

of the heart is discovered, the doctor attempts to strengthen its muscular power, and so to prevent the dilatation of the cavity from increasing. He therefore gives such drugs as digitalis or strophanthus or convallaria, the effects of which are to tone up and strengthen the muscular tissue; and with these he will usually give some iron in order to improve the condition of the patient's blood, or nux vomica in order to improve the nerve power of the heart, and so aid in strengthening its muscular tone. He will thus try to make the muscle stronger and stronger, knowing that the more powerful, within certain limits, the muscle becomes—the thicker, in fact, that the walls of the room are built inwards—the smaller will the cavity of the room be made, that is to say, the more will the dilatation of the affected cavity be reduced. The point, therefore, which it is specially necessary to remember is, that *the chief danger of heart disease consists in the muscular weakness of the organ* which the disease may produce. The more powerful, within certain limits, the muscular action of the heart can be made, the greater is the chance of the patient's life being prolonged.

(To be continued.)

Physical Decadence.

THE INFLUENCE OF DRESS IN PRODUCING THE PHYSICAL DECADENCE OF AMERICAN WOMEN.

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(Continued from page 166.)

ONE woman I saw tossing and kneading upon a block a mass of clay, which, as I found by actual test, weighed over sixty pounds. She handled it in her hands as though it were only a small mass of dough; and although thus employed from early morn until late at night, she was in no way disabled by her occupation. A physician of long experience, who practised in the place, assured me that so far as his practice among women was concerned it amounted to nothing in a gynæcological way, but that his obstetrical practice was very large.

Not long ago, a public meeting was held in Birmingham, England, by the nail-makers of

that district for the purpose of protesting against the employment of women in the business of nail-making. The reason given by a prominent member of the Association for this objection to the employment of women was that by this kind of labour a woman became so "unsexed" that she could outwork a man, continuing her labour hours after a man was completely used up. These facts and many others which might be cited, show that woman is not necessarily weaker than man. The weakness of woman is not due to natural constitution, but to a vicious mode of dress and neglect of physical exercise, although, possibly, heredity has some influence in the matter at the present day.

The practical bearings of this question are too evident to require more than mention.

(1) It is evident that pelvic disease involving the displacement of organs is only a part of a general disorder in which every organ below the diaphragm may be involved, and any system of treatment which addresses itself exclusively to the disorders found present in the pelvis, must be unsuccessful. Here is to be found the secret of the failure of so many methods and systems which have been proposed for the relief or cure of pelvic disease, particularly displacements. I do not hesitate to make the assertion that any method of treatment, either medical or surgical, which does not address itself to the removal of the causes of the disorder as well as to its effects and amelioration of symptoms, must result in failure. Temporary relief, often apparent cure, may be effected, but sooner or later the patient will find himself in the same wretched condition as before. This explains the almost universal failure of pessaries, local application of electricity, operations upon the perineum, and the various forms of anterior and posterior colporrhaphy, operations for shortening the round ligaments, ventro-fixation of the fundus, and a great variety of other methods and procedures which have been adopted for the relief of the various forms of displacements of the pelvic organs. The pessary sometimes succeeds, provided there is some coincident change in the habits of the patient which increases the strength of the muscles of the waist and abdomen. But, in my estimation, nothing can be more absurd than to thrust a pessary up among a mass of prolapsed abdominal and pelvic viscera, stretched away from their normal moorings, jostling one another about in the abdominal cavity, swaying in whatever direction the body happens to incline. No wonder that such patients often complain that the pessary gives pain. Certainly it is no marvel that ulceration, ovarian irritation and inflammation, and even salpingitis, are not uncommon results.

* "Annual Address upon Obstetrics and Gynæcology," delivered before the Michigan State Medical Society at the Annual Meeting held at Saginaw.

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