

## HEREDITY AND HEALTH

THE VIEWS OF FAMILY DOCTORS AND LIFE INSURANCE MEN.

Modern Theories as to the Possibility of Inheriting Disease—The New Belief in Regard to Tuberculosis—Insanity is Not a Bacterial Disease.

Upon few questions have medical men been so divided as upon the possibility of inheriting disease. Opinion on this subject has undergone much change within the last fifteen or twenty years, but even to-day doctors are not unanimous on the subject. Then, again, there is another class of scientific people who theorize regarding the phenomena of physical life and conduct laboratory experiments. These men call themselves biologists, and they are unquestionably a learned lot. Yet their conclusions are often different from those reached by the physicians. In general, it may be said that biologists incline to accept Weismann's doctrine that acquired traits cannot be transmitted to progeny, while medical men, though differing as to details, have more or less confidence in the possibility of inheriting physical infirmities.

The discovery of bacteria as the cause of most maladies has had a revolutionary influence upon the old doctrine of inheritance regarding tuberculosis. Once it was believed that a whole family was hopelessly doomed if either of the parents died of this disease. "We have ripped that notion up the back," said the medical adviser of a leading insurance company the other day. "Phthisis is a contagious disease, and results from association with a victim of that trouble. I should sooner look for it in the husband than in the child of a woman who was thus affected."

The doctor who passes on the applications made to another company put the case less radically. He attached some importance to the fact that parents had died of consumption. Even granting that it is purely a contagious malady, offspring sometimes appear to inherit a susceptibility or an abnormally low power of resistance to it. It is asserted that even when the children of tuberculosis parents are widely separated in their youth, and grow up apart, a larger percentage of them develop the disease than that of other people's children. The preponderance is not marked, perhaps, but there are those who believe that it exists. This same expert remarked, however, that formerly his company did not regard a man reasonably safe from inherited consumption until he was forty years old, whereas they would take him now with little hesitation at thirty-five, if he then showed no signs of the malady. Both theory and practice are undergoing slow changes on this point, apparently.

Insanity is not regarded as a bacterial disease, and yet it has a physical basis. The brain undergoes local or general changes in structure. The disorder cannot be acquired by association with other victims of it, but many experts believe in the possibility of inheriting a tendency to insanity and its first cousin, epilepsy. Doctors recognize what they call the "insane diathesis" or a predisposition to insanity, and then take a good deal of stock in the notion that this is an inherited weakness. Most life insurance companies discriminate sharply against applicants whose ancestry exhibits two or three cases of insanity, or one of insanity and one of epilepsy.

Cancer is another affliction which was once believed to be transmissible to offspring, but that view of it is now almost entirely abandoned. Occasionally there are cases of death from this cause in mother or father and son only a few years apart. But, suggestive as such a coincidence is, doctors do not all interpret it alike. One of the leading life insurance companies of this country, which puts its terms up where consumption or insanity appears in the parents' or grandparents' history, ignores cancer except in the applicant himself.

These are the three diseases to which the most attention is given by these companies in considering the infirmities of parents and grandparents. Still, it is asserted that lack of longevity, Bright's disease and other signs of weakness appear to be characteristic of some families and not of others. There is little evidence of the inheritance of a predisposition to apoplexy. Indeed, this trouble, which is due primarily to a weakness of the walls of the arteries, has been found to be about equally characteristic of persons whose weight is abnormally great and those who are abnormally light.

A great deal has been written of alcoholism and heredity. Some of the expressions on this subject are extravagant and misleading. It is particularly interesting to note whether drunkenness or other moral failings develop in parents before or after their children were born. In the latter case heredity would seem to afford an inadequate explanation of bad habits or disease. Nevertheless, there is much evidence that in one way or another immorality affects offspring. It does so chiefly by impairing the physical stamina of the latter, and rarely

by causing any special disease. Insurance companies pay little attention to alcoholism in the parents of applicants, not because they have no faith in its influences, but because they can recognize the latter in undersize, light weight, nervous weakness or other peculiarities of the children. Such characteristics serve as a more useful guide.

Perhaps the firmest believers in the old Mosaic declaration about the "sins of the fathers" are medical practitioners in towns of moderate size, family physicians who know grandparents, parents and children socially as well as professionally. Their observation almost invariably convinces them not only that moral infirmities are translated into physical weakness in the second and third generations, but also that maladies which are in no sense related to immorality sometimes leave their impress on the young. Very often this effect is nothing more than a predisposition, which, once recognized and dealt with in time, may be skillfully antagonized by diet, exercise and environment.—New York Tribune.

### BLIND MERCHANT IS HANDY.

Carl Wells Never Saw the Light, Yet is a Successful Grocer.

There is a small store on the corner of South avenue and Clover street, where are sold ice cream, canned goods, "package groceries," and the various other things which go to make up the ordinary stock of such an establishment. There are hundreds of other stores in Syracuse exactly like this one, but it is unique because of the personality of the storekeeper, a young man of twenty-one, who is totally blind.

If you were to see Carl Wells moving briskly about, waiting on customers and never making a mistake in finding the right article or in making change, you would find it difficult to realize that the world has been dark to him from the hour of his birth. Although his father and mother are both endowed with eyesight, a strange fatality seems to hang over their children, for Mr. Wells has a brother and a sister also afflicted with congenital blindness. In the case of all three, the optic nerve is paralyzed, and no light affects the retina, so that the blindness is quite irremediable.

"There is a long Latin name for it, Dr. Brown told me, but I don't remember it," said Mr. Wells to a Herald reporter. "But then, of course, I don't miss my eyes as any one would who had had them and lost them. When I was a child I made up my mind that I must learn to do things for myself, for if you wait for some one else to help you, you generally have to wait a long while, and I am fortunate in having a strong sense of location. I always put my own goods in their places on the shelves and then I don't have the least difficulty in finding them. Once I know how the outside of any special package feels, I know it for keeps. Of course, if some one were to disarrange my work and put things out of place, I should be completely lost."—Syracuse Herald.

### Abandoned Schoolhouse to a Ghost.

A ghost has received official recognition in the action of Trustee Jesse Martin, of Jackson township, of Carroll County, Ind., when he gave a contract for the erection of a new school building in the Walnut Grove district.

Several years ago Amer Green was lynched by a mob for the murder of his sweetheart, Luella Mabbitt, the hanging taking place at a walnut tree in the Walnut Grove schoolyard. Since then the children have been filled with superstitious terror in regard to the place, and the once large school dwindled to two pupils last winter, and after a few weeks' effort to get others to attend, school was dismissed. Strange stories were told about the place. Green's ghost was reported to have been seen, and the teachers reported that they heard unexplainable sounds about the building. The walnut tree, before then a large and thrifty one, never bore foliage after the lynching, and stood a bleak reminder of the tragedy.

No teacher could be found to accept the school for next winter, and in response to the insistent demands of the patrons a new building will be erected a short distance away, the old site being abandoned.—Indianapolis Journal.

### Carried Kittens With His Teeth.

Stradley is three years old and a polite young man, as is indicated by the fact that he gravely doffs his hat when meeting a woman with whom he is acquainted. He also believes that in some things nature's way is the better.

A family of kittens came to Stradley's home, much to his delight. He carried one of the kittens about with him and marveled much that the kitten should cry.

The other day he saw the mother cat carrying a kitten in her mouth, and a great light broke on Stradley. That afternoon he walked solemnly in to the house, holding a struggling kitten firmly between his teeth.

"Why, Stradley," said his mother, "you should not carry poor kitty that way."

"No?" said the little man, and then added: "Why, it's mamma does."—New York Mail and Express.



A Compromise—Sadly Lacking—The Reward of Perseverance—Provisioned—A Useless Adjunct—The Responsibility—Midair Apprehension—Hopeful, Etc.

"Will you give me a steam yacht? When I am married to you Jack? The youth was wise, and, like a shot, Gave her a little smack!"—Life.

### Sadly Lacking.

Baby Swellkid (to friend)—"How awkwardly that common child walks." Friend—"Yes; she has no carriage at all!"—Chicago News.

### The Reward of Perseverance.

"Why, I didn't think you intended to encourage him." "Well, I didn't at first, but it was impossible to discourage him!"—Puck.

### Provisioned.

"Did little Jim enjoy that children's party?" "I guess so. He wasn't hungry until the next afternoon at four o'clock."—Puck.

### A Useless Adjunct.

Ascum—"What's the idea in your new story?" Wright—"Idea? Why, it hasn't any. It's a society novel."—Philadelphia Press.

### The Responsibility.

She—"Did it ever occur to you what poor talkers the men are?" He—"Did you ever consider that it is the women who teach babies to say things?"—Boston Transcript.

### Midair Apprehension.

Pinching Bug—"Say, it is silly for you to wear your headlight on behind."

Lightning Bug—"Not at all. I'm awfully nervous about rear-end collisions."

### Hopeful.

He—"Do you suppose we will ever have enough to get married on?"

She—"Surely. Why, Jack, we don't need a million. A couple of hundred thousand will do to start on."—Detroit Free Press.

### Glad of It.

"I read somewhere the other day that the American people spend \$15,000,000 a year for golf."

"Good! I'm glad to hear it. If they didn't blow it in that way they might spend it on fireworks."

### Quite Out of It.

Mrs. Bluegore—"But they are very fashionable, are they not?"

Mrs. Swellman—"Fashionable? Most assuredly not. Why, they permit the care of their children to interfere with their social obligations."—Philadelphia Press.

### None Ever Lost.

"People will find fault." "It seems inherent in human nature."

"The surprising part is so much fault is found when so few seem to lose any of their faults."—Philadelphia Times.

### Helping Him to Like.

"Yes," he said, with a deprecating sweep of the hand, "this is a very small world, after all."

"I know it," she replied; "sometimes it really astonishes me that you can back up or turn around on it without slipping over the edge."—Chicago Record-Herald.

### Justified.

"So you didn't think, before we met," she said, with an arch smile, "that I was beautiful? Why?"

"I had heard several of your lady friends say you were 'such a nice, sweet little thing,'" he replied.

After that she naturally had less confidence in herself.

### The Price of Knowledge.

"I sent away a dollar," she sadly said, "to a party in New York who offered to tell for that amount how to make the guests at summer resorts love your children."

"Oh, did you?" her friend asked.

"What do you have to do?" "Leave them at home!"—Chicago Record-Herald.

### Self-Esteem.

"Yes," said the youngster's mother, "Mr. Bliggins insists that our boy is going to grow up to be a wonderfully intellectual and estimable man."

"That is only a natural parental pride."

"Perhaps, I am not quite sure whether it is parental pride or belief in heredity."—Washington Star.

### Well Fixed.

"But, mamma," said the beautiful South American heiress, "do you believe I will have any trouble in being received in society in the United States?"

"I don't see why," answered her mother. "You have plenty of money and you can make the best of them look like small change when it comes to being a daughter of the revolution."—Indianapolis Sun.

## GOOD POPULAR SONGS SCARCE.

Great Hits Few Nowadays, Although Music Publishers Are Hustling.

"It is singular, but true," said a music publisher, "that there are very few big hits in popular songs nowadays, that is, songs that have reached the million mark in sales, such as 'After the Ball,' 'Annie Rooney,' 'Daisy Bell,' 'Down Went McGinty,' 'Two Little Girls in Blue' and 'Comrades.' Many songs published since then have been very popular, to be sure, but they cannot be compared with the old-timers.

"Many dealers have asked me the cause of this, but thus far I have been unable to explain it satisfactorily. It is all the stranger when you take into consideration the fact that there are more singers and better facilities for pushing songs than in former years.

"Years ago a good song would force itself upon the market. At present a publisher has to humor the singers and do a lot of hustling. Some of the top-liners require pay to sing songs. In the old days they were only too glad to get a good ballad. To cater to the whims of the singers a publisher must have at least three pianos in his establishment, employ expert players and vocalists to teach the songs, print professional cards and do a thousand other things. You see the competition is keen, and if you should hurt the feelings of any singer, especially a man or woman of reputation, you will have considerable trouble in making your songs popular.

"Publishers have to take a lot of chances, too. For instance, to popularize a song you must have slides made for stereopticon views. This costs quite a sum. One publisher spent \$400 to take pictures for a set of slides for the song 'Sing Again That Sweet Refrain.' He had to employ a troupe of colored minstrels, a band and a hall. Fortunately the song made money and he did not lose anything. There are other things to contend with, too, such as lawsuits, etc. There was a dispute over the ownership of one song, for instance. After fighting in the courts for some time one of the firms concerned compromised by paying the other \$2000 in cash and the costs of the suit."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

### Girls Who Sing Over Hard Work.

Young girls in Japan are employed to perform a task which cannot be done in the same time and with the same ease by any other body of work-folk in the world. They are engaged at the different ports in loading the large steamers with coal. The coal barges are swung alongside the vessel, from stem to stern of which are hung a series of platforms, the broadest nearest the base and diminishing as they rise. On each of these platforms a girl stands. Men on the barges fill baskets containing about two buckets of coal each, and pass them to the girl standing on the lowest platform. She passes them to the girl above her, and a continuous and unbroken line of baskets pass into the vessel from 10 in the morning until 4 in the afternoon.

The girls will handle from sixty to seventy baskets of coal per minute, and over 1000 tons of coal a day. This really arduous toil they perform as if it were mere play, for they keep up a running fire of jokes, and their laughter is continuous. They often break into a song, the notes of which are clear, melodious and stimulating. —Chicago Record-Herald.

### Eating Locusts.

The Filipinos in Manila are having an unexpected feast. It came to them like the manna to the Israelites, being furnished by a swarm of locusts, which recently flew over the city. To these people the locusts are a great delicacy. The insects are served dry or in a pot-pourri. They are also made into pies and cakes, and in some instances ground into powder and steeped in liquid so as to make a beverage. At times catching the insects becomes a very profitable business. In Manila and the other large cities they sell at \$2 a sack, gold. These sacks hold about a bushel. When dried the locust can be kept indefinitely. The natives never eat the grasshoppers green, but they eat them in every form, dried or cooked. They even carry them in their pockets and eat them as they would candies and other confections. When dried the locust is nice and crisp, and tastes something like gingersnaps. Some confectioners dress the grasshoppers in various ways, serving him up occasionally with chocolate trimmings and coats of sugar.—New York Post.

### Have You Met This Woman?

Her husband is all right—but he is so fat!

Her little boy is all right—but he is growing so spindling!

Her home is all right—but the paint is too light!

Did she like the last lecture at the club? Liked what he said very much—but his hair was cut so short—like a prize fighter!

Her new tailor suit is all right—but Mrs. Zyz has her coat a trifle, the merest shred, longer, and it's much better!

Her new hat is elegant—but if that ribbon was a shade darker, now—! —Boston Herald.



Two French physicians have made experiments which led to the conclusion that a nutritious, meat diet and absolute bodily rest are the best means of arresting consumption.

Three aluminum electric transmission lines have recently been installed in Italy near Naples. The lines transmit power at 300 volts from three-horse-power turbines to the valley of Pomell, to Sarno, and to Torre Annunziata. The lengths of these lines are two miles, nine miles and two miles, respectively.

A sheep raiser in Guadalupe County, N. M., is shearing his sheep with power furnished by electricity. He has established a camp on the Rock Island extension two miles from Junn Falls and is there shearing 25,000 sheep. The machine secures about three-quarters of a pound more wool from each sheep than did the old hand method. One man can shear 200 sheep a day.

The prize of \$200 offered some time ago by the Association des Industrielles de France for the best insulated glove for electricians was won by Mr. Franz Clouth, of Cologne. The prize-winning glove had an electrical resistance of 52,500 megohms and in a break-down test it withstood a pressure of 11,000 volts for three minutes and 12,200 volts for one minute before being penetrated. The glove is of rubber lined with triacet.

Geologists, after a careful study of the question, have given it as their opinion that the new oil belt, which at present is doing so much to boom Texas, extends from Beaumont down the Gulf Coast to the mouth of the Rio Grande and far into Mexico. Should this prove true, that country has before it a period of prosperity such as its people never before dreamed of. American prospectors are already at work, and are sinking pipe-lines in hundreds of places in the State of Chihuahua.

M. Becquerel reports to the French Academy of Sciences that as a result of carrying in his pocket for several months a small bottle of salts of the metal radium his skin under the pocket became considerably burned. M. Curie also reported that the exposure of his hand to radio-active material six hours caused a burn which did not heal up for several months. In their power to burn, therefore, as well as in various other characteristics, the radium rays show analogy to the X-rays.

Fiber pipes and conduits, made from wood pulp and treated with a preservative, are now being put in use. After the usual grinding the pulp is washed, screened, passed through a beating engine, then screened again. These operations completed, a thin sheet of the pulp is wound on a core until the desired thickness is secured. After drying the tube is treated with a preservative. Its ends are then finished in a lathe to any desired form. It is claimed that this product possesses the advantages over bored logs of a homogeneous material throughout, free from grain, and thoroughly impregnated with the preservative, thus avoiding variations in hardness, dryness and amounts of resinous matter.

### A Clever Postoffice Horse.

There is a clever postoffice horse in Brooklyn which for some time past has been getting double rations, and will probably continue to do so until the postoffice men discover his trick. From the sub-station at the corner of Ninth street and Fifth avenue are sent out a number of mail collecting carts through the surrounding district. When the horses drawing these carts come in they are driven up in front of the station to stand until it is time for another collection. While thus standing they are fed. On the curb in front of each horse is placed a bag of oats. None of the horses are tied, for standing is a part of their business.

This is when the horse with a double appetite has his opportunity to perform a skillful manoeuvre at each meal. He waits until all the rations are distributed, then, paying no attention to his own allotment, he begins slowly to back. Slowly, but surely he backs into the horse below him, which in turn pushes back further and further until in a few moments the clever horse in front who started the backward procession is standing in the place of his neighbor in the rear with his head in that animal's feedbag. Then he begins to eat ravenously, finishes his neighbor's oats as soon as possible, and steps nimbly back to his own place, eats his own oats, and settles contentedly for a stand-up nap with a well-fed air of placid innocence. But the horse at the end of the line suffers. That is no affair of the clever inventor of the scheme, however.—New York Times.

A single workman can cut 6000 watch glasses a day.