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Advice on Health (No. 194)

CARE OF THE HAIR

(Written for "The Listener" by DR. H. B. TURBOTT, Director of the Division of School Hygiene, Health Department)

CONSERVATION is a word that is being used more as our civilisation gives rise to particular needs. Conservation of soils and minerals, conservation of forests and bird life are topical matters. Conservation of health should be a live question. Conservation implies keeping and maintaining and using something wisely. I want to apply this thought of "conservation" to a part of the body to which most of us give too little thought—the hair. While we have it on our heads in abundance, we are careless; we give little thought to conservation; when it is gone or going, we men get worried. Women, with the vogue for short hair and artificial treatments and increasing prevalence of dandruff, will also get increasingly bothered with lifeless, thin hair, and possibly baldness in the future. When hair is getting thin, it is usually too late; care bestowed now may save what is left, but will not restore the loss.

Grandma Was Right

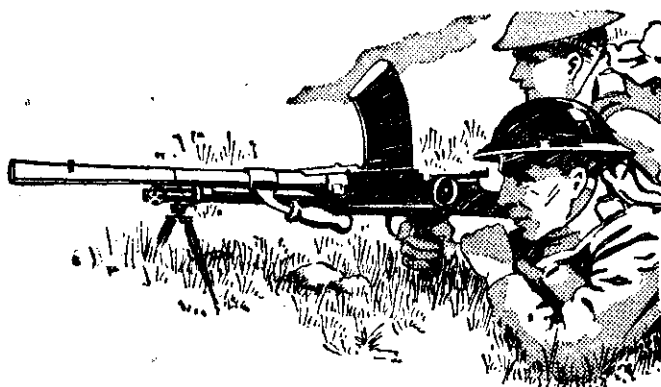
Do you know how to brush your hair? Brushing the hair is a neglected measure in these days of "perms." You need a good brush with bristles stiff enough and long enough to reach through the hair to the scalp. Soft, short-haired brushes are a waste of money. Brush your hair in all directions away from your scalp. It makes the hair healthier and glossier, and gives a well-groomed look. Grandma was right when she insisted on long daily brushing for conservation of hair.

Most boys and girls wash their hair at home. Expensive soaps or shampoos are not needed—just a mild, good soap that lathers well. Use plenty of warm water, rubbing the scalp well with your finger-tips. Rinse the lather out and repeat the lathering. Rinse again until the hair "squeaks" between your fingers. Dry thoroughly in the sun if possible.

How often should you wash your hair? Washing hair too often seems to dry hair—as does using water every time you comb it. There is really no rule, as some folk work in dusty places, or have very oily hair, and need more washing than others. Usually once a week or a fortnight does for a shampoo—provided daily brushing is done, to remove some of the dust and oil. And do not forget to wash your brush and comb, too.

Should you use a hair tonic? The main component of hair tonics is often spirits of alcohol. These dry the hair. Other tonics increase the oiliness of the scalp and make matters worse if the hair is already oily. People with very dry hair may use olive oil massage the night before a shampoo. Tonics do not grow hair or nourish hair. They do not cure dandruff. Their value lies in the fact that they must be rubbed in. The massage stimulates the circulation of blood. Of course you can do this without a tonic if you wish to.

Lastly, I am convinced a balanced diet has a lot to do with healthy hair. A daily sufficiency of vitamins and minerals gives gloss and health.



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