War as a Tonic for Jaded Feminine Nerves: Physicians Say They Are Now Treating Fewer Women Whose Ills Are Imaginary

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Military Heels, Sensible Toes, and the Eredit Carriage Instead of the Slouch

Diseases among women during the last year. Figures are not available on the whole. The Health Department has no means of tabulating these returns, and in estimating them one must rely merely upon his experience and observation. Judging by mine, I would say that the upper-class women of New York had forgotten their ilia by from one-third to one-half.

"You are mistaken in assuming that this is a hardship to physicians. In the first place, physicians have been drawn away to the war in such numbers that those of us who are left are overworked, and we are only too glad to be relieved of cases whose ills were in whole or in part imaginary. It doesn't make any difference how wealthy the woman is or what the fee she is willing to pay. The fact that she takes a physician's time, unless the need is imperative, is a serious matter now. Fortunately, that problem, always a facet heretofore, has been reduced to a minimum by the war."

"Are women physically stronger, or do they only think so?"

"Now you are getting into the border-


Cross depicts located in one of the leading hotels, and not a physician has seen her since. I understand she rose every morning now at 7. She used to get up at 9, 10 or 11. She spends ten to twelve hours a day at the hotel in active supervision of about thirty other workers and has taken personal responsibility for everything that goes or fails from her depot. She has no time to be 'ill'."

"This is far from being an isolated case. There are many like it. One woman, an acquaintance of mine, wrote me a few days ago: 'Doctor, three times in the last six months I have been on the point of consulting you, but each time I started it happened that I received word from some friend that a relative at the front had been wounded, and I became so upset in thinking of those poor boys over there that I didn't feel the heart to say one know I was ill. My own little complaints seemed so trivial I was ashamed of them.'"

So it goes up and down the list of women in easy circumstances. The war, in its manifold appeals, has proved a powerful stimulant, more potent than any medicine that might have been administered. It is the Spartan appeal, the stoic remedy when none is better. Every reputable physician welcomes it, for it relieves him of the hordes of people that always clutter his practice, and, besides the values added to the general community, it has permitted physicians to be released for more needed work on the other side, in addition to clearing the sanatoriums and hospitals of a lot of deadwood. This cleansing process is most encouraging, and will doubtless be accelerated as the war goes on."

The chief health benefits of the war to women so far, according to Dr. Eugene L. Avery, of the Boston Lying-In Hospital, are increased interest in motherhood, which has increased the birth rate, and generally the home life of the military atmosphere which has enveloped the nation. The institute examined physically thousands of women each month.

The most gratifying physical change in women," said Dr. Fisk, "is in their posture. Time was, not so far distant, when a good many of the women in this community, affectioned for their children, were in the habit of standing close to the child and of an attitude of protection over him. This has disappeared. The soldier has captured the popular imagination. The military bearing, the military salute, the military appearance, appeal to the women even more quickly than to the men, and react to it automatically in the home circle. A girl who glides or slouches or minces along is no longer considered desirable by young men or envied by her associates."

Women are knitting, knitting, millions of them, and this is another part of the strain to come. They are learning the insanities of fashionable fripperies and the real attraction that lies in a healthy body, bright eyes, shining teeth, and an upstanding, graceful carriage in the faces which freely her and exercise and the tone of work and service."

Women adjust themselves quickly to meet men's demands on them. Without reasoning it out, they knew that the future militarily trained young man is not going to like the same sort of dawdling, slouching woman the easy-living young man of the past admired."

The question arises, Suppose the war had been no war, what would have been the ultimate fate of these women, who only a few months ago were soft and pampered, stumping at the shoulders, wear county-seat shoes, and many of them devoted to no serious purposes in life? Luxury and commercialism and pacifism were making them decadent. Suddenly they have been transformed in a short time, a few months, a year or so, into a new species of foot, right-walking, self-relying, healthy human animals. Do you think the women are not also compelled to accept this change? Not to so intensive a degree, not to the same extent, to be sure, but the influence is there just the same. We already feel it in industry, in the expression of our feet. We feel it more and more as the months and years go on."

The condition of women's footwear Dr. Fisk might be termed almost a "footwear revolution," the most widespread hygiene and comfort revolution the nation has seen. Fifty to sixty per cent of our recruits have abnormal feet caused by distorting and crippling shoes. The percentage among women, if it could be taken, would doubtless be higher. Perhaps 35 or 50 per cent. of women would be found to have abnormal feet.

It is likely, he observed, "that foot abuse and foot strain are, next to motor exhaustion, the most widespread hygiene sin committed by civilized man. Sixty-five per cent. of our recruits have abnormal feet caused by distorting and crippling shoes. The percentage among women, if it could be taken, would doubtless be higher. Perhaps 35 or 50 per cent. of women would be found to have abnormal feet."

It is not hard, women's shoes are diabolical. The hygienist who can persuade himself to look into a shoe window and find himself in possession of a foot that suffers a sense of physical pain. The pointed toe pierces his brain and his X-ray is thrilled by the disease caused by distor-


Motor Driver.

Policewoman.

land of speculation. I won't attempt to answer. The fact is in hundreds, yes, thousands of wealthy and well-to-do women in this city are giving less thought to their physical ailments than ever before in this generation. Take one case that occurs to me—not one of my own, of course. This woman, a well-to-do person, went from one physician to another. She and at least half a dozen of our best-known doctors had examined her various times. Twice she was on the operation table. The time she spent at removing "recoverying" would ag-


aggerate probably two years of the ten. Not one week of her life did she fail to call in some busy man to listen to her bill of complaint. I won't go so far as to say there was nothing really the ma-

ter with her in view of the fact that two very able surgeons operated on her."

However, about a year ago she took charge of the parking station of a Red

"Fashion in women's footwear is al-

Red

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