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Your Chance of Being Poisoned

By WOODS HUTCHINSON, M. D.

Humanity does not display much judgment in its fears. While, in the main, its instincts as to what is wholesome and what is harmful, what is to be welcomed and what is to be dreaded, are sound because they are based upon the experience of thousands of generations past, it still has an astonishing capacity for exaggerating the dangerousness of harmful things and even vividly dreading the wrong things altogether. One of the most striking illustrations of highly exaggerated fear of real danger is our fear of being poisoned either accidentally or by evil intent. The very name poison sends a shudder through our veins and puts us into a frame of mind where rational and dispassionate thinking is most difficult. The dread goes back such a tremendous distance and is so entwined about the deepest fibers of our being that the mere thought of poison sets up vibrations in us which "wireless" back to the very dawn of human experience. From earliest infancy our minds have been crammed by those distressing survivals from a much better forgotten past—called myth and legend and fairy tale (and Bible story)—with horrifying tales of poisoning by fascinating but deadly fruits. By the bite of flying and other imaginary serpents, by the stroke of venomed daggers or enchanted swords, or by that famous universal refrigerant and sedative, the "cup of cold poison," whether at the Borgias' board or from the taper fingers of the enchantress. The renowned episode in the Garden of Eden, for instance, is merely one of a hundred variants of the primitive legend of the beautifully colored fruit whose eating brought death into the world, probably in the beginning based upon the disastrous result of some actual early dietician experiment. Of course, there is a real basis in fact for part of this vivid fear and dread, because poisons do exist in considerable variety upon all sides of us, particularly in our food and drink, and it is well to be on our guard against them. But the point simply is that the actual part played in the death rate and disease rate by poisons, whether animal, vegetable or mineral, is far, far smaller than our inherited dreads would lead us to believe. We are not, of course, considering here the toxins or poisons of infectious disease or the putrefactive poisons of spoiled or tainted food, which are a very real and important source of danger; but only what are popularly known as poisons, that is to say, substances which in small amounts would cause serious danger to life. A single glance at the mortality lists or tables of causes of death assures us at once that if we all remained upon this earth until we died by poison, whether intentional or accidental, 99.9-10 per cent of us would live to be as old as Methusalem, and older. Death by poisoning accounts for barely one and one-half deaths out of each thousand, or less than one-seven hundredth of all deaths. However, these broad and average statements, though reassuring in the main and in the abstract, are not quite so convincingly consoling personally for the reason that we only happen to be the one person out of 700 upon whom it is to fall the honor of proving the exception to the rule of the 99.9-10 per cent harmlessness of poisons. The question has just recently been brought home to us very vividly by the horrible and dastardly attempt at wholesale murder by putting arsenic in the soup of the guests at the archbishop's banquet in Chicago, and the distressing tragedy of love's perfidy at Lake Forest, where prussic acid is supposed to have been given or taken as the fatal draft. What is the reason for the singularly small amount of actual damage wrought by the quite considerable number of common and fairly active poisons? The first reason is that, although there are great number and variety of substances, which if taken in sufficient amounts or through considerable lengths of time, would produce injurious results in the human system, the actual number of poisons found in a state of nature sufficiently strong or concentrated to be swiftly dangerous to life if swallowed is surprisingly small. We could almost count them upon the fingers of our two hands—opium, arsenic, corrosive sublimate (bichloride of mercury), tellurium, prussic acid, strychnine (tox vomit), carbonic acid, oxalic acid, lead, phosphorus, aconite. This almost completes the roll of the really strong and dangerous poisons. This is the more remarkable because there is no manner of question that poisons were highly prized and eagerly sought after in the olden days, blood-thirsty days of the past, which are not entirely over yet, as recent events in Planders have shown, and anything which would swiftly and surely put your enemy or rival heir out of the way would bring its weight in gold. In fact, no inconsiderable share of the income of the magicians and astrologers and necromancers and medicine men, and earlier times was derived from a lively and lucrative traffic in poisons, for both family and foreign use. In fact, the list which has been given represents the eager accumulations of all past ages and the rakings of every climate and latitude. Opium from Turkey and the near east, arsenic from China, strychnine from tropical Africa, corrosive sublimate from Arabia, and so on. And most of even this small group of real, "sure enough" poisons have to be collected and extracted from the ores or the juices of the plants in which they are found, and usually more or less concentrated before they are swiftly deadly in small amounts. One would have to chew up several poppy heads, for instance, in order to get enough opium for a dangerous dose. Furthermore, scarcely one of these, except occasionally lead, occurs either naturally or accidentally in our food or drink, so that our main danger of poisoning by them consists almost solely in picking up the wrong bottle or pill box or in some other way taking a deadly dose of medicine instead of a harmless one.

In-Shoots

Misfortune often has difficulty in overtaking a hatter. Those silver linings do not always make up for the cloudy coverings. Men satisfied with a rear pew at church always demands a front seat at the prize fight.

Waning of the Love Letters

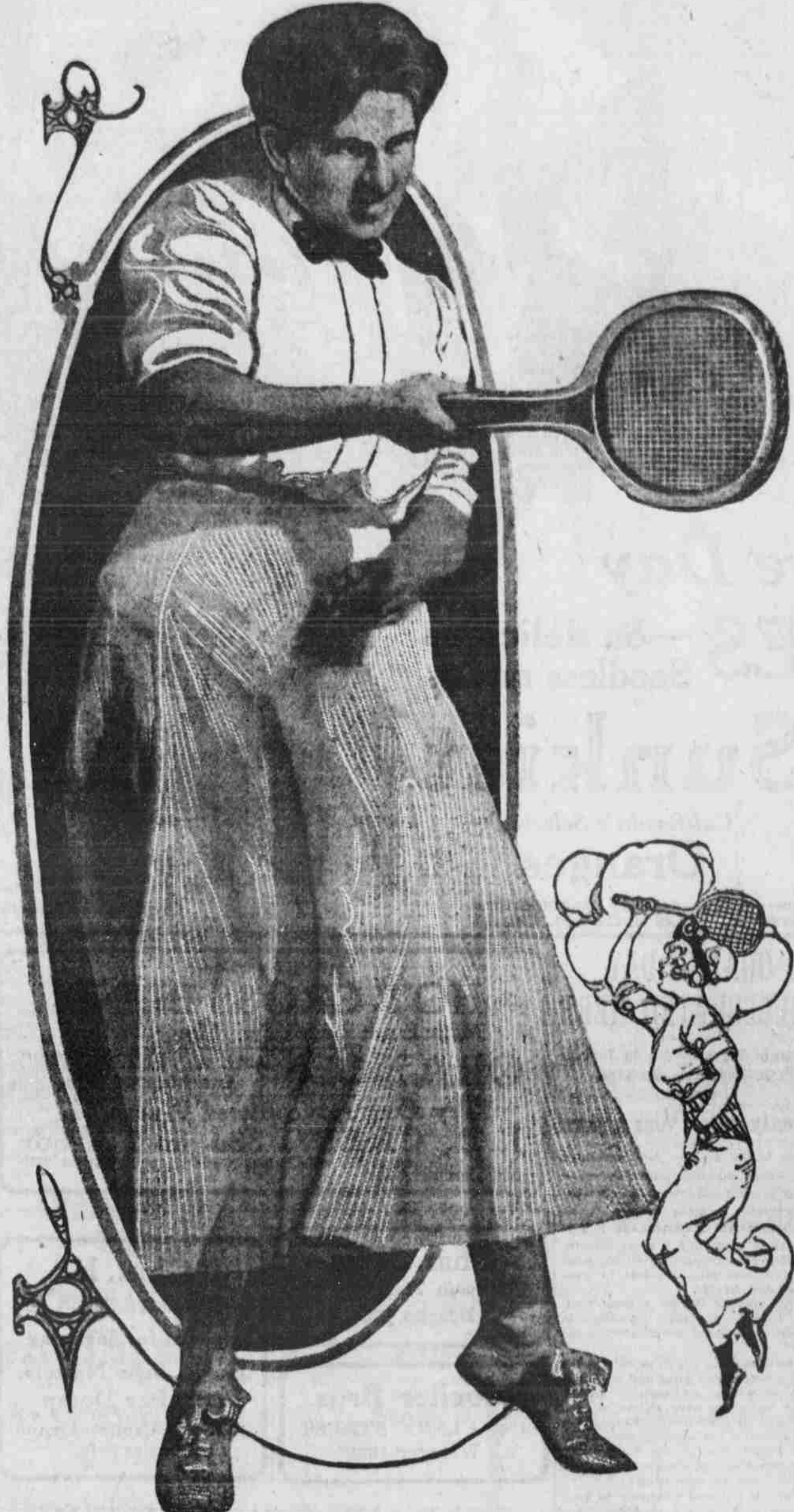
By MARIE DE FERROT.

All through life I have been a great friend of letter-writing and have treasured letters, some sparking with wit or sad with pathos, others full of true devotion. How the love-letters in Richardson's "Pamela" and "Sir Charles Grandison" delighted our grandfathers and grandmothers. They wept bitter tears over the misfortunes of their heroes and heroines. Their own long love-epistles were full of small details, for nothing is too small for great love. They would feel surprised that we have so terribly neglected the art which delighted them. The most famous love-letter writers of the time were French women, though the art came to us from England. Mademoiselle de Jeunaine spent ten days shut in her room writing love-letters to the Comte de Mora, who sent back twenty-two replies. Horace Walpole, writing about his stay in France, tells us about people who wrote to one another four times a day and also a married couple so bent on writing love-letters that they had a screen put up in their drawing room and threw their letters over it. The sweet message of old is supplanted by the petit bleu—short and terse, blown through a tube, for the world has invented marvelous things. To me a love-letter full of joy and exquisite delight, seems sacred and mysterious. Who of us does not remember the moment when a sight of the well-known writing and the touch of the paper thrilled us? Did we not linger over every line? Did we not read in it a thousand meanings? It brought the beloved so close to us, almost within our touch! Those lovers of old had so much time on their hands and the sheets of paper are covered closely, sheet following sheet. Distance and the monotony of life was great and the means of transport slow, but I wonder if all our daily telegrams and notes give half the pleasure of one of those long letters. Distance nowadays no longer exists. When we are wild with longing and despair at being separated from those we love, we take a steamer, an express or a motor, we send a telegram and tomorrow we may fly in an aeroplane. Our life has grown too busy! It is so much easier to buy a picture postcard than to spend time and trouble and possibly even to sacrifice rest, to send the beloved the picture of one's self, drawn from life with pen and ink. We no longer write about ourselves, because this hurried twentieth century has no time to reflect seriously and there is so much outside excitement to write about—"The king's horse has won the derby," "Paulhan has made the French forget the defeat of Waterloo." Every moment is taken up. And how will it be when we women sit in Parliament to improve the affairs of the nation? Letters, even love-letters, are short and terse. All this is progress and I am afraid you will think me old-fashioned and out of date when I tell you that I miss, between lovers of today, a something, a certain timidity, perhaps, which pervades those love-letters of old. I admire men and women, boys and girls, who are strong and brave—the world needs them, too, but love is timid. Strong love is always afraid that it will never be great, good, pure enough for those other eyes to dwell upon with pleasure. It is not bold, and takes refuge in a letter to express with trembling what it wishes to convey. It is fortunately no longer fashionable to indulge in sentiment. It is called sentimentality, and is often considered not merely weakness, but insincerity. The greatest qualities, however, are the qualities of the soul, and if the heart "furnishes more in conversation than in mind," as a profound French thinker once said, how truly this applies to the art of writing love-letters in their infinite varieties.

Do You Know That

"Dutch" clocks are made in Germany, their name arising from a mispronunciation of "Deutsch," the German word for "German." Elephants travel from three to four miles an hour and cannot cover more than fifteen or twenty miles a day with comfort. To prevent your lamp from smoking, soak the wick in vinegar and dry thoroughly before putting it into the burner. Ostriches can jump a height of over five feet. Dikes are attached to the mooring ropes of ships when in harbor, in order to prevent rats running along the ropes. Hearing is not an active sense until three or four days after birth. The highest rainfall in England is at Seathwaite, in the lake district. As a substitute for blacking, apply a small quantity of glycerine to your boots with a soft rag. Leave for ten minutes and then polish with a brush. The polish thus obtained will last for several days.

New York State Tennis Champion Who Opposes Miss Bjursted in National Meet



MISS MARIE WAGNER.

Play for the national women's indoor tennis title has been started with a record list of entries. The tournaments are being played in New York. Miss Mollajursted, the national outdoor and indoor champion, is defending her title against some of the best contenders in the game. Miss Marie Wagner, New York state titleholder, is one of her strongest opponents and will make a plucky fight to wrest the title from the Norwegian girl.

Advice to Lovelorn

By Beatrice Fairfax

Try to Forget Him. Dear Miss Fairfax: Have been going about with a young man for about two months and care for him very dearly. He has often told me that he also cared for me. Now this young man previously went with another young lady for quite some time, but had some misunderstandings and parted. I have continually told him that if he really cared for her to return, but always he would answer that he no longer cared. Now, for the past couple of weeks he has been acting very strangely toward me, so I mentioned it to him one evening and he replied that it was nothing worth thinking about. So I let the matter drop. He then made an engagement for Sunday, which he did not keep, and neither did he phone. So about three days later I wrote him a short note inclosing his picture and stating that I had come to the conclusion that he really cared more for his previous girl friend, so it would be better to part, also asking for the return of my pictures, which he holds. As yet I have not heard from him, so am at a loss as to whether I did the proper act or not. Do you think I ought to phone this young man and ask him to explain or should I let the matter drop entirely? E. M. C. Really I think you are better off without the affections of this man, in whose devotion and loyalty you evidently have no confidence. Possibly you were doing the other girl an injustice when you permitted yourself to get interested in this young man. But the greater injustice was in his letting two girls suffer because he did not know his own mind. Of course, you were a little hasty in returning his photograph and taking the stand you did, but I believe your greatest chance of happiness lies in dismissing him from your mind and in interesting yourself in other people and other things.

Church Should Have Nature Sabbath School

By ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

Copyright, 1916, by Star Company. What is your opinion on the subject of a "Nature Sabbath school"? The idea has come to me as a sort of inspiration. We teach children to think of their natural activities, their play, as something to be put aside, till their religious devotion is over—and so religion becomes not something to love, but merely a duty which they hope will be short—the shorter the Sunday school the better the child likes it—as a writer says, "we mark the joy of religion by a long, unsmiling face, our mechanical devotion, our whistles and tragic manner," then—is it any wonder that children find religion wearisome? As Coe writes: "As long as such notions prevail we should expect children to exclude God from their play; to think of religion as unnatural and either grow up indifferent to religion or reserve their reverence for Sunday in the church." My idea would be to take little one out under the skies to show them the wonderful beauties of nature, teach them the goodness of the infinite and, as my little boy has been taught, to "talk to the spirits of light and love and aid from the spiritual, teaching—physically the little ones would be benefited and the little flock could be given such an enjoyable outing that they would learn to love "Nature's Sabbath school" (is the name appropriate?) If you think such an idea of use, I shall be glad to outline a plan which is in my mind, though doubtless it could be improved. M. H. C.

The idea contained in the letter quoted above is crude but beautiful. Working out and properly developed it would become of great value to the world. A Nature Sabbath school should be a part of every Christian church. Teacher should be carefully selected and thoroughly trained to carry out the instruction which would include the rudiments of botany, astronomy and the wonders of nature, of insect and star life, should be dwelt upon with reverence and awe. All these studies should be made as entertaining as fairy stories or fiction of any form. The children should feel that they are on a picnic and that they are being amused, while in fact they are being instructed, mentally, and their souls are unconsciously being awakened to reverence for and love of God. A child who attended Nature's Sabbath school under such instruction could never grow into a pessimist or an atheist. Many children have become both who were reared in the depressing environment of the old-fashioned Sunday school. A good man said not long ago that twenty years of his life were marred by his Sunday school experiences. Sunday to him was a day of horror and gloom, and the unwholesome teachings he heard expounded by a cruel God who sent unbelievers to hell caused him to fly to the extreme of unbelief in any religion as soon as he passed out of the home environment. After twenty years, however, he came into the light of true knowledge of God through a study of plant life, and the marvels which he found in seed and bulb and bud and blossom caused him to realize the majesty and might of the All Creative Power and to love his Maker.

Let us have the Nature Sunday school by all means.

Let us have the Nature Sunday school by all means.

Let us have the Nature Sunday school by all means.

Are You Responsible or Irresponsible?

By BEATRICE FAIRFAX.

The great difference between irresponsible and responsible folk is that the latter appreciate the fact that everything in the world has a consequence. Irresponsible people are wholly untrustworthy because with them, life is made up of moments which are general and individual. As a matter of fact, life is made up of moments, but they are strung together and follow one another with a certain logic. Everything in life is connected of something else and upon something else. You are an untrustworthy person if you set yourself into the way of imagining that you can cut yourself off from paying for whatever you do. Life is a series of payments. Go out without rubbers on a stormy day and sit about with damp feet. If, perchance, you escape the consequent cold that is logically due you, you lose up your head and talk about the magnificent constitution that enables you to resist sickness. But nature, who spina with the grim certainty of the mythological "ates, must smile rather cynically. She knows that you are weakening that "magnificent constitution" of yours by your folly and that if you go on breaking down your physical resistance, some day you will fall an easy prey to disease. For all we get in life, we pay. But, unfortunately, we do not pay always when we have just contracted a debt, and might feel that we got enough satisfaction out of our purchase so that taking the consequences was not too much of a hardship. We generally have to pay just about when we had hoped that the debt was outlived. "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel"—that tells the doom of all irresponsible, happy-go-lucky folk. They do not excel, nor can they ever hope to unless they acquire a sense of responsibility to themselves, to the people about them, to their position in life and to life itself. Strong people can almost cut themselves off from their heredity. Think of all the wonderful men who have made themselves, and in the making risen far above the place in life from which they started. It is easier to cut yourself off from your heredity than from your responsibility to posterity. If you are weak, you leave behind you a heritage of weakness which makes for the next generation the struggle of cutting itself off from heredity—and you do not leave a heritage of strength to make it easier to rise above your weaknesses. Any one of us can be trusted—if first we trust ourselves, and refuse to fall that trust. It is all a matter of will-power. The minute we look at life as a whole, a circle in which the past presses on the present and the present on the future, and the future again is traceable from the past, we get a feeling of responsibility. And a feeling of responsibility means that if we have any common sense at all we recognize that the pattern of life is ours to weave, warp and woof. "The pattern of life!" It is ours for the making, and when we recognize the responsibility we have to make our own little pattern good and fine and worthy of the whole we have become trustworthy individuals.

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