

## Chilblains and Chapped Hands

WE are in the cold, damp, wet, wintry months—chilblain weather. Have you had them or are they persecuting you now? If so, you're unlucky! Some folk never have chilblains. Other folk get them year after year, usually in the same places, although occasionally there's a year of freedom. Favourite spots are fingers and toes, occasionally ears, rarely the nose, and in young women, the calves and shins of the legs. Before the fortieth year about one in every two women has suffered from chilblains, and very often on that lower limb left with little protection from short skirts and thin stockings.

A chilblain is the result of bad circulation in the part affected. For some reason unknown the arteries just under the skin react to cold by undue tightening up of their walls. This, in turn, leads to widening of the little skin vessels. The result, less blood flow and stagnation in the skin in that place. Why this happens to some people and not to others nobody knows. First there's a redness and tingling that draws your attention, and you find developing a roundish, uneven patch that's itchy. Warm this blue and red part up and it really goes to market—burns and itches, sometimes intolerably. If nothing is done

about it, the skin may crack, and you have a really sore spot that may turn into an ulcer.

Never let a chilblain get to this broken down stage. Better still, try to prevent them happening. If a chilblain is developing, the treatment is aimed at improving the circulation locally, by counter-irritation. A paint for unbroken chilblains that works with some is tincture of iodine, 10 per cent, in collodion. Others find balsalm of Peru useful on its own or perhaps with some menthol added. If the skin is cracked, an ointment is better containing balsalm of Peru. All sorts of things have been tried internally. Vitamins, such as vitamin K and nicotinic acid, vitamin D with calcium injections, and so on. Successes have been claimed for one or other of these treatments in the past, but present opinion seems to be that nobody is sure of the successful outcome of any internal treatment.

Prevention is best, so attempt it, chilblain subject! Warmth is the key. Gloves for hands. No shoes that let in the damp! Make sure by wearing rubber overshoes outside—not only when shopping, but also round the back yard attending to the clothes. Why not two pairs, if thin stockings have to be worn? Or larger shoes, with sockettes over stockings to the ankle? Or fleecy-lined boots? Why not, if you want to get rid

This is the text of a talk on health broadcast recently from ZB, YA and YZ Stations of the NZBS, by DR. H. B. TURBOTT, Deputy-Director-General of Health

of your chilblains? Don't stand about in the cold—movement or more exercise are part of the chilblain-avoiding prescription. Diet helps—milk, plenty of it, cheese, vegetables, and fruit should be eaten every day.

Warmth is paramount! It is true that Great Britain and one of its offshoots, New Zealand, suffer chilblains. It seems that Canada and U.S.A. do not. The only explanation suggested for their freedom is their central heating. So above all, chilblain sufferer, keep warm and dry.

Let's leave chilblains now, and discuss chapped hands. These also worry some people in the cold weather—not the wet cold that encourages chilblains, but the opposite, dry cold! Chapping happens in cold weather, when the humidity is low, and is helped by dry, cold winds. So gloves, outside, are a "must" in such weather for those tending to chap. Inside, such a person must be careful with soaps and alkalis, which aggravate chapping. They do this by emulsifying the greasy matter on the skin and removing it. If your hands chap remember the cause may be in

your dishwashing and clothes-washing procedures. You may be using too alkaline a soap or soap powder. A more likely thing, perhaps, is that you use far too much soap powder or detergent for the immediate task. Thoroughly rinse your hands in fresh water, and dry well, after using these household helpers. If your hands become rough and sore from these household chores, wear household rubber gloves on washing day and when washing up. The best treatment for chapping is to use glycerin and rose water, or some hand-lotion containing glycerin.

### Australian Literature

IN the days of Henry Lawson and Banjo Patterson, the Australian man of letters, especially the poet, was essentially a "popular" figure. Today, his position has changed, but still Australia's literature has not gone beyond the reach of the ordinary man. According to Dr. Murray Todd, a New Zealander now lecturing in English at Canberra University College, it is winning both more popular and more official and academic recognition. Dr. Todd gives his views on its literature in two talks to be broadcast shortly by YC stations. His first deals with writing in general, and his second with what he considers Australia's two outstanding contemporary poets, R. D. FitzGerald and Kenneth Slessor. The talks, entitled *Australian Literature Today*, will be broadcast first by 2YC at 7.30 p.m. on August 25.

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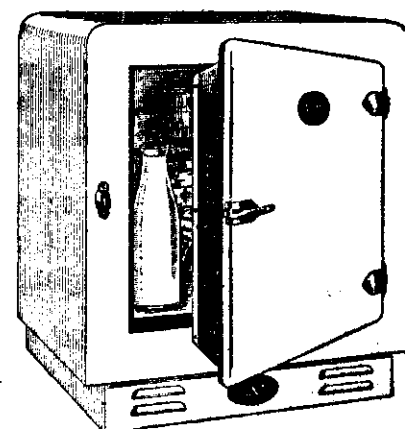
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