

The Germs of Death

By the Editor of Collier's Weekly



It may be maintained that nobody ever dies a natural death. Old age, the premature old age, which is the only kind we know, is a pathological condition. Such are the opinions of Dr. Elle Metchnikoff, not a fakir, but a serious person, who studies things through a microscope at the Pasteur Institute. Each of us swarms with tiny beasts of prey, which travel up and down our body, seeking what they may devour. By attacking our beneficent cells, previously weakened by the unwise life we all lead, they produce an artificial senility, the malady which kills those men whom in our ignorance we call very old. Looked at from Dr. Metchnikoff's standpoint, old age is merely a problem for medical science. How shall we help our beneficent cells in their struggle against the enemy? One way would be to take every baby and cut out his larger intestine, an organ which ought not to have been included in our anatomy. At present this can not be done, as the operation is risky. A second method would be to destroy the beasts of prey. But we do not yet know what they exactly are. Some are a legacy left by our ancestors, immediate and remote, who suffered from heritable diseases. Others, more mysterious, are perhaps the instruments of a sort of essential disease, of that old age which precociously kills all who do not die still earlier of tuberculosis, pneumonia, the bubonic plague, or croup. Until we know more we can only reform our diet, eating little meat or none, and subsisting chiefly on butter, cheese and sour milk. By these imperfect means we may prolong life a little—two hundred years or so. Up to ninety, for example, we may be as active as the President of the United States, and thereafter, for a hundred years more, as reflective as the Prime Minister of England. This would still leave us half a century for art, philanthropy, or croquet. But when death does finally draw near, will not its approach be as distasteful as ever? By no means, says the doctor. Under present conditions death is like an unnatural sleep, which overtakes us early in the day—say before dinner. In the future it will come after a full meal, when the day's work is done.

An Aristocracy in America?

The Impossibility of an American Aristocracy of Wealth :: ::

By Anna McClure Sholl

CHIEFLY upon two conditions depends an aristocracy—the continued possession and exercise of power, and the consequent unity of aims and ideals. The aristocratic body in England, for instance, is self-conscious; its members are united by mutual understanding. They acknowledge certain well-recognized laws of life and manners. They depend upon each other to uphold these laws. Individually, wealthy Americans may be both self-conscious and self-assertive, but collectively they are antagonistic to one another. The accumulation of wealth implies struggle, and struggle does not bring forth the kind of qualities which make the gentle and stately men and women of Van Dyck's canvases one great family.

One of the greatest perils of the republic, and one reason why a genuine American aristocracy can never be formed is that a strong class has arisen, without its strength being officially recognized, as in the aristocracy of rank, and certain duties and obligations toward society are imposed upon it by that recognition. For if wealthy Americans lack social unity among themselves, they lack also to a greater degree, the sense of social responsibility, that mark of a true aristocracy. The sense of his public duties, inborn in an English aristocrat, is owing, to be sure, largely to the law of primogeniture, a law which also insures to him that wealth without which the aristocratic ideal can not be perfectly enforced. He is expected to take his seat in Parliament, to give his aid in legislation, to perform certain public duties which have no connection with his own material prosperity. Another bar to unity of social aims and ideals among the wealthy is their frequent lack of genuine culture. To know rather than to feel is the aim, and ideals are not born of knowledge alone. The culture which implies courtesy and humanity—those aristocratic essentials,—is too often lacking.

If this unity of social ideals upon which an aristocracy largely depends does not now exist, is it likely to be evolved out of the present conditions? Its evolution would depend largely upon the permanent power of one class, exercised in the right direction. But though the second condition may be possible, the first can never be. Under conditions peculiar to American life, great fortunes are constantly changing hands. Accumulated by the fathers, they are squandered by the sons, or divided among many children, or lost through mismanagement or speculation. The aristocracy of wealth constantly endangers its position by its very style of living, making large demands on even large fortunes. The law of decay, which eventually protects society from power of whatever nature, operates to disperse wealth so that the powerful class can not be the permanent class, can not therefore form an aristocracy. It is the safeguard of the aristocracy of rank that its power is mystical as well as material; can never, therefore, wholly perish. Another bar to unity and permanency in the wealthy class is the constant inundation of newcomers. Into the rose-lighted drawing-room may stride at any moment a breezy Westerner, or a member of the first generation, his riches raw upon him.—McClure's Magazine.

The Care of Children's Eyes

By D. T. Marshall, M. D.

ORIGINAL research in a large eye clinic has proved to me that many parents, even of fair intelligence, are extremely neglectful of the eyes of their children.

Either from some congenital defect of the inner eye, or from the presence of squint and the consequent inability to fix both eyes upon an object, the work is thrown upon the better eye, and the poorer eye gradually becomes less capable from mere disuse. It would be well for parents to test the vision of their children by covering first one eye and then the other with a small card or book, and asking them to read some sign or describe some object at a convenient distance. It is often a matter of great surprise for one to find that a child sees very little with one of his eyes. If children having such eyes are fitted with suitable glasses when young, the vision of the poor eye may be made equal to that of the other, and by use become stronger instead of weaker. Children with squint can often be cured without operation by wearing proper glasses.

This is a contagious disease which is characterized by the growth on the inside of the eyelids of small granules as large as pin-heads, or larger, which look very much like grains of pearl sago after they have been soaked in water. In some cases this disease gives rise to no symptoms, but in most cases there is sooner or later redness, and sensitiveness to light. Later on there may be clouding of the cornea (the transparent part of the eyeball), extreme sensitiveness to light, and in extreme cases blindness. Even when the disease gives rise to no symptoms, later in life it may cause a contraction of the inner surfaces of the lids, which causes the eyelashes to turn in and rub on the eyeball, thus giving rise to great discomfort and loss of good vision.

The method of exposing the inner surface of the eyelid is very simple. For the lower lid, the most common seat of trachoma, simply put the finger on the lower edge of the lid, and pull down, at the same time telling the child to look up. To examine the upper lid, take hold of the eyelashes with the thumb and forefinger of one hand, and with the other hand gently press a penne-point or the edge of a card against the fold above the stiff part of the lid, and fold the lid backward, at the same time telling the child to look down. The eyelids turn back with a snap. It does not hurt. If the inside of the lid is not smooth and clear, the child had better be taken to an oculist for examination. The above method of turning the lid is useful when one is called upon to remove a foreign body from the eye. Clinders and grains of sand do get into the eye, and it is not always convenient to get a doctor to take them out. Turn the lid back, and with a toothpick or hairpin, around the end of which a bit of cotton has been smoothly wound, gently wipe out the offending object. If you have no cotton at hand, wet the end of a toothpick and crush it up, thus forming a kind of brush.

FOR WOMAN'S BENEFIT

ART OF DRESSING HAIR.

An Important Matter With the Up-to-Date Woman.

Perhaps never before has there been a time when the hair was an object of greater solicitude to women at large than at the present, or a more important element of personal beauty. The low coiffure has caught on with a rapidity which shows how tired the public generally was of the upward sweep and bare nape, the small top-knot and the high effects that have been in vogue so long. For street and ordinary wear the hair is drawn into a simple knot low down on the neck, and for evening wear the high coiffure remains in vogue, although where a woman has a good profile and a style which the low knot distinctly enhances she is sorely tempted to wear it all the time. The low coiffure is pretty generally becoming, as it shows the shape of the head to better advantage than does the high coiffure. It also conceals the nape of the neck, which is a weak spot in many women's dressing of their hair. Not every woman has a pretty neck, or one that is decorative when the hair is drawn away from it in the severe lines that have been in vogue.

The hair is still worn pompadour, but, instead of an even symmetrical pompadour framing the face, the hair is pouched over the face in irregular masses or puffs, and there is a general movement to discard the rat as inartistic. Many women who have adopted the low style of hair dressing have returned to the centre parting, the result being something exceedingly womanly looking and soft, provided they have foreheads that will bear showing.

A narrow, long effect is sought for by women whose heads are broad and the nape of the neck plump and pretty. These are in the shape of the figure 8, in loose coils, or in oblong knots. With the low style of hair dressing any ornament that may be added in the form of flowers is worn at the side. Where the hair is worn in a broad braid, young women ornament the top and bottom of the braid with black ribbon bows. The lower bow is slipped through the braid before it is turned up, and protrudes on either side in a big broad fan. All these low styles of hair dressing call for a good head of hair, if the results are to be satisfactory. As handsome hair is somewhat less common than it was in the days before crimping and rats were so generally adopted, not a few women, and even young girls, are glad to avail themselves of the black ribbon bow as a pretty and innocent method of eking out their locks.

One still sees innumerable high coiffures on the street. Some of the best dressed women wear them, and will continue to wear them, possibly with modifications, because they have found that the mode suits their style. It will probably be a long time before the high coiffure becomes passe.

Shirt Waists For Winter Wear.

What is more attractive to the eye than a well-fitted plain tailored waist with all accessories in accordance? There are some women more suited to wear this style of apparel than others. When the tailored girl is pictured by us we see a tall, well-proportioned figure, with the coiffure severely arranged, even tightly drawn from the face, into a huge knot at the nape of the neck, or dressed on the crown of the head, but without the frowsy pompadour or clustering ringlets.

The neck piece should be of the severe sort, either to match the waist or one of the many pretty varieties shown in the shops at present. The linen stock with the black satin tie is decidedly mannish and severe, but then we have the pretty drawn bands or turnovers to be worn with the plainer stock and give a touch of refinement and neatness so much sought for.—Pittsburg Dispatch.

Play With Fingers and Toes.

At the meeting of the Ohio Congress of Mothers, Cleveland, Mrs. James L. Hughes, of Toronto, advised mothers to play with their babies' fingers and toes.

"I do not believe," she said, "there is a mother in Cleveland, whether she be American, Italian or any other nationality, who does not play with her baby's fingers and toes. And I venture to say there is nothing she can do of greater importance to baby's development."

Woman, Not Gown, a Mist.

Isaac Abrams, a Chicago ladies' tailor, who sued a woman for not taking the garment she had ordered, made a novel defense. "I do not like to go to court," said he, "but what can a man do when, after he has taken a woman's measure for a tailor-made suit, she is taken ill, loses thirty pounds in weight and then will not take the garment because it does not fit her?"

Fashion Notes.

Yards and yards of braid are used. Pippings are ubiquitous in the new modes. Fringe is one of the fashionable garnitures.

The long coat seems to be "it" for general service.

A brown zibeline flecked with green is a chic example.

Hats in shaded beaver are among the millinery novelties.

Pelerines are the ultra-fashionable thing in fur neck-wear.

White and moss green are an artistic combination in millinery.

Tweeds are very smart for walking suits intended for hard wear.

Gay colors are introduced into the new suitings with fetching effect.

Some of the rough suitings seem to have been caught in a snowstorm.

The off-color whites, champagne, mushroom and oyster, will be fashionable.

The long boas in mixed black and white ostrich reappear among the new neck things.

Lovely evening coats of white broadcloth have capes trimmed with deep white fringe.

The old-fashioned Hercules braid appears with a beautiful lustre and trims gowns of all sorts.

The skirts of many gowns threaten to bring gray hairs to the head of more than one dressmaker.

The new ruffs all incline to be low and flat with long stole ends—quite like the quaint old-fashioned pelerines.

Lace gowns will again be all that is most desirable in the way of a toilette of fashionable elegance for evening wear.

Blouses of a heavy mercerized fabric, in white preferably, are distinguished by Chinese hieroglyphics worked in dull blue, red, yellow and green silks. This declaration is usually on the front box pleat and on the collar and cuffs.

WORDS OF WISDOM.

An obvious fact about habit frequently noted is that though we gain no pleasure from doing a thing, yet we suffer great discomfort from not doing it. And so great is the force of habit that this is applicable to good, bad or indifferent practices. The formation of a habit becomes a great tyranny if the habit be bad, and, on the other hand, a great prop to virtue if the habit be good and desirable.

The more we look at the world with intelligent and loving eyes, the more the world means to us. The more we look at each other's faces with intelligence and love, the more human beings mean to us. The more we think of the fathomless depths and the lofty heights of being, and of the Being that fills being and is the source of it, the more will it mean to us.

The sainthoods of the fireside and of the market place—they have their martyrdoms, and their palms, and though they get into no calendars, they leave a benediction and a force behind them on the earth when they go up to heaven.

The things which, in our soliloquies, we brag we will do, are apt to be in inverse proportion to the things we really do.

The best evidence of merit is the cordial recognition of it whenever and wherever it may be found.

Each of us must journey out of this world into that which lies beyond—alone, with no comrade.

Experience is a keen knife and hurts while it extracts the cataract that blinds.

The future destiny of the child is always the work of the mother.

In this life there is but one sure happiness—to live for others.

The more you speak of yourself the more you are likely to lie.

Alligator Hatchery.

Among the unique "infant" industries resorted to for profit in the great Sunshine State is that of hatching alligators.

There is a constant and lively demand during the tourist season on the east coast for young alligators, and the methods for supplying this demand have heretofore been eminently unreliable.

To secure an abundant supply of these infant saurians H. H. Jenkins, of Courtenay, a charming little hamlet on Merritt Island, has, for several seasons past, conducted a hatchery, from which he secures as many as may be called for.

His plan is to carefully note the location of the alligator holes or dens and nests throughout the swamps, marshes and ponds in his vicinity and when laying time comes to quietly steal the eggs away and place them in an improvised nest on his own premises, where they hatch out under conditions that correspond to those about the original nests from which they were taken.

Mr. Jenkins has been quite successful so far with his hatchery and has this season a nest with seven hundred eggs. For a week or ten days past there has been an average daily hatch of about twenty young alligators, and as this is the season of the year when they naturally hatch out there will soon be a big crop of the little reptiles within the precincts of that unique farm.

Not all, however, of the eggs "set" prove good and hatch, but only about sixty per cent. can be expected.—Coconut (Fla.) News.

POPULAR SCIENCE

A highly finished "sun chariot," lately found in a moor of Seeland, in Denmark, is thought to be at least 3000 years old.

By dissolving a little gelatin in milk the milk can be carried in solid blocks, and would gain rather than lose nutrient value.

The most prized of the singing insects of Japan is a black beetle called "susumushi," or "insect bell." Its singing resembles the dainty sound of a sweet-toned silver bell.

A study of bird migration from the Kentish Knock Lightship, at the mouth of the Thames, twenty-one miles from land, has been undertaken by W. Eagle Clarke, of Edinburgh.

The lizard-like pterodactyl, which had membranous wings, with a spread of twenty feet, is the pattern for the air-ship which Professor Langley, of the Smithsonian Institute, has built and recently tested unsatisfactorily.

It is reported, according to an English authority, that a firm of engineers has offered to fit on board the Cunard steamers about to be built turbine engines to develop 75,000 horse power, with a coal consumption of only half what would be required by ordinary engines.

Motoring on Scottish lakes promises to become as popular on keels as on wheels in the Highlands, thanks largely to the work of Sir John Murray, of Challenger Expedition fame and the staff of the Pullar Trust Lake Survey. No fewer than 300 lakes have been fully charted, the soundings being accurately given in feet. Hitherto all has been largely guess work on the part of the old boatmen.

A power transmission installation is now being erected at Bagelino, in Italy, in which a pressure of 40,000 volts will be used—the first instance in Europe of so high a voltage being employed. The project is designed to distribute power to the town of Brescia, and the neighboring works. Power will be derived from the River Caffaro, rising in the Tyrolean Alps, and feeding the Chiesa.

From 1890 to 1900 the average annual excess of births over deaths in the United States was 17.7 per 1000 of the population, while Prussia stood next with 14.7 per 1000. Then came Holland, with 14 per 1000; Norway, with 13.9; the German empire, with 13.7; Denmark, with 12.6; Scotland, with 11.9 and England and Wales with 11.7. The two foreign countries in which there is the nearest approximation to race suicide are France and Ireland.

Houses in Fez.

In Fez, the capital of Morocco, most of the houses consist of several stories, each being provided with a light veranda running around it and connecting the rooms. All the windows and doors open out into the patio, or courtyard, the window openings in the upper stories being covered with close trellis-work. All the houses have flat roofs, with a wall some four to six feet high running around, and from 4 p. m. until sunset the roofs are given over to the ladies exclusively, who can then walk about and take the fresh air without being seen by any of the opposite sex. This reservation is a law, which is never broken, and no man would be guilty of being seen on his or on any other roof during the forbidden hours. Owing to the fact that the women of the house are not allowed to be seen by any other man than their lord and master all domestic offices are situated away from the house proper. In many of the larger houses, besides the water fountains, others spraying scented or scented water are to be found. Sections of the courtyard also are slightly sunk, and these portions are filled with scented oil, which is used to perfume the rooms. The Moors are exceptionally particular in discarding their foot gear before entering a room or crossing a rug or carpet. They even change slippers before entering the courtyard from the street. Thus the houses are kept beautifully clean and sweet, and are not, as many people would suppose, musty or close.

The Renaissance of Tennis.

The wonderful revival of interest in lawn tennis is one of the most significant features of American outdoor life to-day. The seven thousand people who watched the championship games at Bay Ridge last year made a bigger crowd than any country ever knew even in the days when tennis was a fad. Tennis is coming into its own. There is every reason why tennis should be popular. It costs less than many games; it takes less time; it requires few players; there is no danger in it; it exercises the whole body thoroughly, not partially or spasmodically; both sexes can play it, and, finally, its whole moral tone is clean and gentlemanly.—From Country Life in America.