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HEALTH TALKS

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Asthmatic Wheezes

A young business woman went to a country inn for her vacation. Several dogs had the run of the house. Within 48 hours the young woman was so ill of asthma that it was necessary to take her home to her physician. In the city she quickly recovered. Her physician saw no reason why she should not return to the country for her vacation. She went back to the inn. Everybody welcomed her, including the dogs. Within a few days the asthma recurred. Again she was carried home, this time to remain in bed a month. After that she was able to visit another resort in the country, where she regained her usual good health. There were no dogs in this second country place. No one thought of that at the time, however.

Months afterward this business woman built herself a country home near the ocean, and there she thrived, though she occasionally got off a few wheezes. Her sister happened to be present on one such occasion and sister wondered whether a dog could have anything to do with it, for she had noticed that the wheezing usually occurred when a neighbor's dog had visited the cottage.

This theory of sister's set everybody thinking, and then it was recalled that every remembered asthmatic seizure had occurred soon after association with a dog. This was considered as of academic interest only, until one day the family stopped at a roadhouse for dinner. There the luckless woman had a moderate attack of the old asthma. One of the party remarked that if she did not know better she would assume there was a dog on the premises. There was apparently no dog—until a party arose from a nearby table and left the room followed by their dog which had been lying quietly under the table.

The plot thickens and the story ends here.

Not a few cases of spasmodic or bronchial asthma are caused by emanations (dander) from dogs, cats, fowls, parrots, canaries, mice, horses and other animals whose emanations (dander, skin, hair, fur, feathers) are foreign to man. Certain individuals seem to become "sensitized" to the particular protein of some such emanation, so that they have a characteristic reaction whenever they inhale the emanation in question. This action does not always amount to an asthmatic seizure; sometimes it expresses itself in an attack of hives with little or no disturbance of breathing. Hay fever is an identical reaction, in character, though the exciting cause is of vegetagle rather than animal origin, a pollen to which the victim is sensitized.

A medical man who had suffered more or less from asthma since childhood, found relief only after it had dawned on him that his footsteps had been dogged during all his worst attacks at home or in far away health resorts by that, as some folks call him, faithful friend of man, that dumb, very dumb indeed as compared with the intelligent feline, unreasoning animal that licks any hand that feeds him and bites a finger from the hand of his tender hearted mistress when she tries to rescue him from a perilous situation into which he has rushed like the dunderhead he is.

All that wheezes is not asthma. Many cases purporting to be asthma are in reality not of this character at all, but merely disturbances of breathing associated with very different diseases which it seems of no use to the layman even to mention in a discussion of asthma.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Seven Buckets of Blood.

Kindly inform me whether (4) four quarts of blood is an exceptional amount to lose at a tonsil operation? (L. S.)

Answer—I doubt whether any patient has ever lost four quarts of blood in a tonsil operation, unless it were Frank the elephant, and even Frank might well question the propriety of giving so much of his blood to the glory of surgery.

Old Lady Hygeia.

I believe you have recommended Hygeia as a good health magazine. In a recent number I find a reply to a query about bathing and menstruation, and it states that "swimming in cold water during the menstrual period has sometimes caused

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