the slums of cities and awakening the sanitary conscience of the people so that they can keep themselves and their surroundings cleaner and neater. Frequent clean-up campaigns by health visitors, posters and handbills etc., can enlighten the general masses in the simple laws of hygiene and personal and public sanitation. Again realising that one of the effective means to check the spread of the disease is to isolate and segregate the potential

and actual cases of tuberculosis in the family, emphasis should be laid on this aspect by health propaganda committees. Under the present conditions of our living, isolation is not practicable to an extent that one would desire it to be, but efforts should be made to segregate such cases as far as possible or minimise contact with them by the rest of the family members in person and with articles as far as practicable, discarding all false sense of love, service etc., in the larger interests of the family and community.

Conclusion.—The problem is vast and intricate. But an earnest beginning must be made and a helpful and intelligent spirit of co-operation between the public, the Local Bodies, schools, the State and social services must come into being to wage a successful fight on all fronts against this protean disease.

IMPORTANCE OF NATURAL FOOD

1

The man that feeds on nuts and grains,
Crisp herbs and roots, sweet fruits and water,
Knows little of disease and pains
And of the many ills that bother.

2

His body well, his brain is clear,
His soul is full of every goodness.
He lives a life that knows no fear,
Of Nature's rough revenge and rudeness.

3

His passions are in harmony
With spirit, soul and better senses,
In consequence, Morality
Accuses him of no offences.

4

Tobacco, Coffee, Meat and Beer,
And Salt and Pepper, Wine and Whisky.
Are words that harshly greet his ear,
He knows their use is low and risky.

—R. R. SUKLA, I/c., *Municipal Hospital, Ajmer.*

THE VALUE OF HEALTH

“**H**EALTH is wealth”—so goes the golden adage. The value of health cannot be belittled. It cannot be bought for money even by a millionaire.

Health is the greatest of all assets in human life. Without it life is nothing but a drudgery devoid of all pleasures and high ambition. It is the key note of success. It promotes long life and leads the human beings to happiness, pure and simple.

But how can this health be earned? “Nothing is impossible to a willing mind” in this wide universe. The two things which are of vital importance in this connection are *care* and *sacrifice*. If proper care of our health is taken and sacrifice is made of everything for the sake of health, its attainment will be within our easy reach. There are many people who curse themselves for their poor health. But, as a matter of fact, they themselves are solely to blame for it. They are not inclined to take every possible care of their health and sacrifice every thing for health.

If a certain organ of the human body is diseased, the whole system suffers a great deal. So, all the organs must perform their legitimate, natural and individual functions without any let or hindrance. They also must work in harmony.

To make the life glorious, health is essential. To attain prosperity, health

BY

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is an unavoidable necessity. To break the monotony of life, health is in great requirement.

Health is of two kinds—physical



and mental. There is a close relationship between the two. “Mens sana in corpore sano” which means a sound mind in a sound body. A man may be a possessor of vim, vigour and radiant health, but if his mind be deranged or ill-developed, every sound person will despise him and he

will be nothing but a cumbrous burden to the society. Mind thus exerts a great influence upon health.

Truly speaking, health and longevity greatly depend upon the development and soundness of mind. Good health is the heart's desire of every individual. But if this desire is put into practice by living in accordance with the laws of mother Nature, its attainment is not a difficult task. Besides this, regularity in all matters, diet, sleep, thoughts and deeds and freedom from excesses are to be observed scrupulously for the upkeep of our health.

The following is Abraham Lincoln's Code of Health—

“Do not worry, eat three meals a day, say your prayers, be courteous to your creditors, keep your digestion good, steer clear of biliousness, exercise, go slow and easy. May be there are other things that your special care requires to make you happy, but, my friends, these I reckon will give you a good lift.”

Dr. J. T. Huston, M.D.'s five rules of health are as follows :

1. Eat sufficient, but not too much, wholesome food, taking care to masticate it thoroughly.

2. Breathe pure air by night and by day.

3. Keep the body warm and clean within and without.

4- Take at the proper time and in sufficient amount exercise, recreation, rest and sleep.

5. Be master of your will and think pure, true thoughts.

“To get the best out of life; we must have good health. One thing which no millionaire can buy is health. But the habit of health is largely a matter of the habit of our daily lives. If we have inherited healthy bodies, their maintenance in health depends on how we use them or abuse them. Remember that *over-use* is a serious form of abuse.

“Good health demands: Proper food and drink; all the fresh air and sunlight possible; sufficient exercise; suitable clothing; and sound sleep. Given all these, most ordinary diseases would disappear, and we would attain the dignity of A. I.

“Health is no mystery. Know the working of your body machine and study its needs as you would that of any other machine you are working on. The reward—health and happiness—makes it truly worth while.”—Sir Arbuthnot Lane, Bart., C.B.

Unclean Handling of Food.

Attention should be drawn to the dangerous manner in which certain articles of food, notably confectionery and sweets, are sometimes handed by the retailer to the purchaser. We refer to the habit, common to many, of moistening the forefinger and thumb with the tongue before picking up the paper bag, preparatory to its being blown open with a forced expiration of droplet-laden breath. This process completed, the food stuff is then transferred to its contaminated container by the sputum-infected hand of the vendor. In the majority of cases, foodstuffs are prepared under satisfactory and hygienic conditions, safeguards which, in many instances, are nullified by subsequent dirty handling. The purchaser, by refusing to accept articles so handled, would do much to discourage this disgusting practice.

—Arogyamargam.

THE EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL

BY Sri M. ARUNACHELLAM,

1. It impoverishes the blood, and renders it unfit for its natural functions of nourishing and vitalising the body; hence, paleness, anæmia, blotches, and ill-nutrition in those addicted to liquor.

2. It prevents the elimination of waste products from the body, and also tends to mal-assimilation of certain articles of food; hence the unhealthy bloating of drinkers.

3. It retards and prevents digestion so long as it remains in the stomach, by interfering with the proper secretion and function of gastric juice, the feeling of warmth created in stomach deceiving the drinkers as to the real action of alcohol.

4. It removes the body heat by liberating it from the heat centres inside the body and bringing it to the surface from where it is lost to the outer air, though a man feels warm while he is losing heat like this.

5. It is not a food in any sense, and is capable of creating heat and energy in our system. As it is no food in itself, and will not even allow other food to be properly digested and assimilated, it does not in any way add to the strength or nutrition of our body. The hardest tasks are performed, and great endurances of strength are undergone, in every case without the aid of alcohol.

6. Statistics have clearly proved that the life of a drinker is only about three-quarters of that of an abstainer in duration; and Insurance Companies adopt this as their principle of business.

7. As alcohol reduces the vitality

and resisting power of the body, it becomes an easy prey to diseases. What is slight in an abstainer is serious or fatal in a drinker in many cases. In many instances alcohol itself causes diverse serious diseases.

8. Moderation in the use of liquor is a great snare to which there is no limit. The same quantity, which causes a certain amount of pleasant stimulation now will not be quite enough to produce the same result a year hence. So comes the gradual growth in drink. Besides, owing to some constitutional peculiarity some cannot restrict themselves to moderation. All the drunkards that now exist were once moderation men, when they began.

9. The adulterations and sophistications of liquor have become so common, widespread and universal, as to become almost a legitimate part of the trade itself. Any change required in the matter of colour, age, piquancy or flavour in alcoholic drinks, is easily brought about by chemical means.

The only return for this enormous outlay is poverty, disease, crime, insanity, misery and wretchedness. The consideration of this evil alone should induce anyone with self-respect and love for his fellow-creatures to have nothing to do with alcohol, which has done, and is doing such an awful amount of mischief.

As a medicine it might be useful in the hands of physicians, but as a beverage it is harmful, unnecessary and dangerous, even in quantities considered "moderate". The natural and safe path is Total Abstinence.

HEAD TETANUS

BY Dr. L. R. FERNANDEZ, *Trichinopoly.*

toxæmia or poisonous condition of the blood. Only people who have received

THE following case of Head Tetanus, I am sure, will be read with interest by the readers of "Health". Towards the middle of last month, I was called to see a patient who was writhing with agonizing pain from severe muscular spasms. He had a stiff neck and lock-jaw. There was much difficulty in swallowing anything. I was told that he was given up as hopeless by a number of Ayurvedic and Unani physicians who treated him without diagnosing it properly for nearly ten days. When I examined him, he could neither lie down nor sit up as any movement gave him intense pain. He was in a semi-recumbent position propped up by four of his relatives and friends. The muscles of his neck and abdomen were as stiff as a board. Moreover, he had paralysis of the muscles of the face and a wound on the back of his head which had apparently healed up. As I suspected some pus within, I opened up the wound, let out the pent-up pus and dressed it daily, while giving in the mornings an injection of Anti-tetanus serum, and in the evenings Mag-Sulph 25% solution intravenously. On the third day of my treatment, he was quite all right and able to walk about. What I wish to impress here upon the lay people is the necessity of early anti-tetanus treatment in all cases of injuries. The laymen are very likely to neglect wounds of the head and legs. As the germs causing Tetanus are often found in the dirt of streets, garden soil manured by horse dung and stables, every wound ought to be treated with the utmost care, and many a life can be saved by taking preventive anti-tetanus injections as early as possible.

What is Tetanus? How is it caused? Well, Tetanus is a local infective disease due to a germ called Tetanus, associated with considerable

some injuries are susceptible to this virulent infection. Within a few days after the injury, the patient complains of stiffness of the jaw and back of the neck. The spasm of the jaw-muscles is called Lock-jaw. A similar toxic spasm spreads to all the other muscles of the trunk. The back is very rigid and sometimes arched. These spasms cause very severe pain. The slightest touch may provoke spasms. In severe cases the spasms become more frequent leading to death from involvement of the muscles of respiration. In untreated cases the mortality is as high as 90 per cent.

It is always useful to remember that Tetanus is caused by a wound, however trivial or innocent looking, into which the Tetanus germ has entered.* Just like the grown-ups, the new-born children also are liable to get Tetanus, when their navel is not dressed up in an aseptic manner. In some of the delivery cases attended to by barber women and unhygienic grand old women in towns and villages, I have come across Tetanus of the new-born and the mother. During delivery in certain insanitary houses, sometimes small lacerations or tears occur in the genital passages of the mother. Through these trivial injuries also the awe-inspiring Tetanus germ enters the body and plays greater havoc than our lay people dream of. More than once I have come across women who suffered from Tetanus as a result of self-induced abortion in the third month of pregnancy.

Let the readers bear in mind that the Tetanus Bacilli are capable of remaining latent in a wound for months and years, and cause Tetanus when the wound is opened again. So it is a life-saving principle to take a preventive dose of anti-tetanus serum whenever one receives any injury, however trivial it may appear to be.

The Mouth—Pleasure Organ of the Infant

By Docent Josef Friedjung, Haifa.

WE all know the important role the mouth plays in the life of the newly born and the infant. Feeding is set in motion with its aid. Nurses have known from time memorial that the restlessness of infants, so frequently found to be extremely annoying, can be controlled by way of the mouth. The first gratification of pleasure in its own body the infant obtains from its mouth in the form of sucking its fingers; the mouth is the infant's most important organ for grasping, to which for a time it continues to give everything that it has grasped with its hand. That the mouth in kissing and smoking can later afford great pleasure even, as we know, in the service of perversions, must at least have made Freud's conception of the mouth as erotogenic zone in the newly born already a subject for discussion amongst physicians. But prejudices, "autistic thinking" (Bleuler) still frequently hamper them in carrying out their hygienic tasks, and we thus see avoidable difficulties in feeding develop, passionate sucking of the fingers, at times continued until the child is of school age, perhaps followed by real anomalies in the position of the teeth; indeed, it appears that even convergent strabismus can develop in children, whose ascendancy does not indicate that this misfortune is inherited. For this reason this subject is offered a serious analysis.

Sucking is a means of gratifying pleasure with the mouth, in conformity with the newly born and suckling *i.e.*, it is physiological. Not infrequently newly born children immediately begin sucking their fingers, *i.e.*, a few minutes after delivery; this occurs in such a matter-of-fact

way and with such dexterity that the observer is almost forced to assume that the act had already been practised in the mother's belly. The sucking function of the mouth is, it is true, successfully placed at the service of feeding.

But normal feeding, rightfully rationed, planned with great intervals does not quite meet the child's instinctive need to suck. In seeking a suitable object the child remains faithfully to the thumb or fingers once chosen; indeed—once the habit is formed it rejects all substitutes. I have already mentioned some results of this habit as a warning, but they do not exhaust this under-estimated Pandora's box. After the child learns to creep, these fingers are not always so clean as not to prepare the way for oral infections. The older the child gets, the more difficult it is for him to break this instinctive indulgence, and this is followed by an unbroken chain of conflicts with parents and teachers, of unavoidable mockery, humiliations. The path is thus frequently paved for the development of neuroses. This finger sucking, however, is used the more frequently as a means of turning away from the world with its conflicts, its enui, and a very troublesome vicious circle thus develops. Failure in studies, changes upto pseudo-debility are not uncommon. I have seen children of this type who have erroneously been considered as mentally retarded even by experienced paediatricians. In view of such possibilities it is necessary for us to interfere prophylactically, to give the newly born a rubber nipple that can be boiled and which should actually be boiled daily. If it is kept clean, preferably dry under a glass,

and used by no one else, not even by a grand mother, who sometimes moistens the nipple with her own mouth beforehand, it serves as an extremely effective, absolutely harmless soothing remedy for the infant. And a second advantage: I can gradually and relatively painlessly break the habit in the second year, the time I consider suitable for this. All roughness or brutality must, of course, be avoided. How difficult, on the other hand, is the task with the "Thumb-sucker"! In line with this discussion I am a strong supporter for replacing the breast by a bottle after weaning. All modern suggestions for feeding a suckling with a spoon or cup are made

in ignorance of the instinctive physiology of children of this age. Why do we call the child suckling and not drinking? Language conceals much wisdom. Let us abide by the good custom of the so-called Soxhlet bottle unbiassed by thoughtless catch words. I wish to stress the fact that feeding with a cup or spoon cannot avoid immense harm e.g., cooling, contamination of the food by dust, factors which are not insignificant particularly in cases of nutritive disturbances!. Not everything that is new is good, not everything old is bad. Here too, we must be guided by careful observation and scientific thinking.—*Ars Medici.*

● Topics from Medical and Health Periodicals ●

Popularity of Health Lectures

REFERRING to activities in Leicestershire during the national health campaign last year, Dr. J. A. Fairer, M.O.H., records that many lectures and talks were given by members of his staff at infant welfare centres and at meetings of various organisations. "There is no doubt," he writes, "that at the present day the general public takes a very great interest in health, and educational work of this kind is now much easier to carry out and of greater value than it was a few years ago. There was a time when a lecture on health would have been regarded as, inevitably, a very boring business, but nowadays such lectures are eagerly sought after. The manner in which mothers at welfare centres listen to talks from the medical and nursing staff—straining their ears to hear what is being said amid the appalling din created by their lusty offspring—is praiseworthy, and very encouraging. Some day, perhaps, children at school will receive a proper ground-work of

health knowledge as part of the normal curriculum; but in the meantime the best we can do is to instil such ideas as we can into the—fortunately receptive—ears of our young mothers." Dr. Fairer believes that in the present state of things the greatest factor in education of the public is the health visitor.—*The Medical Officer.*

Health and Agriculture

'DUST thou art to dust returnest' is a scientific as well as a philosophic truth and the secret of a sound agricultural policy lies in an acceptance of that truth. Man is literally created out of the earth, since it is the earth that supplies, through the agency of plants, the materials of which he is made and it is only by returning to the earth the waste products of man's activities that the wheel of life, which is also the wheel of health is allowed to turn full circle and fulfil its function.—*Ernest Cooper in 'Health for All.'*

Health and Cleanliness

It is regrettable that greater progress has not been achieved in the standard of cleanliness since the introduction of school medical inspection. It is possible that better housing and cleaner surroundings may effect that uplift of the negligent parent that will in time bring him into line with the more enlightened of his class, but education in health and cleanliness moves forward only slowly. Fortunately in but a small proportion of the community is there no forward movement at all. These few are those who cost the local authority so much in their difficult task of education of the unwilling in matters of cleanliness.

—*Arogya Margam.*

Pan and Cancer

ANOTHER useful investigation was that conducted into the incidence of cancer in India during the past four years. An examination of hospital statistics, particularly of the larger hospitals attached to teaching medical institutions, where a comparatively high stage of diagnostic skill may be expected brought out interesting facts.

The age of maximum incidence of cancer in India is at least ten years lower than in Western countries and in Japan. In every province, the incidence of cancer of the cervix is heaviest amongst Hindu women. Cancer of the mouth is more common among males than among females and among Mahommadens than among Hindus.

This type of cancer has its smallest incidence in the Punjab, where the habit of chewing *pan* is not prevalent to the same extent as in other parts of India. From the Punjab, cancer of the mouth increases eastwards towards Bengal and southwards towards Madras, and the practice of *pan* chewing also appears to show a corresponding increase.—*The Indian Hospital.*

A Simple Treatment of Wounds

FOR thirty years I have used the same method of treatment for all wounds, from a pin-prick to a compound fracture. The method, which is simple, practical, and efficient, is one of continuous drainage. Its advantages include the prevention of complications, a better functional result than can be obtained by other methods, freedom from inflammation and pain and a minimum of scar tissue. Not only does it prevent sepsis in a clean wound but it overcomes sepsis already established.

The technique consists in the application of wet boric lint to the surface of the wound. The boric lint must contain equal parts by weight of boric acid and lint. Immediately before being applied, it must be saturated with cold water and not wrung out. The entire area of the wound is covered with this wet lint, on top of which is placed oiled silk (best quality), which must in turn entirely cover the lint to seal it off hermetically and keep it from becoming dry. The dressing is kept in place with a bandage or towel. If the correct technique is carried out, the lint will still be wet on the removal of the dressing, even if left unchanged for as long as a week.

This treatment has proved satisfactory in such various conditions as compound comminuted fracture of the skull accompanied by laceration of the brain, wound of the hand due to a pickaxe driven right through it, severing of all tendons on the back of the forearm by a punctured knife-wound, gunshot wound of the hand, wound of the hand due to explosion of a dynamite cap, severe laceration of the hand with severing of tendons by a machine, compound comminuted fractures of the leg and arm, and suppurating wounds and whitlows.—*By Philip Weatherbe, M.D. Edin F.A.C.S. in the Lancet, 23-12-39 P. 1317.*

Why is an Indian's life-span curtailed?

DISEASE in India is on a tremendous scale. Though there is no reason to believe that the potential of life of the races of India is any less than that of Western Europeans, the average length of the Indians is but half that of the Europeans. Although the curtailment is largely due to famine, and ill nutrition, it is still more due to disease, chiefly epidemic disease which we know is capable of human control.—*Medical Officer*.

Tea Drinking

THE increased consumption of tea has given rise to a problem which requires careful consideration. Tea drinking has rapidly spread over the country and has replaced milk as a normal accompaniment of meals. With many people tea drinking has become a chronic habit. If indulged in excess, tea produces over-excitement and palpitation of heart. Tea also affects the stomach giving rise to loss of appetite and indigestion and finally leading to dyspepsia and other sequences. Tea is contraindicated in children; in adults, excess of tea hastened old age by disturbing metabolism."—*Medical Bulletin*.

Causes of ill-nourishment

NUTRITION is more than a question of adequacy of diet. The bad influence of worry, insufficient sleep, lack of cleanliness, illnesses and general disobedience of the laws of health must all be taken into account. The introduction of milk meals to schools is a step in the right direction. Milk is rightly regarded as a valuable article of diet and even a medicine in the case of weakly children and invalids, but it must not be thought that the mere addition of a small quantity of milk to the diet of school children will produce a miracle.—Dr. H.J. Milligan, M.O.H., Reading.—“*Better Health*”.

Ice Cream

THE Victorian physicians, imbued with the metaphysics of their times which looked upon everything which gave pleasure as necessarily evil, condemned ice cream unequivocally without troubling about grounds for their proscription to satisfy physiology. But man—whether from perversity, or from disinclination to forego what he likes without a reason which appeals to his limited intelligence, it is not for us to say—not only refused to deny himself the pleasure of eating ices but developed the habit of doing so with such increasing avidity that to-day ice cream must be treated as a standard article of diet. As such it interests physiologists for its nutritive value, the physical effect of its coldness, and the effect on digestion of the custom of consuming it outside the routine of meal-times. To us, as hygienists, it is of still greater interest, for few foods are more liable to dangerous contamination and in consequence many outbreaks of disease have been traced to it. Until the present century, ice cream was made, stored, and sold, in conditions which almost ensured its gross contamination, and we had no powers to enforce safeguards which would rob it of danger. Partly owing to the growth of knowledge of food infections, of which belatedly the law took some cognizance, and partly to the development and organisation of the trade, which became of increasing commercial importance, ice cream to-day is generally hygienically sound, and its distribution is regulated in a manner with which we are generally satisfied. But though most of the ice cream sold to-day is manufactured and distributed by large firms fully equipped to turn out a satisfactory product, and careful of their interests in seeing that it reaches the consumer in a state of purity, there is still a considerable number of small traders who collectively

are responsible for much of the ice cream sold to the public, especially to the poorer classes. An important point in connection with this "also ran" ice cream is that its consumers are generally persons of poor nutrition and most likely to consume it when they are hot, partly dehydrated by sweating and with empty bellies—circumstances which materially increase the chances of disease developing should the ice cream be infected with organisms capable of producing it. So the exercise of such control as we are by law permitted, or can by persuasion obtain, over the small vendors of ice cream, is an important detail in sanitary administration.

Details of the control of ice cream are not abundant in the annual reports of medical officers of health, nor so full as they used to be, but, exceptionally, in his report for 1938, Dr. H. C. Maurice Williams (Southampton) gives a full chapter to the manufacture of ice cream, which being quite up to date, is worth the attention of his colleagues. He tells us that "every sample taken of the large firms' products was found to conform easily to the old Grade A milk standard." We take this to mean that both in chemical composition and in bacterial content these samples would satisfy all reasonable requirements of value and purity. The small traders' samples were by no means satisfactory either in value—their fat content varied from 0.22 per cent. to 0.57 per cent.—or in bacterial purity. The majority showed *bacterium coli* in 1/000 C.C. and many showed total counts of over a million. A considerable proportion of the small manufacturers were Italians who used the "hot mix", traditional with them but abandoned by the larger firms, which is particularly liable to contamination by dust and flies during the process of cooking. In the past, much ice cream was made and stored in

foul conditions on foul premises, but we gather from Dr. Williams that the troubles at present are more often due to cramped premises, poor equipment and language difficulties in making the traders understand what is required of them. We read of one manufacturer of foreign extraction who had spent number of years in Scotland to whom the imparting of instruction in bacterial cleanliness was a matter of great linguistic difficulty. Several of the samples taken of ice cream made from hot mix by small traders in cramped and difficult circumstances were perfectly satisfactory and the general impression left by the report of Dr. Williams is that with proper sanitary supervision, these small traders can turn out products which are fully reliable.—*The Medical Officer*.

Hysterical Deformities

THE orthopædic section of the Cumberland school medical service records, as an unusual feature, a number of children suffering from hysterical deformities, brought for treatment during 1938. One child was suffering from a severe limp, another from extreme flexion of the knee, and another from severe pain in the back; there were other minor cases.

Local treatment in the shape of massage, plasters, and exercises respectively was employed in these cases, and in each there was complete recovery from the hysterical condition. Several adults also suffered from hysterical symptoms. The orthopædic after-care sister (Miss F. D. Nelson) suggests that these conditions may have been brought about to a large extent by the lack of sunshine during the past twelve months and by the depressing winter. Most of these cases came in at the latter end of the year.—*Mother and Child*.

Health Tit-Bits

On Sleep

Sleep is a reconciling —
A rest that peace begets ;
Doth not the sun rise smiling,
When fair the even he sets ?

—John Doland.

Some Ancient Sayings on “Physical Fitness”

HIPPOCRATES, in 400 B. C. said :—

“The man who eats cannot stay healthy if he does not also perform physical exercises”.

PLATO, 400 B. C. :—

“Only if exercises are wisely and carefully applied will they give to men bodily well-being, Gymnastics have to be simple”.

ARISTOTLE, 340 B. C. :—

“Until adult age we should apply only easier exercises, and should not order a specially rigid diet or specially strenuous exercises, otherwise growth will be hindered. Proof of the damage done by premature strenuous exercise is that only two or three boy victors in the Olympic Games have gained victories when they became grown up.”

And, from the Arab Proverbs :—

“He who has health has hope, and he who has hope has everything”.

“For life is not to live but to be well”.

“In health there is liberty. Health is the first of all the liberties”.

—*The General Practitioner*, (Oct. 15, 1939).

Treatment of Smallpox

It is reported that smallpox has been treated so successfully with sulfanilamide that there was no disfigurement of the skin.—*O. W.*

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Sanitary Surroundings

IN an exceedingly pithy verse in the famous Kural by the didactic Tamil Poet, *Tiruvalluvar*, he speaks in appreciation of the land in which a city was built as one “whose peaceful annals know not fierce famine nor wasting disease nor ravages of the enemy.” The ancients very well recognised the principles of sanitary surroundings and never failed to investigate not merely the suitability of the soils and waters for purposes of human habitation but they likewise took care about the protective possibilities of the locality against the attacks of enemies and robbers.—*Indian Architecture*.

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Small Cause for Complaint

A MAN went to his doctor, who told him he had diabetes.

“I can't have it,” he protested. “I'm only 41 years old.”

“Age has nothing to do with it,” persisted the doctor. “You have diabetes.”

Stunned by the news, the patient went home on a street car, muttering hysterically to himself :

“To think ! I got diabetes at 41... diabetes at 41...”

He kept saying this over and over until a fellow passenger protested.

“What are you kicking about ?” he demanded. “I got Amalgamated Railway at 68 !”—*Let's Go*.