

HEALTH

ESTD. 1923

Edited by: Dr. U. RAMA RAU and U. KRISHNA RAU, M.B., B.S.



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FIRST THINGS FIRST

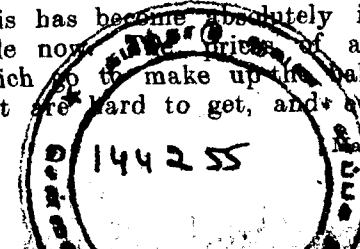
INDIA is passing through a critical period in her history. The acceptance of the "Quit India" resolution by the British Government and the fixing of a date for the complete transference of power into Indian hands have to a very great extent allayed the suspicions of the public on the bonafides of the British Government. But many other internal problems, such as the position of the Muslim Leaguers in the Interim Government, the authority to whom power is to be transferred in intransigent provinces, have been left vague, giving room to conjectures to suit every body's predilections. In our own Province a crisis has arisen in the ministerial ranks and the meeting of the Congress Legislative party had been convened for the last day of February to consider the no-confidence motion against the Premier, brought forward by a large section of the party. At a time when the minds of those entrusted with the task of administration should be concentrated on measures to be adopted for the amelioration of the condition of the people and framing the budget for the coming year to carry out these measures, it is a great pity that a state of things should have been created whereby such a motion had become necessary. Whoever is in power, first things must be considered first. As pioneers in the field of public health, having concentrated all our energies in this behalf for nearly three decades and more, we are most anxious that a

stable Ministry should be established and that it should concentrate on the improvement of public health. We have in many of our previous editorials laid down some of the lines on which this problem should be tackled. It will be no exaggeration to say that the public are ignorant of even the rudimentary principles of health, thanks to the apathy displayed by an alien government which was interested more in maintaining its power in the land than in ameliorating the condition of the people. There has, of course, been a change in the administration, but the Ministers either in the Centre or in the Provinces do not yet seem to have got out of the old rut, that things are going on as ever before in spite of loud protestations to the contrary and the heroic announcements of policies. The supply of inadequate quantity of foodstuffs to the people, on the ground that sufficient quantities of these stuffs are not available, has only worsened the situation. In Madras, the ration of staple foodstuff has been raised to 12 oz. per head in some districts, and we are assured of similar increase in the other districts early. This increase in the ration may be sufficient to keep the body and soul together, but it is not sufficient to provide for health. What is wanted is a balanced diet. This has become absolutely impossible now. The price of articles which go to make up the balanced diet are hard to get, and even i

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they are available, they are beyond the capacity of the average citizen. The removal of control on tinned food-stuffs, like Horlick's, etc., has given rise to blackmarket activities on a colossal scale. How many can afford to pay more than hundred per cent increase in the prices that has been made by merchants as a result of the removal of control? Why should not the price control be continued? Pure milk is difficult to get, and substitutes of milk are beyond the reach of people. The net result is many children have to go without their usual food, and they are to be the future citizens of the land. What their condition will be when they are brought up in this state can well be imagined than described. We have quoted only one instance. We can quote many more. It therefore behoves the Government to see to it that the arti-

cles of food which go to make a balanced diet must be made available to the public at a price within their reach; the need for the adoption of a balanced diet must be impressed in the minds of the people; the public, young and old, must be taught the art of healthful living. These are the first things and they should be attended to first. They will be productive of better results than the adumbration of heroic schemes to satisfy one's own fads or to please anybody. We therefore appeal to the Ministers to turn their attention to the most important and urgent things first rather than propound high-sounding policies leading to serious controversies or interfere unnecessarily into spheres not their own in an autocratic and undemocratic way and create disunion and strife when unity is essential.

LEPROSY IN INDIA

THERE are only very few diseases which present a problem both to the doctors and to the lay public concerning proper control and eradication for security of the public health. The one such variety of disease which is one among the rich and many among the poor is leprosy. It is considered to be a social menace as the diseased appears very dreadful and odious for a long time. But it is wrong and highly inhuman on the part of a civilised nation to treat the diseased and depressed in a way to be shunned by the society without giving them a lead to calm life. All the same painful life, indeed, will sometimes reveal thousand truths to the world so as to be followed by millions at a time.

Leprosy is traced as far back as 1400 B.C. in India, and throughout the world it has its own root and prevalence. Its prevalence in Europe has come to a standstill owing to improved methods of prevention and control. The heaviest incidences at present are in Africa, India, South China and parts of South America. In India the areas of high incidence are in the East and South. The Central and Western India and the Himalayan areas show a moderate incidence. The heavily infected areas are West Bengal, South Bihar, Orissa and Madras. In some villages and places 2 to 4% of the people are infected. Calculations could not be strictly accurate by any means. Sometimes 7 to 8% of the population are noted in some areas. It is presumed the probable number of cases in India are at least one million on a rough calculation.

V. D. RAJAN, L.M.P.,
Rajan Eye Clinic, Negapatam.

Of course the disease as it manifests itself is very peculiar in its origin, source and in its mode of infection, and the healing process or the cure is very deceptive both for doctors and the lay public. It lies latent in the infected body for years together in one's life, and suddenly springs forth with the height of symptoms, if it is not properly controlled by medicinal measures. The arrest of the disease is very probable for many in all certainty if they resort to proper treatment from the early stage. As the remains of the manifested symptoms and other deformities of an arrested case are dreadful and obnoxious to the on-lookers, they seek much advertised remedies for their supposed cure, thereby involving waste of money, and finally come to grief in addition to the already existing depressed state. Excepting to the theoretical dogma that the invading lepra-germs are the cause for an attack of leprosy into the body, there is no reasonable cause to think why a certain people of healthy state in a wealthy condition succumb to this infection and gradually or suddenly deteriorate in health with all the serious manifestations.

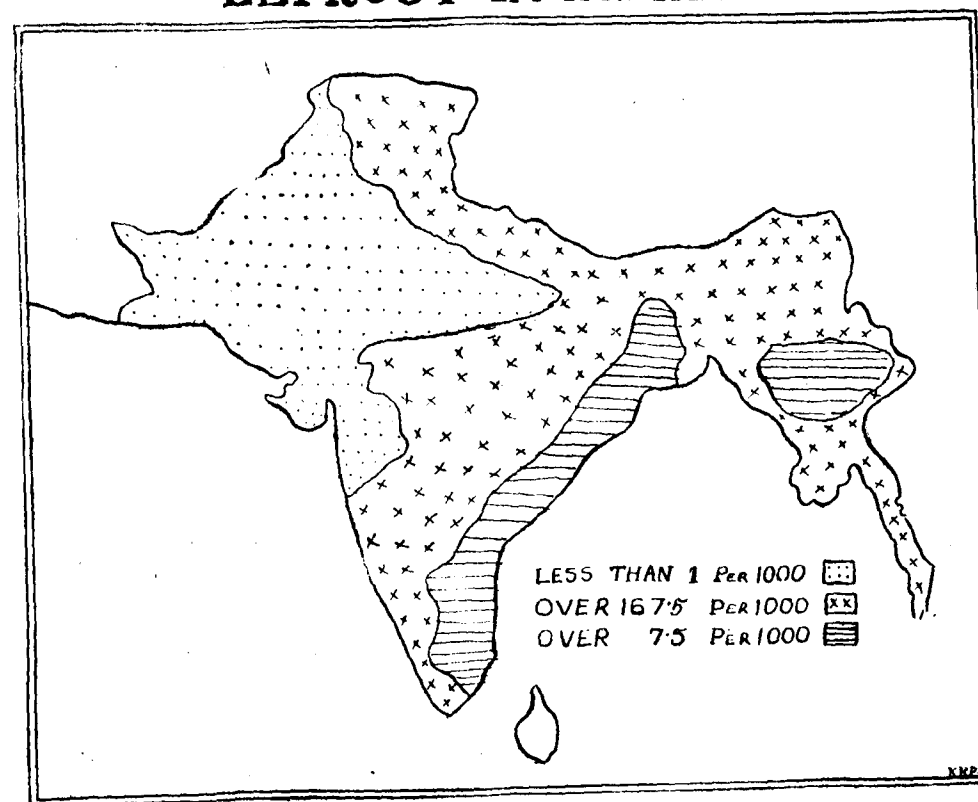
It is a loathsome, detestable disease to many and all unanimously look with contempt, and begin to treat those patients with the same outlook. It is considered to be highly contagious by look itself by the ignorant mass, and

thus, out of fear they either want to vanish from their sight or drive out those from their sight. So their lives become very very dejected and careworn, and finally come to close up their scenes by themselves in terrible mental depression. There are interesting facts and stories on this illness in every part of the world (The reader may refer to September 1942 issue of "Health"). The ignorant mass of people mistake leprosy for other skin diseases and begin to treat one and all affected with skin diseases as cursed lepers of the society and subject them to their ill treatment and chagrin. This is how a leper or a diseased is scorned at by all, condemned by the society out of sheer ignorance, and

tion. Among the rich, all these social ill-treatments and public scandals are masked from others as per the facilities afforded by the wealthy state, but with these the mode of infection is a source of great danger especially to the children of the family. They are allowed to move freely, and to take part in amenities. Marriage worry and family care must be far away from their folds. In these days of modern civilisation their lives prove extremely burdensome and careworn among the average class of people, many of whom are not really infective and dangerous to the society as others think.

Infection by lepra-germs is the cause of this disease and it is sure to spread from the

LEPROSY IN INDIA.



taken up by the different sects of people and religious lore, as traditional outcasts of their community. Certain religion also views them as religious criminals and try to exterminate them from society and churches. Thanks to the advanced efforts of the modern workers on scientific basis without any religious bias on the cause of depressed souls, some improvement has been effected.

In the course of one's long chronic continuity of the disease on the one hand and the bitter ill-treatment of the society on the other, the diseased is driven to utter hopelessness and miserable position in life so as to curse himself and find fault with his fate and crea-

infected to the healthy children and adults who are predisposed by run down health, and low vitality. Children are more susceptible to this infection than adults. Children separated from their infected parents will never get this as we observe today. All lepers are not infections at all times and all people are not infected to the same intensity as others at all times. This is a point to be noted by the public. There is a period with height of symptoms known as infective period in the course of one's disease, to infect others. For instance conjugal infection is comparatively rare. The common chances of infection are close contact for a long time as in moving

within houses, rooms, and in bed. Long contact is the cause when favoured by low resistance power in body to combat diseases. The common predisposing causes are syphilis, malaria, worm infection, ulcers of the body dysenteries and chronic diarrhoeas. It is common among backward class of people with unclean habits and manners. Malnutrition and poverty-stricken condition are mostly predisposed. Personal acquisition of moral injustice and the subsequent loss of mental and physical energy, extreme care, fear, worry and animosity are the indirect causes for the loss of the power of resistance to infection, and are the predisposing causes especially in the aged and those advanced in life. Ignorance, carelessness and circumstances in family and in domestic circles are other inevitable factors for an easy prey to the infection. Usually the disease is very very slow in its origin and development and is equally very slow in its recovery also. This fact is taken advantage of by quacks to promise a short time cure on contract basis.

As we see, therefore, the society is the cause for the spread of the disease every year. The doctors' part in treating the disease is very limited and the method of control and arrest of spread is more a mission of the public body in its own interest and in the interest of the general safety. In Europe it has been controlled satisfactorily in all civilised cities out of the interest evinced by the public body and the government.

In India much can be done if an attempt be made in simple ways of isolating the poor lepers to a separate locality in each and every town and village. Out of million in India alone 10 to 20% will be in a position to infect others, and spread the disease now and then. People are generally uneducated to understand anything in the light of modern views, and are very timid and frightful for any attempt towards public causes. But it is far beyond the immediate scope of creating a sense of modern hygienic principles in the minds of all people by means of education at present. The people are highly religious in one way or the other according to their blind faith. If it be viewed that the erection of isolated houses and rest houses for lepers is one of the duties, which go to please the Gods of their respective faith, a tendency to bequeath the property for such rest houses will become a mania for religious fanatics. It must be made as essential as a public tank or a well in a village or a town in promoting the healthy living for both the infected and the healthy. We see generally all the charitable rest houses and other pilgrims' and tourists' rest houses surrounding the shrines and temples always become the abode of wandering lepers of beggar class, causing a pinching sensation to other residents of the place. This scene is very common and these places are always occupied by most virulent types of infecting leprosy. They are the chief cause for infecting ever so many backward and poor class of people who frequent those places during their period of

pilgrimage tour. We can see daily ever so many wandering lepers as beggars from place to place visiting temples and places of sacredness as their routine work in their life time. I think one third of leper menace in India can be saved if these wandering beggars are made to live in these respective abodes attached with the funds of the respective temples and devasthanam committees. The temple committee boards can make it as one of the essential functions along with other religious sacramental duties.

We cannot expect much from the Government though national health building plans especially in the matter of prevention of leprosy are made. The peoples' co-operation rather the co-operation of infected people is much more necessary than the governing laws of the country. The people generally would not stick to rules and regulations concerning compulsory segregation. They will flee from the sight of health surveyors and conceal themselves in villages. Moreover, the Government rules the state by finance, and the plans and schemes are to be constructed on the basis of the financial position of the country. This means the planning committee appointed has to waste a large amount of revenue on various systems and methods with the result of a poor turn over of the much achieved plans and schemes.

It is very easy and more practical if a real start is made by the philanthropic public, to erect a few model sheds in isolated parts of towns and villages so as to give them shelter and protection. There are also many well-to-do class of lepers who can themselves accommodate in their own erected houses, at least for those periods in which they are highly infective to others. The voluntary segregations among intelligent and educated class of the infected will influence the whole outlook creating better conditions as to prevention and control. The place of segregation would be so glamorous and full of natural beauties as to attract all the depressed rich and poor and to create a healthy atmosphere. Especially by virtue of private and public encouragement in money as also in kind, separate self-sufficient centres could be started wherein the more educated and sensible patients can easily take up the entire task of looking after their own managements besides being of an immensely practical and effective remedy in alleviating the distress of the down-trodden sufferers. This step paves a refund way of checking the onspread of the complaints to others after whom the lepers have no go but to linger for want of their mere subsistence, being themselves unable to look after their own primary comforts.

I have to say the blessed are those who realise their own position and come forward to work for their own cause in limiting the spread of the disease and keep every one under control and under arrest of symptoms in the land. Noble are they! Great benefactors of the Land!! Heroes born for compassion.

Preventable Blindness

Dr. M. A. KAMATH

THE number of the blind in the whole of India according to the Census of 1941 is about 600,000, but probably the figure is under-estimated. The main causes of blindness are.

(1) In children—Keratomalacia, optic neuritis, congenital syphilis and hereditary blinding diseases.

(2) In adults—Cataract, various optic nerve lesions mainly syphilitic, ulcer of the cornea, glaucoma and trachoma.

(3) In children and adults—Irritant remedies and small-pox.

Blindness in children is much more common in India than in any civilised and progressive country of the west. The Madras Census Report with all its inaccuracies and defects shows a general figure of 150 for every 100,000 of population, whereas in England and Wales there have been only 119 blind per 100,000 population. Statistics of England and Wales as to "age" incidence shows that about 20% became blind within the first year of birth. Such an incidence in India must, for several reasons, be much higher.

The cause of such enormous percentage of blindness in India seems to be—first and foremost—ignorance and want of education among the masses. People are unable to recognise the seriousness of eye complaints, being ignorant of their consequences, so that medical advice is not sought until too late even when available easily and without cost, as in the large Cities of India. In the remote villages, however, the poor sufferers depend entirely upon the indigenous quack, who being himself ignorant of the nature of disease can be considered responsible for a large number of cases of blindness; moreover, his methods are rough and primitive and his medicaments crude and highly irritating to the eyes, covering perhaps a case of simple sore-eyes (which may heal in a few days, without special care) into a serious corneal ulceration with subsequent destruction of the eye. Elliot in his Tropical Ophthalmology gives pictures of eye-patients being treated by Indian quacks with applications prepared on a dirty spade of the field or a broken piece of mudware. Whatever may be the curative properties of the remedies employed by these quacks, the preparations are grossly dirty and irritant, and one can imagine what amount of harmful effect they can produce on an already inflamed eye.

Next to ignorance, there is the factor of poverty of the masses that has also to be taken into consideration in this connection. The dietary of the poorer classes, especially among growing children, thereby suffers, becomes wholly devoid of certain essential or "protective" substance like proteins, salts and vitamins, which we have seen are so important for healthy growth; so much so, their general vitality is very much lowered and disease readily sets in. According to

McCarrison, we have seen faulty nutrition is the great basic cause of the bulk of the ill-health in India.

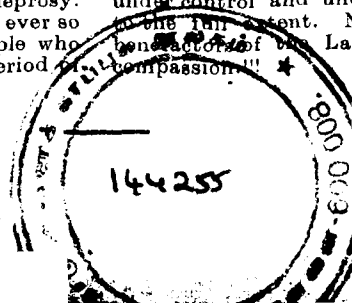
The so called "deficiency diseases" of the eye, we have seen, are:

1. Xerophthalmia or Xerosis due to deficiency of vitamin A in diet. It is possible also that deficiency in diet in other directions, such as proteins and calcium and phosphorus salts may act as an adjunct cause. In this condition, the reader is reminded, the conjunctiva of the eyeball becomes pigmented or even jaundiced, dry and lustreless, and appears covered with a material resembling dried foam. Associated with the condition there is usually night-blindness of a functional nature. We saw that the condition is thought to be due to deficiency of vitamin A for several reasons: It has been experimentally produced in animals by withholding completely vitamin A from their diets and proved to be curable by Cod Liver Oil, mammalian or birds' liver or red palm oil, all these being rich in vitamin A. Aykroyd (now of the Coonor Institute) made the following observations in 1929 in Newfoundland and Labrador: The diet of the series of cases of Xerosis with night-blindness was found to be obviously deficient in vitamin A; in some patients the disease developed in less than a month after the patient had passed from a diet rich in vitamin A to one which was totally devoid of it. The condition of the country, says Aykroyd, and the mode of life followed by people made it difficult or impossible to obtain proper food. All these cases, he says, were curable, especially the night-blindness, by one or two doses of Cod Liver oil. Two fishermen, he adds, had cured themselves by eating half a sea-gull's liver.

2. Another disease of the eye due to deficiency of vitamin A is Keratomalacia, where the cornea becomes softened and destroyed resulting in complete blindness. The condition occurs mostly in children after the first year of life, but may also be found in older children and rarely in adults over 20 years of age. The child usually suffers from marasmus and poor health from diarrhoea, enlarged liver and spleen. There is an accompanying condition of xerosis also, so much so, keratomalacia is considered by some to be an accentuated form of xerosis. The child is weak and apathetic and unable to close the eyes; gradually the cornea softens and peels off resulting in an irreparable condition of blindness. It is therefore important that active treatment should be resorted to at once as soon as the condition is recognised. Vitamin A in the form of Cod liver oil or the cheaper red palm-oil is highly useful. But in the stage of keratomalacia the digestion is so poor that the oil is not easily digested or absorbed from the accompanying condition of diarrhoea. In such cases, therefore, massaging with the oil (Cod liver oil or red palm

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oil), feeding the child on freshly drawn cow's milk or goat's milk and on fruit juice (oranges or tomatoes) raw potato juice or fresh spinach juice are helpful. These latter supply vitamin C in abundance, which however, corrects any tendency to scurvy, that may be associated with keratomalacia.

Now Keratomalacia is possibly the most serious cause of preventable blindness in the Madras Presidency, and in any case is more serious than Ophthalmia Neonatorum (Gonorrhoeal ophthalmia of the newborn). In Bengal and Bombay the same view is held by eminent ophthalmologists, but in the Punjab, which is peculiarly free from deficiency diseases not only of the eye but of the systemic diseases like rickets, beri-beri, scurvy etc., the incidence of Keratomalacia is negligible. On the other hand, in the United Provinces the position of this complaint is the same as in Madras or Bengal. One of the great differences, we said, between the Punjab and other provinces of India which influences the occurrence of Keratomalacia, is that the food in the Punjab gives a more complete diet, the inhabitants being largely wheat-eaters and not rice-eaters; moreover the Punjabis consume larger quantities of milk products and other "protective" foods, that is, foods containing enough of animal proteins, salts of Ca and P and vitamins. Hence it is that there is very little deficiency disease in the Punjab. Prof. Duggan of Bombay says that the large number of cases of Keratomalacia met with in that province are chiefly among the itinerant classes (pardashis) who live chiefly on chapati and dhal and use little of milk or milk products in their diet; that the disease is also prevalent among the children of working mothers in the industrial parts of the City of Bombay, the mothers while going for their daily work in the factories sometimes resort to drug the children with opium-pills (Bal-goli) to quiet them during the mothers' absence till they return home in the evening. Meanwhile the children would be starving also. The effect of starvation and drugging with harmful drugs, insufficiency of food and of proper quality—all combine to wreck the constitution and predispose to disease. Matters seem to have improved ever since the starting of "creches" by the Children's Welfare Association, where the children of the working classes do receive adequate attention regarding their food and cleanliness.

Now breastfed children are less susceptible to Keratomalacia provided the mothers are healthy and their milk is of good quality.

This disease is very common in some of the famine-stricken areas in the Madras Presidency like Bellary and other Ceded Districts.

(To be continued)

WORK, PLAY AND SLEEP in their relation to health

MARK M. SCHAPIRO

WORK is a necessary activity that should be considered play. If this were a general acceptance how much happier and healthier we would be. Unfortunately, many of us labor under the ancient belief that work is an irksome task that must be performed to provide food and shelter. It must be realized that work is essential to good health and that the welfare of the majority of the population is dependent on healthful work. Value of work should not be interpreted by dollar and cents return, but must be based on the health and happiness of the worker. "Wealth gained at the expense of health" has always proved a bitter joke. The victim proceeds through life spending his wealth in the pursuit of health. Few things are more necessary to a normal, healthy, well balanced life than useful work that inspires interest and enthusiasm. "Work is one of our greatest blessings, but too many miss the joy of it." Work, when done with a zest, is a wonderful tonic.

Work can be either mental or physical. Our present day tendency toward specialization, with its too strenuous application, may result in an early exhaustion of the reserve mental or physical energy. When one's duties are physical, definite time must be devoted to mental recreation; when the duties are mental, physical recreation should be sought. The

same rule may be applied to indoor occupations by devoting the resting hours in the fresh air outdoors.

The individual must keep himself physically and mentally fit by healthy living in order to reduce to a minimum the normal wear and tear on the human body. Industry is making the working environment more healthful and wholesome, sort of humanizing it, not only by better sanitation and the teaching of the employee how to maintain his bodily functions properly, but also by showing him how to obtain mental health and relaxation in order to live a complete life. Efforts have been made in industry to produce a healthy spirit among workers in monotonous tasks by various devices, such as having a man read aloud to the employees, the presentation of recorded music at specified periods of time, etc. These innovations have unquestionably improved the health and spirit of these workers and have reduced the strain manifested by the employees.

Most people who are overworked are, in many instances, victims of bad air, improper diet, poisons or worry. Being tired, they believe must be the result of their work. It is true they may be working beyond their capacity, but the present working capacity

may be only a fraction of what it might be if they take proper exercise; maintain proper body functions; avoid overindulgence in food; and, were not constantly worrying. They lived hygienically in these respects, the work that is a drag and a bore might become an inspiration.

Since the occupation of most people is likely to produce some elements detrimental to a continued state of good health that cannot be avoided, a diversion should be sought in a hobby. This avocation should be foreign from that of the regular work in order for it to serve a useful purpose. Recognizing such a necessity, a famous physician did carpenter work; a well known engineer wrote stories and painted pictures; and the President of the United States plays the piano.

Many of us have laughed at the old adage, "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," yet it is based on sound scientific reasoning as recent experimentation has proven. In order to live a healthy life, it is necessary to supply the body with wholesome food, pure water and proper exercise and rest. There are two forms of activity, work and play; and two forms of inactivity, rest and sleep. These in proper amounts and proportions are needed for a normal, well balanced, healthy life. It is distinctly unhealthful to overdo or to underdo any one of the four. Moderation in all things should be the prime rule for the proper maintenance of health.

Many people are suffering from too much work and too little play, while others are suffering from too little work and too much play. The latter is particularly true of the overtrained competing athlete. The thing that should be understood about play is that it is not a luxury but a necessity. It is not something that a child likes to do, but it is something that he must have if he is to grow up to be a normal, healthy, vigorous and emotionally stable child. It is an integral part of his education. It is as important as part of his bodily growth. It is one of the chief processes by which he becomes a man.

One cannot watch a child playing without being convinced that the thing he is doing is a serious matter; whether it is a baby trying to put his toe in his mouth, a boy climbing on a chair, or a little girl treating the imagined diseases of her dolls. If you observe the child's face you will see that he is as much absorbed in his play as the adult who is engaged in a serious business enterprise. Play is a serious matter to the child and the child is definitely right. Play is instinctive; it is nature's call to prepare the growing animal, be it child, puppy, or kitten, for the serious battles of life, by instinctively training the muscles of coordination and the trigger accomplishment of purposes of the will. In other words, it is something more important than mere relaxation or diversion. It is the doing of something, it is activity. It is definitely the crowning part of nature's law of growth.

Notice how a child in the selection of language assigns great importance to the verb. He calls the cow a "Moo," the dog, "Bow-Wow" and the engine a "Choo-choo,"—names that are descriptive of activity. Play should, therefore, not be understood in the narrow sense of exercise or recreation, but rather in

the sense of being a preparation of the boy and girl for manhood and womanhood. Play affords exercise for the muscles and aids in the mental development, particularly in the social relations between the members of the family and rest of the world. It gives one the ability to give and take and to share in the pleasures and rewards of the game—that are essential prerequisites for a successful mission in life.

Not only is play a prime requisite for growing boys and girls, but it is also a necessity for adults. Every man and woman should have regular periods of recreation and play. In the case of the business, or office executive, the character of the play should, of course, be physical exercise such as golf, volley ball, tennis, etc., for these sports combine both physical and mental relaxation. These demand muscular coordination and mental alertness that promote health and aid in prolonging human life. No man or woman should be too busy to neglect play and exercise. The busier and more engrossed one is in his work, the greater is the necessity for regular and systematic periods of recreation and play. The Greeks lifted their sports to higher levels than ours, perhaps, by surrounding them with imagination and giving their youths a training in aesthetics as well as in physical excellence.

We are often too concerned with the desire to win and not enough with the idea of moderation in such measures as a means of promoting health. A little ingenuity, mixed with a grain of determination, will solve the problem for those who are readily interested in deriving the most benefit from play and recreation.

It would be well for parents, school boards and concerned parties to remember that the play instinct, while natural in the child, should and must be cultivated and directed along proper healthful channels before one can adequately benefit from any form of mental or physical recreation.

The need for a proper amount of sleep, one of the two great forms of inactivity, is also important. Young, writing on sleep says: "Tired nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep she, like the world, his ready visit pays where fortune smiles, the wretched he for sakes." The only complete rest for the body and mind is sleep. No one can keep continuously healthy without satisfying this need. The sleepy, tired feeling one has at a certain time every night is nature's method of registering the body's need for rest and complete recuperation.

Mental and physical activities of the day are inevitably accompanied by a greater or lesser degree of mental and physical exhaustion. Rest through sleep must be secured in order that the mind and body may build up what the ceaseless activities of the day tear down. Little repair of mind or body takes place during the day as the functions are chiefly engaged in producing sufficient heat and energy to supply the body and mind. We are almost entirely dependent on the reparative process of the mind and body through regular intervals of rest and sleep. Sleep is not a habit, but an urgent necessity, without which speedy physical and mental collapse would occur.—Hygeia.

Topics from Medical and Health Periodicals

Fitness program in school.—A large proportion of the physical impairments disclosed by draft examinations were classed as remediable. This makes it clear that preventive measures should have been begun in early childhood. Oregon has passed a law said to be the first comprehensive legislation in any State to insure adequate health and physical education (*Journal of the American Medical Association*, Vol. 128, p. 813). The subjects to be taught include personal hygiene, community health and sanitation, communicable diseases, nutrition, mental health, safety education, first aid, human anatomy and physiology and the effects of exercise. Health examinations are mandatory in primary and secondary schools.

Skin eruptions from garments.—Many cases of skin trouble are due to wearing apparel. Drs. Louis Schwartz and Samuel M. Peck, of the United States Public Health Service, have made comprehensive studies in this field, and present their findings in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (Vol. 128, p. 1209). Dermatitis has been reported from the wearing of fabrics such as silk, wool and synthetic fibers, as well as leather, artificial leather, furs, rubber and rubber containing materials, such as rubber gloves, dress shields and girdles, socks, pyjamas, and brassieres. Metals used in jewellery and in eyeglass frames, wrist watches and straps have also brought on inflammation, as have plastics used in spectacle frames, wrist watch straps, garters and suspenders. In many instances, the cause of the trouble is not the original material but the chemicals employed in processing. Nylon has led to dermatitis, but the origin of the trouble was not the nylon but a certain finish. To identify the source of mischief, physicians make patch tests. In these tests, the eruption begins at the place of contact with the offending material usually within five days or longer. It is commonly confined to the immediate locality, but occasionally becomes general, and may cause systemic symptoms, such as a rise in temperature.—*Good Health*.

Nuts and soybeans replace dairy products.—A radical group of English vegetarians are trying the experiment of complete exclusion of animal products of all sorts, eggs and milk, as well as meat, from their menu. The subject has been discussed at length in the *Vegetarian Messenger and Health Review*. Testimony is clear that perfect health can be maintained on this restricted diet. One family of four young children is described as being superbly vigorous, while lacking the fidgety symptoms often seen in children of their age. Nuts of various sorts were used as rich sources of protein when obtainable and replaced milk on their table. Before the war the family of six never used more than half a pint of milk daily. Of course millions of children in China and

other countries have never known the taste of milk. It is a well-known fact that infants often suffer from an insufficient supply of milk. The inference has been drawn from the fact that a certain amount of animal food is necessary. Because they were sensitized to milk protein, many babies and older children in this country have suffered discomfort or actual illness from the use of milk. A variety of entirely satisfactory substitutes has been devised, particularly from nuts and soybeans. The demand for huge amounts of additional food for stricken Europe is leading to lessened consumption not only of meat but of eggs and dairy products in this country. Far more calories can be obtained directly from plant sources than indirectly from animals.

Do drink water with your meals—The medicine-show men, who used to sell coloured water on the promise that it would restore health and keep the customers "regular," overlooked a wonderful bet. If they had only prescribed that the "medicine" be taken with meals, and in quantity, they would have achieved some truly remarkable and genuine cures.

These cures would have been caused, not by any colour in the water, but by the water itself—and by drinking it with meals. Dr. James A. McKenney, of Oakland, Calif., has tried this on a scientific basis and has found that the treatment works. His findings are reported in the *American Journal of Digestive Diseases*.

The idea of going back to the natural habit of drinking water is the most unconventional recommendation of all times for the treatment of the most common digestive complaint, constipation. As a matter of fact, the treatment for constipation has for the most part adhered to medieval procedure more closely than for any other affliction of the human race.

The doctors themselves are to blame for much of the constipation prevalent among the public to day. That is, the doctors are responsible for keeping alive the old dictum that you must not drink water with your meals. "To do so dilutes the digestive juices," they maintain, "and thereby interferes with digestion."

Research shows that this is nonsense. Far from interfering with the flow of saliva and other digestive juices, the drinking of water helps the process by acting as a gastric stimulant. It also helps digestion and absorption in the intestines. Drinking water between meals is not nearly as effective as drinking it with meals, Dr. McKenney believes.

The tests which he has now concluded were prompted by observations made at the Oakland Health Clinic some twenty years ago. It then became apparent that those taking water with their meals did not require laxatives. Conversely, those not taking water with their meals were users of various laxatives and cathartics.—*Orient* (Dr. McKenney).

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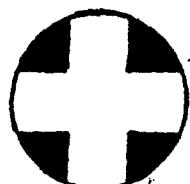
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