

## New York's Mid-Winter Bathers



Photo by Messersohn.  
A Group of "Polar Bears" and "Snow Birds" Playing with the Medicine Ball in the Shore Ice on Brighton Beach, New York.

**Sturdy Women Winter Bathers Warming Up on One of New York's Beaches by Playing Leap Frog Before Plunging Into the Frigid Waves.**

**Heroic Health Gaining Methods of the Intrepid Men and Women Who Plunge in the Ocean Even with the Thermometer at Zero and Swim Races with Cakes of Ice**



Running Through Snow and Ice to the Bath House After the Arctic Dip.

At a recent banquet at Brighton Beach a ruddy faced man with glowing eyes and a "haven't-a-care-in-the-world" smile, arose and toasted "the newest and finest of sports."

"Here's to midwinter bathing," he said, with glass aloft. "The icy plunge that drives out the devils of nervousness and drives in the little angels of cheerfulness; that makes women beautiful and keeps men young; that straightens bent backs and twisted tempers. The greatest blessing we can wish to our friends is that they may become midwinter bathers."

Dr. Theodore Siqueland was the speaker. At his right sat former Police Deputy Dougherty, of New York.

"Mr. Dougherty," the speaker continued, beaming on his confere, "is individual in bathing, as in all other matters. Not content with one dip in the congealing flood, he takes two. He strides the beach as majestically as Alexander strode the shore of Asia Minor, and after warming up sufficiently, he plunges into said flood and swims from a given point in front of the Parkway Baths to the foot of Ocean Parkway, a distance of 300 yards. Landing, he repeats the majestic stride back to the given point in front of the bathhouse, swings his arms with a dignity that resembles that of an eagle making ready his wings for flight, dashes again into the water and swims once more the 300 yards. Then he strides back to the bathhouse, removes his dripping garments, dresses beside a roaring fire, and motors back to town for dinner. He owes his commanding brain and compelling health to a weekly plunge into the Atlantic Ocean, with the water at a temperature of 25 to 30 degrees above zero and the circumambient air anywhere from 45 degrees above to 2 below zero."

At which the eighteen "Beach Nuts" and their friends applauded President Siqueland, and the guest of honor.

Among the palms, turning their admiring gaze upon the speaker, sat a score of handsome, smartly attired women, the wives, mothers and sisters of the men of Polar aquatic instincts.

"Really, Theodore has become a much handsomer man since he began his Winter dips," said one of these. "My George is not only handsomer, but his temper has improved. Home has been a pleasanter place this Winter."

"My brother's earning capacity has increased. The company has promoted him three times in one year," proudly attested a charming little Brooklyn maid in blue velvet. Which attests at least the enthusiasms of the bands of men and women from Brooklyn and New York



Winter Bathing Certainly Seems to Make for Strength as This Photograph, Taken at the Coney Island (New York) Beach When the Thermometer Marked 5 Degrees Above Zero, Shows.

who make weekly pilgrimages to the seashore to swim in the chilling brine. There is fraternity in these bands, in all save the hour of their wintry bathing.

The oldest of the organizations, consisting of twenty-five members, named themselves the Polar Bears, and, headed by Harry Oelrichs and the dozen pretty and sturdy women who compose the flock of Snow Birds, led by Miss Alda Cordes, think it more convenient and salubrious to bathe in the afternoon. On any Sunday afternoon at 2:30 these thirty-seven may be seen issuing from the Parkway Baths, which the midwinter bathers have taken over, at Brighton Beach, in ordinary Summer bathing costumes. For an hour or two they gambol on the beach, the shivering spectators on the board walk being edified by the spectacle of a bearded

"Polar Bear" playing leap frog, and a "Snow Bird" bowling over a "Polar Bear" with a snowball as large as her head.

The Arctic Club, made up of ten male adventurers in the ocean waves, chose noon as the most auspicious hour for the chilling process. Mr. Walter Cushing leads his company of ten knickerbockered valiants into the surf at noon, he deeming that the most auspicious hour.

Eighteen residents of Brooklyn preferring an earlier plunge, so that they might doze over the Sunday papers at home, or walk or motor in the afternoon, have arranged the day's programme with "Parkway Baths at 10" as the chief item.

In methods as in fraternity, the bathers agree. It is their custom to warm up by playing medicine ball, leap frog or by races on the beach

for from one to two hours, before their dip. When the blood is bounding through their veins with sufficient velocity to afford resistance to the cold and shock, they dive into the water. There are no half way measures in the plunge, no timid wadings, no cries of "Ouch!" For the midwinter bathers know that he who hesitates is in great danger, while he who plunges is in all probability safe. Most of the bathers are satisfied with the dip of a moment, and, laughing and shouting, run straight back to the baths, where they clothe themselves, and whence they issue in an apparent state of abundant vitality.

There are exceptions to this regimen, as, for instance, in the case of former Deputy Dougherty, who invariably makes his two dashes of 300 yards each. The example of two



intrepid bathers, Louis Frank and Martin F. Healy, who paid a week day visit to the beach and dared the water when the temperature of the air was 2 below zero, is being discussed. Would any Beach Nut, or Polar Bear, or Snow Bird, or member of the Arctic Club have dared?

If the 2 below zero day had fallen on a Sunday, the consensus of opinion is that they would have dared.

"But why?" some essentially practical person may inquire.

The writer of this article so inquired. Mrs. Herbert Crowell, one of the "Snow Birds" and wife of a "Polar Bear," replied: "To have a good time. We bathe as some people dance, because we enjoy it."

Dr. Siqueland smilingly gives the information: "The midwinter plunge out of doors is better than the cold plunge in your bathroom, for the reason that all sports are better out of doors than indoors. The principle involved is the same. The value of the cold plunge is in the shock it gives to the blood vessels, so stimulating the circulation of the blood.

"Few take the cold plunge or shower in their bathrooms without the advice and consent of their physician. All persons who take a weekly midwinter plunge in the ocean would do well to be thus safeguarded by professional advice. At least the outdoor-in-Winter bathing habit should be gradually formed. All the members of our various icy organizations were accustomed to

surf bathing in the Summer, and simply continued their dips as the weather grew colder. The human body has marvelous adaptability. It slowly inures itself to the new conditions of the increasing cold. The man or woman who rashly began midwinter bathing would court pneumonia, and deserve his or her fate."

On April 17, at the Hotel Imperial in Brooklyn, the Arctic Club, another of the quartette of organizations that chartered the Parkway Baths for the Winter, will hold its annual banquet. At that time will be reported the number of dips taken during the Winter months, despite hindrances of ice and snow. The number, by present indications, will reach considerably more than one thousand.

### Danger in Cleaning Your Teeth with Paper

ONE of the most dangerous little tricks that men and women do is to take a bit of paper, torn from an envelope or newspaper, and try to run it between the teeth to remove some little particle of food that the tongue feels. If you want to be sure of trouble with your gums continue this practice, and sooner or later—rather sooner than later—you will secure a splendid case of infection of the gums that will send you

to the dentist in a hurry, and may cause more than one sleepless night. The bit of paper used in this way, introduced edge-wise between the teeth, is worse than any toothpick or other instrument, for many reasons. In the first place the sharp edge of the paper is most apt to make a cut in the gum, and in so doing it is almost sure to carry into the circulation at least some of the many germs clinging to it. Again,

the chemicals used in the making of paper are far from edible, but in addition to these the newspaper may have picked up a variety of germs from those who have handled it or from the dust that has blown upon it while exposed for sale. The flap of the envelope, which is so "handy" a bit to use for the teeth, may have touched the lips of some one with tonsillitis, or even with tuberculosis.

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