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LETTERS  
TO  
THE PEOPLE  
ON  
HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

BY

CATHARINE E. BEECHER



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LETTER FIRST.

MY FRIENDS :

Will you let me come to you in your work-shop, or office, or store, or study? and you, my female friends, may I enter your nursery, your parlor, or your kitchen? I have matters of interest to present in which every one of you has a deep personal concern.

I have facts to communicate, that will prove that the American people are pursuing a course, in their own habits and practices, which is destroying health and happiness to an extent that is perfectly appalling. Nay more, I think I shall be able to show, that the majority of parents in this nation are systematically educating the rising generation to be feeble, deformed, homely, sickly, and miserable; as much so as if it were their express aim to commit so monstrous a folly.

I think I can show also, that if a plan for *destroying female health*, in all the ways in which it could be most effectively done, were drawn up, it would be exactly the course which is now pursued by a large portion of this nation, especially in the more wealthy classes.

At the same time, I can present *facts* showing that the results of such a course have been an amount of domestic unhappiness and of individual suffering in all classes in our

land that is perfectly frightful, and that these dreadful evils are constantly increasing.

You have read often of the Greeks. Some twenty centuries ago they were a small people, in a small country; and yet they became the wisest and most powerful of all nations, and thus conquered nearly the whole world. And they were remarkable, not only for their wisdom and strength, but for their great beauty, so that the statues they made to resemble their own men and women have, ever since, been regarded as the most perfect forms of human beauty.

The chief reason why they excelled all nations in these respects, was the great care they took in educating their children. They had two kinds of schools—the one to train the minds, and the other to train the bodies of their children. And though they estimated very highly the education of the mind, they still more valued that part of school training which tended to develop and perfect the body.

In the family, too, although the higher classes took care that their children should improve the mind, all, from the highest to the lowest, were earnest in efforts to train the rising generation to have healthy, strong, and beautiful bodies. And when these people met at their national festivals, they not only read or recited history and poetry before these great assemblies, but they still more delighted in games and sports, which exhibited the beauty, strength, gracefulness, and skill of the human body.

But the American people have pursued a very different course. It is true that a large portion of them have provided schools for educating the minds of their children; but instead of providing teachers to train the bodies of their offspring, most of them have not only entirely neglected it, but have done almost every thing they could do to train their children to become feeble, sickly, and ugly. And those, who have not pursued so foolish a course, have taken very little pains to secure the proper education of the body for their offspring during the period of their school life.

In consequence of this dreadful neglect and mismanagement, the children of this country are every year becoming less and less healthful and good-looking. There is a great change in reference to this matter within my memory. When

young, I noticed in my travels the children in school-houses, or on Sunday in the churches, almost all of them had rosy cheeks, and looked full of health and spirits. But now, when I notice the children in churches and schools, both in city and country, a great portion of them either have sallow or pale complexions, or look delicate or partially misformed.

When I was young, I did not know of any sickly children. All my brothers and sisters and young playmates could go out in all weathers, were not harmed by wetting their feet, would play on the snow and ice for hours without cloaks or shawls, and never seemed to be troubled with the cold. And the tender parents of these days would be shocked to see how little clothing we wore in the bitterest cold of winter.

But now, though parents take far more pains to wrap up their little ones, to save them from the cold and wet, the children grow less and less healthy every year. And I rarely find a school-room full of such rosy-cheeked, strong, fine-looking children as I used to see thirty years ago.

Every year I hear more and more complaints of the poor health that is so very common among grown people, especially among women. And physicians say, that this is an evil that is constantly increasing, so that they fear, ere long, there will be no healthy women in the country.

At the same time, among all classes of our land, we are constantly hearing of the superior health and activity of our ancestors. Their physical health and strength, and their power of labor and endurance, was altogether beyond any thing witnessed in the present generation.

Travelers, when they go to other countries, especially when they visit England, from whence our ancestors came, are struck with the contrast between the appearance of American women and those of other countries in the matter of health. In this nation, it is rare to see a married woman of thirty or forty, especially in the more wealthy classes, who retains the fullness of person and freshness of complexion that mark good health. But in England, almost all the women are in the full perfection of womanhood at that period of life.

Now it is a fact, that the health of children depends very much on the health of their parents. Feeble and sickly

fathers and mothers seldom have strong and healthy children. And when one parent is well and the other sickly, then a part of the children will be sickly and a part healthy.

Thus the more parents become unhealthy the more feeble children will be born. And when these feeble children grow up and become parents, they will have a still more puny and degenerate offspring. So the case will go on, from bad to worse, with every generation. What then, if what I state be true, are the prospects of this nation, unless some great and radical change is effected?

Such a change is possible. The American people have far better advantages than the Greeks had to train their offspring to be strong, healthful, and beautiful, while the means of *retrieving* the mischief already done are in their hands. Nothing is needed but a *full knowledge* of the case, and then the *application of that practical common-sense and efficiency to this object*, which secures to them such wonderful success in all their business affairs. It is with the hope of doing something to effect such a change that this book has been prepared.

I have been led to this effort by many powerful influences. More than half of the mature years of my own life have been those of restless debility and infirmities, that all would have been saved by the knowledge contained in this work.

More than half the families where I have visited in all parts of the land, seem under a cloud of dim anxiety or sorrow from the failing health or recent death of some beloved member, who has been a victim to similar ignorance.

The many establishments for the restoration of health which I have frequented, are thronged with sufferers from all classes, who bring mournful testimony of the decay of health and vitality in all the circles in which they move, while the statistics of health and disease, which in various ways have been furnished to me, show that the sad impressions made by the above circumstances are more than sustained by unquestionable *facts*. And surely if any thing should "cause the ear that heareth to tingle," it is some of the facts which these pages will present.

All these evils are suffered *chiefly* because the people are

ignorant of that which, above all earthly knowledge, they most need to acquire; so that it may truly be said, in the words of Holy Writ—"The people do perish for lack of knowledge."

It is impossible that the evils referred to should be remedied until they are known, and their causes fully understood. And it is impossible to make them comprehended except by giving clear ideas of the construction of certain portions of the human body, the end designed by these organs, and the methods for securing these ends. This is what is first proposed in this work; and in attempting it, the aim will be to avoid all that is not strictly practical, and all the technics of science that are needless. It also will be the aim to write in so clear and simple a style that even children can understand every sentence; and to make the work so *short*, that even American *men of business* can be induced to read it.

The following is an outline of the plan:

The first part contains a brief description of certain organs of the human body most important to health and happiness, and which are most injured and abused by the American people.

The second part shows what is the proper treatment of these organs in order to secure the most perfect health and physical happiness.

The third part points out the various methods in which these organs are most frequently injured.

Part fourth shows the many evil results of such abuse and mismanagement.

Part fifth points out the remedies for these evils.

In regard to the first portion, it is feared that some who are familiar with physiology may pass it over. This is earnestly deprecated. All that follows is so intimately connected with the first part, that none of the work can be fully appreciated after such an omission.

It is a very small book; it will not take over two or three hours to read it.

I beseech you for your own sake, for the sake of all you love best, to read *the whole*.

## LETTER TWENTY-THIRD.

## WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

We have now reached the final portion of this work, in which is to be suggested more definitely the *remedies* for the evils that have been set forth.

In pursuing this, it is clear that the undertaking is equaled in importance only by the difficulties to be overcome. To change essentially the habits, customs, and daily practices of a whole nation, in regard to exercise, ventilation, food, drink, amusements, medical treatment, and modes of training the young, certainly is a most Herculean undertaking; and yet nothing less than this will at all meet the case.

But then the American people never fail in any thing they choose to undertake, and they would feel a pride and pleasure in accomplishing a wonderful and beneficent change, and one, too, that would *in all respects set them at the head of the human race.*

For it is granted by all physiologists and naturalists that the mingling of races is the surest mode of securing the highest physical developments of the human family. The superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race is always traced to the happy combination of the British, Celtic, Saxon, and Norman races. In America a new development is to be made, by the union of almost every civilized race, and the eventual result must be the highest type of human physical development, so far as this single cause shall have its influence.

If, in addition to this, the American people could become enlightened as to the true modes of physical training both of themselves and their offspring, and should excel all nations in customs and habits conformed to the laws of health, both of body and mind, what a glorious development

of humanity would ensue! And why may not this be hoped for, and undertaken as a direct and practical aim? What human undertaking ever was started that so directly appealed to the personal interest of every individual of a nation, and yet, at the same time, was so free from all antagonistic influences and combinations?

The first thing suggested then is, that appropriate means be taken to make *the whole people understand this subject*, as presented in this work. If suitable measures for this end were adopted, in a few months every man and woman in this nation who can read, might have this little book placed in their hands. The labor of simplifying and condensing a subject usually so enveloped in technics, and thus putting it in reach of the most ordinary capacity, has been what few can understand, and was done with this very end in view.

Men never can be made to obey what to them are *empirical* rules of health. They must understand the construction of their bodies, the functions of the several organs, and their modes of healthful action. They must understand the nature of the atmosphere they breathe, and of the food they eat, and the influences of their habits, customs, and employments on the various organs and functions of their bodies. When this is secured, reason, conscience, self-love, domestic affection, and religion, furnish motives of obedience to laws perceived to be wise and necessary, and whose penalties are inevitable.

They also must have clear and practical ideas of the exact course each one individually should pursue, in remedying the evils here presented. In reference to this, more exact and minute details will now be set forth, under the main topics.

## PURE AIR AND VENTILATION.

This topic takes the lead of all others in importance and difficulty. The fact that the Greeks lived most of the year out-doors, and that in their houses they never breathed any but pure air, gave them an advantage in developing the beauty, strength, and health of their children, which it would be difficult to secure with our climate and habits,

And the steady and equable climate of the old countries, which has led their inhabitants to out-door life, and thus to acquire vigorous constitutions, gives them also a great advantage over us.

But then our difficulties *can* be met and overcome.

Every man who is a householder should be sure that every member of his family breathes pure air, not only all day but all night, by this simple arrangement: In every room of his house let at least one window be let down at the top two inches, and one door have an opening of two inches over the top. Let this be done in such a way that no person *can* alter it. For if ventilators are fixed so that they can be closed, they will be, in the majority of cases, by the ignorant, or timid, or falsely economical.

A house thus arranged will require more fuel to warm it, but the additional expense of this will not be a tenth part of that which would result from the loss of labor and health consequent on the debility and disease always resulting, more or less, from the habitual inhalation of impure air.

In a house thus arranged, stoves—though less healthful than open fires—would still be far less injurious than they now are.

And here one common prejudice against "night-air," resulting solely from ignorance, must be met.

It has been shown that every pair of lungs vitiates a hogshead of air every hour, by withdrawing from it one half its oxygen, and replacing it with the same quantity of carbonic acid. Now, at night, the inmates of a house must either breathe pure air, that constantly flows in from without and thus drives out the impure air within, or they must keep on breathing over and over again the confined air of the house, that every hour grows more and more poisonous and debilitating.

The popular objections to night-air are, that it is cold, or damp, or loaded with unhealthful miasmata. But if a person has bed-clothing enough to keep warm, the colder the air the better every way. And if the air is damp, so as to render the atmosphere of the room damp also, still no harm is done, *provided the body is kept warm*. Remember that the most delicate patients in health establishments sleep

for hours with wet sheets packed around them, without the least evil or danger. A damp night-air never can harm the most delicate person if every part of the body is covered so as to be duly warm. As to the effect of damp air taken into the lungs, well educated people know that there is no time when there is more water held suspended in the atmosphere than in a hot day. When the air becomes cold this dampness becomes sensible to the eye and feeling, but there is really not so much water inhaled into the lungs in breathing a cold, damp air, as in breathing a warm and apparently dry atmosphere.

No reason, then, exists for excluding the night-air from the lungs when cold and damp; but more clothing is required, and more care to avoid a draft on any exposed part of the body. Of course, where lungs are diseased, any extremes in temperature must be avoided.

As to unhealthful miasmata in the night-air, nothing can be worse than the exhalations of decaying bodies, as sent forth from the lungs and skin of sleepers. It is precisely the same evil as is found in proximity to grave-yards and decaying carrion. The effluvia from the lungs and skin is precisely the same as that from carrion, only more diluted by the atmosphere. Those who have entered the pent-up sleeping rooms of persons who do not wash their skins or breathe a pure air, very well understand the close resemblance.

In the summer season, while vegetation is in life, it is true that the leaves of all trees and plants are *respiring*; giving out oxygen and taking in carbonic acid by day, and then at night throwing out carbonic acid and taking in oxygen. But this respiration of vegetable nature outside of our dwellings, and all the effluvia of decaying vegetation at any period of the year, are never so effective in destroying the healthfulness of the air around our dwellings, as the lungs of the inhabitants within them.

Let it also be considered that the air we do breathe—unless the house is air-tight, which no house can be—must be night-air, more or less mixed with the portion which has been breathed over and over again through the day and evening. So that every body *does* breathe night-air, or what is worse.

These things are presented in order to remove that baseful prejudice and fear that so many ignorant persons indulge toward their best friends, *air and water*.

To return: let every person who has charge of a family make some *sure* arrangement thus to secure to every person in their house an abundance of pure air for their lungs and skin both by day and night, and the grand cause that, above all others, is gradually deteriorating the vigor, health, and beauty of the American people will disappear.

Add to this, appropriate care that all the school-rooms in the land have the same arrangement made to provide pure air for the pupils. Keep the tops of the windows down both in winter and summer, and pay for the increase of fuel instead of the doctor and grave-digger. In every community where there are colleges and seminaries, as well as the public schools, there ought to be inspectors appointed, the same as other civil officers, to go around and see whether any parent or teacher is poisoning the rising generation with impure air. Oh, how many families, and schools, and boarding establishments have come within my circuit in which this evil, even to this hour, is perpetuated!

No parents, no guardians of the young should ever retire to rest till fully assured that every one under their care is furnished with the full supply of pure air for the night. And all employers, in all kinds of business, should be taught that they are committing a great sin against the life and welfare of those they employ, if they force them to labor in impure air. Every minister of the gospel should, in the first place take care that his own spiritual concerns, and those of his hearers are not checked and interrupted by brains stupefied by bad air; and next, he should teach his people their obligations in this matter, both to themselves and to all under their care. The physician, too, is especially bound to use all his influence in a community in the same direction.

#### EXERCISE AND AMUSEMENT.

Next to pure air, *healthful exercise and amusements* are the most important remedies for the evils set forth.

The modes for securing these are not so easily indicated. A great part of the American people exercise

certain portions of their muscular system too much, while their intellect has little activity, and their spirits are rarely cheered and animated by amusements. Another portion keep their brain in constant labor, without the balancing influence of muscular activity, or the relief of recreation. And still another portion give up their whole being to pleasure-seeking and amusement, without any useful activity either of body or mind.

There are various measures which might be adopted, that each in its place would tend to a better adjustment of this difficult matter. To illustrate what *might* be done, let it be imagined that, for the sake of an experiment, funds were provided, and the inhabitants of a community should all agree to give the method here suggested a fair trial.

In the first place, a course of lectures should be given, for the purpose of making the people fully understand the evils to be remedied, and the benefits to be secured.

Next, a central site should be provided, on which should be erected a large and beautiful building—a *Temple of Health*. Around it should be every variety of pleasant walks, and shades, and flowers, to attract and please in the summer months, and other arrangements provided for outdoor sports and exercises in winter. Within the building should be arranged a great variety of apparatus and accommodations for in-door amusements that *exercise the muscles*, and those which in most cases could be performed *in measures and to the sound of music*. These exercises should be under the direction of scientific and medical men, and no one should be admitted to these premises except on condition that they would strictly obey the direction of these managers.

All persons attending should then be examined in regard to their daily avocations, their diet, the ventilation of their sleeping and business rooms, the defects of their physical system, and any disease they may suffer, and advice appropriate be given. Then a course of exercise, fitted to each case, should be marked out, and superintendents appointed to see that all these directions are obeyed. The aim should be, not only to secure exercise, but that kind which is appropriate to each case, and also that which would prove *exhilarating* and

*amusing.* For exercise that is sought as a pleasure is more than doubled in value.

In short, every arrangement should be made in strict conformity to the laws of health, and all excess should be excluded. Here, too, parents should be instructed in family plays and games, and thus induced to join with their children in home amusements. For nothing so binds the young to those who control them, as aid and sympathy in amusing sports.

It is believed that if any community would once fairly test such a plan as this for six months, nine-tenths of the diseases, infirmities, low spirits, and ill-temper of that place would vanish away, while every social, domestic, and religious virtue would take a new start.

The preceding method is suggested mainly with reference to adults. In regard to the rising generation, the grand remedy must be in connection with schools and other institutions for education.

As these are now conducted, all the money, time, and efforts are spent in training and exercising the intellect. In our higher institutions, one department is *endowed* that a teacher may give all his time and efforts to cultivating the mathematical faculties. Another endowment supports a teacher to train the linguistic powers. Another endowment secures a teacher for chemistry—another provides for some other of the natural sciences. Thus, there is a constantly accumulating outlay for divisions and subdivisions of labor, and all for the intellectual department of education. Stringent rules also are made, and laws enforced to secure obedience to arrangements that often involve most flagrant violations of the laws of health.

But where in the wide circuit of our nation is an institution where even *one* teacher is sustained, whose official duty it is to secure the health and perfect development of that wonderful and curious organism on which the mind is so dependent? Why should not the students in our colleges and other institutions of learning be required to breathe pure air; to exercise their muscles appropriately and sufficiently; to retire as well as to rise at proper hours; to take care of the skin, and to avoid the use of stimulating herbs and

drinks? And why should not endowments be provided to sustain a well qualified and able man, whose official duty it shall be to give instructions, and exercise the supervision that would secure so important a result?

In regard to all our common and other schools for young children, to the proper ventilation of their school-rooms should be added a complete and scientific training of their bodies to perfect health and the full development of every part. This is entirely practicable, and would be immediately adopted by every teacher did the public demand it. One half hour of every school session ought to be spent by every teacher and pupil in a regular course of calisthenic and gymnastic exercises, that should be as imperative as any other school duty.

A universal course of training of this kind, scientifically arranged and applied, in connection with obedience to other laws of health, might, in one generation, transform the inhabitants of this land from the low development now so extensive to the beautiful model of the highest form of humanity.

Children, too, can be made to understand all that is contained in this book as to the construction of their own bodies and the laws of health. And such knowledge is as important for them, in order to secure their obedience to these laws, as it is for grown persons. Nothing can be made more interesting to children than information in regard to the curious construction of their own bodies; while this alone will secure an intelligent and cheerful submission to rules that regulate their appetites and propensities.

#### FOOD AND DRINK.

Next in importance to air and exercise comes the selection of diet and drink. And in this matter the practical adoption of one common-sense maxim would do almost all that needs to be done. The maxim is this: *In cases where one of two courses involves danger and risk and another is perfectly safe, always choose the path of safety.*

We have seen that the great mass of this nation is fast hastening to disease and deterioration, and that individual misery and domestic unhappiness are widely increasing as the result. We have seen that owing to needless varieties,

to stimulating food and drinks, and to the use of condiments, *excess* in loading the digestive organs is one great cause of this extensive suffering.

Now there is a rich variety and abundance of simple, healthful food and drinks that are fitted for the perfect development and nutrition of the body, and involve little liability to perversion and excess. And when all stimulating food, drinks, and condiments are relinquished and a simple diet maintained, a *healthful appetite* returns, which is a safe guide to the proper amount to be taken, provided always that enough pure air and exercise are secured.

Moreover, I have found by my own experience, and have learned from others, that after living for several months on simple food, there is an increased susceptibility of taste and a keener relish for the delicate flavors that simple food offers. Does any one remember the delicious relish of childhood for a bit of good bread? This same relish will again return when solicited aright. Let a person for several weeks try the experiment of drinking only water, eating nothing but bread and butter, potatoes, baked fruit, and milk, and at the same time exercise abundantly in the fresh air, and if their experience corresponds with that of most I have known who have tried the experiment, they will say, "Never did food of the richest variety and composition furnish such an exquisite relish!"

The more a person will limit a meal to *a few articles*, and these of the *simplest kind*, the more will they regain the appetite and relish of early life.

Now the course here suggested is perfectly safe, is equally productive of enjoyment, and is in obedience to the laws of health, which are the laws of God. The common course pursued in this land of abundance and gormandizing is certainly one of risk and danger to the delicate and deteriorated constitutions of the adult and rising generations. Is not here the place to practice the Christian "daily" duty of "self-denial?" And if the strong and healthy feel no need of it for themselves, is there not a duty set forth for them in this inspired command, "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves?"

In reference to stimulating drinks, how often have I seen

the need of this divine injunction. The parents of a family drink strong tea and coffee. They teach their children perhaps, that it is a dangerous and unhealthy practice, and train them to entire abstinence. But after a few years these children draw to manhood and womanhood, and begin to claim the privileges of acting by their own judgments. Then, after a period of deprecation and remonstrance, the luxury is conceded. Some one of the flock is weak, the strong can bear it but the weak one falters. No eye but that of the Heavenly Parent marks how this one single cause is daily draining the already stunted nervous fountain. And when the flower is cut down, the weeping parents mourn over the sacrifice offered by themselves to their own self-indulgence—to their neglect of that beneficent law, "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves."

Oh, tender parents, who provide these dangerous beverages, look around your beloved circle and see which one you can select as the hapless victim!

And so in reference to that disgusting and baleful use of tobacco, which all over the nation is draining the nervous fountain of thousands of pale and delicate young men. The clergyman, the church elder, the father of the family, indulge in a useless and dangerous practice, merely to gratify a morbid appetite. While they teach others to "deny fleshly lusts," and upbraid the young if they fall, in their own cherished fleshly appetite they see no sin, because they say it does not hurt *themselves*.

But every young victim to this appetite who has been led on by their example, or has not been withheld when their arguments and example might have saved them, is set down to their account by Him who seeth not as man seeth. He whose example of self-denying benevolence they profess to follow, whose last teachings on earth were, "If ye love me feed my sheep; feed my lambs"—He has left to them, above all others, the sacred monition, "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves."

In regard to the use of tobacco, it seems to me the American people, for want of a little consideration, are invading

their high character for respectful kindness and deference to woman. In this matter, there are few that have so much occasion as myself to render a grateful acknowledgment of this most chivalrous virtue in my countrymen; for during the last period of my life I have crossed from West to East, or from East to West, not less than thirty times, and have traveled in all the Free States and five of the Southern; and in all this varied experience, when, in a large portion of the cases also, I was without a protector, I have never *once* known of a coarse or disrespectful word or act toward myself, or witnessed one toward any other woman. At the same time, all that father or brother could render has been accorded by strangers.

But in my recent travels, especially at the West, I have constantly been made to feel what a *selfish* as well as disgusting and ungallant habit is induced by the use of tobacco! The majority of ladies are offended by the effluvia of that weed, and disgusted by its marks on the mouth and face, while the puddles of tobacco juice that infest our public conveyances, the breath of smokers, and the wads and squirting of chewers, not only defile the dress but keep a sensitive stomach in constant excitement and agitation. There have been times in my experience when it seemed to me I must give up a journey from this cause alone. Certainly, if those who practice this vice will insist on perfuming public conveyances with dead tobacco smoke from their dress and lungs, and rendering all their premises filthy and disgusting with their expectorations, the managers of these conveyances should provide rooms and cars for ladies and all other persons who are annoyed by this vice, from which all who either smoke or chew shall be excluded.

## LETTER TWENTY-FOURTH.

## TREATMENT OF THE SKIN—DRESS—DEFORMITIES.

NEXT to air, exercise, and diet, the care of that complicated and sensitive organ *the skin* is to be regarded.

Under this head will be placed also what is to be said on the subject of *dress* and *deformities*.

In regard to the care of the skin, it has been shown that the full circulation of blood in its capillaries, and the free discharge of its secretions, are the objects to be aimed at in promoting perfect health. For this purpose air, light, water, friction, and cold are the chief agencies, and are also healthful tonics to the nervous system generally, from its intimate connection with the skin.

All these agencies are secured by a daily morning ablution of the whole person. In order to this, no extensive bathing apparatus is required. A screen, made like a small clothes-frame, to set around a wash-stand, a bowl of cold water, and two towels, are all that are needed.

The quickest way to bathe is, with one towel, dipped in water, to wet first the upper and then the lower portions of the body, and then to rub them till dry and red with the other towel, which should be a rough and coarse one.

This followed by drinking two tumblers of cold water and a walk in the cool morning air, or, when the weather forbids, a series of *calisthenic* exercises before an open window, will give a healthful glow and appetite.

As to dress, it should always be sufficient in thickness and warmth to prevent any sense of uncomfortable chilliness. This being secured, the less clothing the better for the skin and the whole body.

Heat is always debilitating to the skin, while cold and

pure air are tonics. But all changes in this particular must be gradual, and great care must be taken not to exceed the nervous supply of the system, by abstracting animal heat too often and too long.

A great many persons lose all the benefits of water-treatment, and others bring on disease, by not understanding the importance of this caution.

In regard to the fashion of dress, it always should be so loose as to allow the *fullest* inspiration of the lungs without any consequent pressure. Every mantua-maker should be required to take her measures when the lungs are entirely filled.

As for striving to make women dress "out of the fashion," in order to be healthy, the effort would be folly and a failure. The wiser way is to circumvent Madam Fashion by contrivances that shall in the main pay her all demanded deference, and yet conform to the rules of health and decency.

The present style, which demands that the middle portion of the female form be drawn in like the body of a wasp, while the lower portion must flare out like an umbrella, can be secured without the disgusting and murderous methods the results of which will now be again presented.

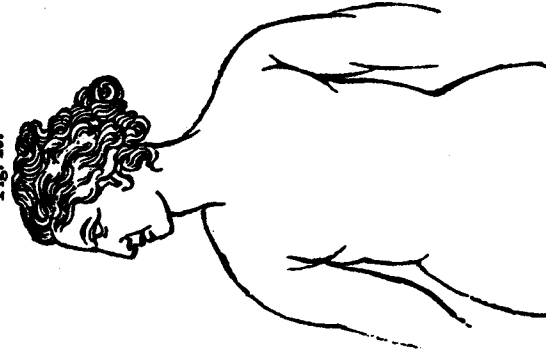
On the next page are two figures, one of which represents the waist of the most perfect model of a beautiful female form. The other represents the fashionable waist of modern days, which can be achieved only by deforming the bones, and displacing the most delicate and important internal organs.

Fig. 30.



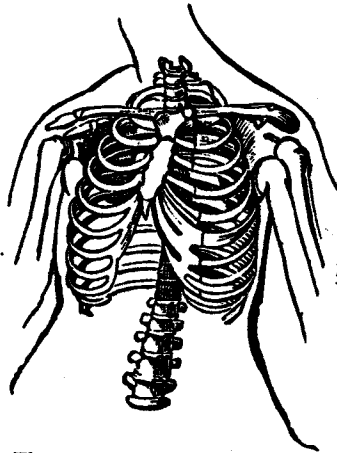
Outline of the form of a modern Belle.

Fig. 29.

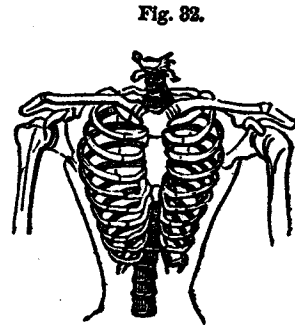


Outline of Venus de Medicis.

Here is a drawing of the skeletons of these female figures—the one as Nature designed it, and the other as Art deforms it.  
Fig. 31.



The skeleton as Nature formed it.



The skeleton as deformed by Art.

The poor young girl whom the mother is dressing for a sacrifice to this horrid fashion, remorselessly girds the waist just where the bones have least internal support and yield the easiest. The small floating ribs are pressed unequally and laterally against the spine, because the intestines can not yield the equal support required. The result is a distortion of this kind. Fig. 33.

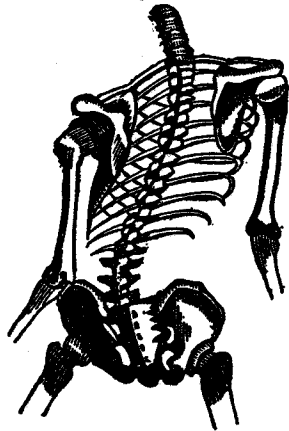


Fig. 33.

Any mother can discover when this deformity is secured by examining these drawings—Fig. 34 showing the external appearance of the back as Nature designed it should be, and

Fig. 35 the deformity caused by tight dress. These views are presented, because in many cases this evil, if discovered soon enough, can be remedied by methods to be hereafter indicated.

Fig. 34



Fig. 34.



Fig. 35.

The same deformity of the spine is sometimes caused or increased by wrong positions in sleeping. If the body is placed in a perfectly horizontal position—as may be seen in the drawing at Fig. 36—all pressure is taken from the car-



Fig. 36.

tilage discs of the spine, and thus, for seven or eight hours out of the twenty-four, they are enabled gradually to return to their natural form. It is found by measurement that, in this way, the spine is every night *lengthened*—these discs re-

covering by their elasticity a slight increase of thickness. Thus, every person is a little taller in the morning than at night.

But when a person sleeps with a high pillow, so that the spine is bent through the night, this relieving process is not allowed to certain portions of the spinal discs. (Here is a drawing, Fig. 37, to illustrate.) The result is, in certain

Fig. 37.

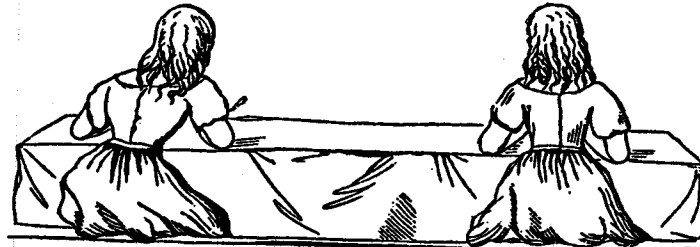


cases where delicacy of constitution particularly affects the bony portion of the body, that the spine becomes more or less distorted. This shows why it is that children should not be allowed high pillows. The pillow should be just high enough to keep the head in the natural position; and the child should be taught to sleep on both sides, if there is any danger of a departure from this ordinary practice.

Another, and still more frequent mode of distorting the spine is by the positions that children assume at school, or in study and writing at home. The drawing (Fig. 38 and Fig. 39) on the opposite page represents the right and the wrong methods of sitting when drawing and writing. When children sit on high benches so that their feet can not rest on the floor, when they are obliged to sit long with the back unsupported, and when they bend over to study and read, the muscles that hold the body in its proper position become exhausted, the discs of the spine gradually harden, and various deformities—such as projecting necks, round shoulders, and crooked backs—are the result. In childhood, and often among adults, most of these deform-

Fig. 38.

Fig. 39.



ities can be remedied by methods to be hereafter indicated.

But, as has been before shown, the most terrible evil that mischievous fashions in dress have induced is the internal displacements and change of form exhibited in the article furnished by Mrs. Gleason. These are caused by the combined influence of *tight dress*, pressing the central organs downward on the lower ones, and the debility and pressure induced by the *heat and weight* of clothing around the hips. Let the reader again examine, in the beginning of that article, the beautiful curves of the chest and spine of the perfect form, as viewed sidewise, and then compare it with the distorted one.

Then notice the outline of a healthy, finely-formed child, and see how it entirely corresponds, in a side view, with this drawing of a perfect form. Then notice most of the female forms in a drawing-room, and see how many there are that sink *inward* in front, instead of showing the beautiful *outward* curve. The effort to gain the "slender waist," which novelists and dress-makers set forth to admiration, as the Chinese do the stump foot, often produces this outward distortion, with little consciousness of the still more shocking internal results.

Now, it is to circumvent Madam Fashion in this, the climax of her murderous follies, that a fashion of under-garments is suggested, which is illustrated in Fig. 40 and Fig. 41, on page 182.

Fig. 40.

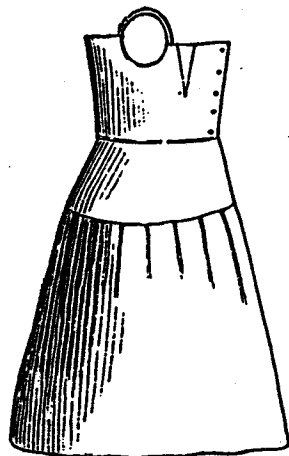
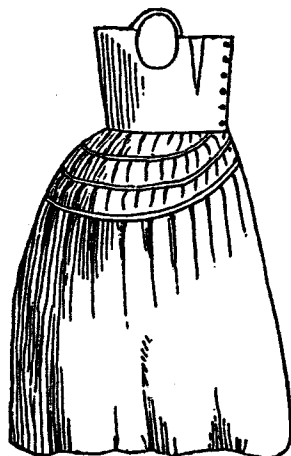


Fig. 40 shows the outline of a warm, close *under-petticoat*, in which there is no accumulation of plaits or gathers around the waist, and the design of which is to keep the body *equally* warm in all parts. The fullness in this case is made at the lower line, as shown by the drawing. At the same time, by waist and shoulder-straps, the weight is borne by the shoulders, and the upper part of the body is dressed as warm as the lower.

But our second drawing (Fig. 41) is our main achievement in circumventing the evils of the present fashion. By this method a woman can spread out her robes below, to any extent she may deem necessary in order to secure her the very pinnacle of fashionable expansion. In this drawing, a waist is made which rests by straps on the shoulders, and to which the skirt below can be buttoned. The skirt is made of two parts. The upper is a long, double strip, with *slides* made in it for inserting whalebones, as is done in drawn bonnets. Then this strip is drawn up on these whalebones till it assumes the form of that part of a fashionable lady where from six to twelve skirts ordinarily

Fig. 41.



are sustained, weighing from four to six or eight pounds. Then the lower portion of the petticoat is to be gathered or plaited on to this, and the whole fastened to the waist by buttons.

By this method a skirt is made that can expand to any dimensions, and yet be light and cool for summer. Then when cold weather comes, the added clothing can nestle under its broad expanse. By this method, too, a lady can appear in the height of the mode, and yet, so far as this matter is concerned, violate none of the laws of health.

#### CUSTOMS OF SOCIAL LIFE.

The American people claim to be in advance of all other nations in civil and religious liberty. They are complimented as the people who are to take the lead in guiding all others to the most perfect state of social, civil, and moral development.

If this honorable career is before them, it surely is inconsistent with their high vocation to become slaves to injurious customs that are manufactured for them abroad. Why should not the American people originate customs in social life as much in advance of old nations as are their civil concerns?

We have seen that *light* is more favorable to health and perfect development than darkness. We have seen that even the trees and shrubs that exhale their life-inspiring oxygen by day and their carbon through the night, are teaching mankind that the time for the quick circulation of muscular labor and of brain excitement is *the day*, while the slow breath of slumber is reserved for the less healthful atmosphere of night.

Now those countries whose customs are founded on the assumption that one class of people are to do the work and another class are to appropriate the best fruits of this labor, have instituted social customs on the plan of making every possible barrier of separation between these two classes. And so the aristocracy sit up all night and sleep by day, while those who carry on the business of the world are abroad in the light and slumber in the hours appointed by God for sleep.

But it is the pride of our nation that all men are equal in rights and privileges, and that no aristocracy can flourish here. Why, then, should we not banish those customs of social life that are low imitations of what is false and wrong? Why should not the American people set an example to the Old World of customs conformed at once to the laws of health, the laws of God, and the spirit of their own boasted institutions?

In the palmy days of our early Republic, all classes rose with the sun, and all the hours of labor, even for the highest, were by daylight. And their social gatherings were ordinarily ended when the "nine o'clock bell" gave warning that all well-ordered families should retire to rest.

In another matter we have an opportunity to excel even the fathers of our Republic. The farther man advances from childhood and in social life from the savage state, the more do refined and intellectual pleasures take the place of merely animal. In the lower states of society the chief attractions to social gatherings were *eating and drinking*. But just in proportion as man becomes elevated, this lowest species of enjoyment gives place to higher and more refined pleasure.

May we not hope that our country is so far advanced as to be able to institute new customs in these respects? Can not the principle of "association," which accomplishes so many other social improvements, be brought to bear upon this matter?

It certainly is true that the great body of cultivated and sensible people in this country heartily despise and condemn the vulgar gatherings where a good part of the night is spent in unhealthful air, unhealthful dresses, stupid recognitions, and unseasonable eating and drinking. Why should this sensible portion be controlled by the uncultivated and frivolous? Why should not the really "best circles" associate on the principles of common sense, democracy, and Christianity, and agree to have their social gatherings such as are worthy of our country and our country's "best society," and such as we may set forth as examples of a higher civilization to all other nations?