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...ed on page 84)

"Pep"

What it is—How you can get it—How you can lose it—
What to do if you haven't enough of it

By William S. Sadler, M.D.

Editor's Note: Dr. William S. Sadler is senior attending surgeon at one of Chicago's larger hospitals and a widely known lecturer and writer on health subjects.

PERHAPS you object to the word "pep." Some people do. But I don't believe it can be banished. For there is no other that expresses the exact meaning conveyed by this newcomer in our language. So I make no apology for using it. As a physician, I couldn't get rid of it, even if I wanted to. I often wonder how my patients ever got along without it; for not a day passes in a doctor's consulting-room that he doesn't have to listen to the plaintive remark, "I don't seem to have any pep!"

The person who feels that way ought to go to a doctor. Something is wrong with his engine. It doesn't get up steam. When you have plenty of pep you are surcharged with vitality. You are full of hope, ambition, courage. The world is your oyster, and you are just aching to get at it and open it.

But when your pep is at low ebb there is just one word that adequately describes how you feel, and that word is, "rotten." You have no energy; no "get up and get." You can't stand the gaff. You can't stand anything. You say you feel "all in." But you really mean that you feel "all out."

I am going to describe the seven most important factors that control the amount of pep you will have. And I will explain how you, in your turn, can very largely control these all-important factors. Let us start with

the blood. As you probably know, it contains two kinds of cells, the red and the white. Red cells carry oxygen to the tissues; then they carry carbonic acid gas back to the lungs to be exhaled—got rid of.

These little cells are enabled to perform this double rôle because they contain a chemical substance consisting largely of iron. It is this substance that gives them their red color.

When the doctor pricks your ear, takes a drop of blood from it, and compares it with a strip showing various shades of red, he is testing your blood to find out its percentage of iron—hemoglobin, as

he would call it. If this percentage corresponds with the general average for healthy people, he says that it is 100 per cent. If it is a little below the average, say 95 per cent, there's nothing to worry about. In most sedentary people over thirty years of age, it is often as low as 90 per cent.

But if your percentage of iron (hemoglobin) is down to 80 per cent, the situation is becoming serious. And if it is as low as 75 per cent, you have some form of anemia. You are sick. And if the condition is not corrected, you are going to have trouble and plenty of it.

One thing is certain; if your iron is

special cases. They are not for the average person, who nevertheless must constantly replenish his supply of iron. Just remember that if you don't replenish it, you are going to have a deficit that will result in loss of pep.

Well then, how are you to keep up your supply of iron? I'll tell you. You are going to eat it. You are not going to get it at the drug store, but at the fruit store and the grocery store. You are not going to take it out of a bottle, before meals or after meals; you are going to eat it as a part of your meals.

Most of our common foods contain iron, but some are especially rich in it.

Here they are, in the order of the amount of iron they contain: Spinach, especially fresh green spinach; yolk of eggs; asparagus; oranges; tomatoes; apples; milk.

Have You Ever Tried This Test on Yourself?

"I AM going to tell you," says Doctor Sadler, "of a very simple test by which you can determine fairly well the activity of your thyroid gland, which regulates your personal energy to an astonishing extent. With your right thumb and forefinger pinch up the skin on the back of your left hand. Hold it this way a few seconds, then let go quickly. If the ridge of skin instantly flattens out, it means that your thyroid gland is normally active, or possibly over-active. But if the fold of skin returns slowly and sluggishly, your thyroid is not active; it is producing too little secretion.

"However, the older you are, the less significant is this test. Old age is accompanied by a slowing down of thyroid activity. There is always less skin elasticity in people fifty years of age than in those of twenty or thirty."

below par, your pep will be below par. You will feel listless, miserable, all in. The less iron you have, the less pep you will have.

How can this deficiency in iron be made up? Well, if your percentage is very low, you may be taken to a hospital and have a blood transfusion—get a pint or two from somebody else. Or if you are in a less serious state, but still pretty bad, the doctor may give you a hypodermic injection of some form of vegetable iron. Or he may administer ordinary mineral iron in the form of Blaud's pills, even though this method has its disadvantages.

But these ways of getting iron are for

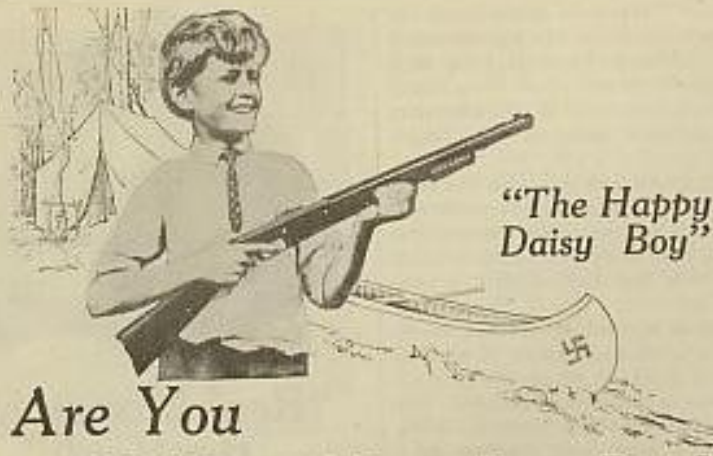
LEARN that list by heart. Be sure that every day—or, better still, at every meal—you eat some of these foods. Don't take iron in any other form, unless a first-class doctor prescribes it for you. But if you make a practice of eating an abundance of foods that are rich in iron, there isn't one chance in a thousand that a doctor will have to prescribe it for you.

The second factor that controls your degree of pep is the amount of acid poisons in your blood. The presence of too many of these poisons will make you feel drowsy, dull, fatigued. Your brain will refuse to act. You won't be able to think clearly and quickly.

Now, the human body is a regular poison factory! And most of the poison it produces are acid poisons. These are thrown into the blood. The kidneys filter out these poisons, with the result that a test of the urine will show what poisons were present in the blood.

The amount of acid in the normal, average urine is taken as a standard. It is set down as 30 degrees. Some people who eat little or no meat, may have an acidity test of only 20 degrees; or even as low as 10 degrees. Others, who eat a large amount of meat and who suffer from chronic constipation, may show anywhere from 50 to 100 degrees of acidity!

You must understand that every effort of the brain and (Continued on page 178)



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"Pep"

(Continued from page 29)

every contraction of the muscles produces acid in the body. The whole process of living is accompanied with acid production. This is natural and is easily taken care of by the normal body; but there are other acid poisons which are not "wished on us" by nature. We bring them on ourselves.

When we habitually use tea, coffee, tobacco, alcohol, or certain kinds of drugs, we take almost pure acid poisons into the system. When these substances are burned up in the body, they leave a very strong and harmful acid ash, or waste product. If you are addicted to their use, you are systematically preventing yourself from having the pep you are so much in need of.

Then there are the microbic poisons, produced by practically all the commonly known disease germs. If you have a bad cold, the "flu," an abscessed tooth, chronic tonsillitis, chronic appendicitis—in fact, almost any infection—acid poisons are constantly being manufactured in your body. Most of the diseases that are accompanied by fever produce acid toxins.

TO FIND out whether these poisons are responsible for loss of pep, the urine should be tested scientifically several times, at intervals of a day or two; for the acidity may vary somewhat with changes in diet, exercise, and so on.

Incidentally, let me explain that the much maligned uric acid is really a rather harmless substance in itself. It is merely an indicator of the presence of the more harmful acids which are the real mischief-makers.

Now you can, if you will, avoid using tea, coffee, tobacco, alcohol, and drugs. You can try to escape infectious diseases, and, with proper precautions, you will have only an occasional tussle with them. But there is one thing you cannot avoid. You must eat food. And, after all, your diet is the chief thing that controls your degree of acidity.

I want you to pay careful attention to what I am going to say about foods; for there is a very widespread misconception in regard to this phase of the subject.

Patients often tell me that they have quit eating grapefruit, oranges, and other acid fruits because they have been told that there was too much acid in their blood. But it is a fact that all the acid fruits, except plums and cranberries, are the best alkaline (non-acid) producing foods in the world.

In the process of digestion, the acids of these fruits, with the two exceptions I mentioned, are converted into alkaline salts. These salts tend to neutralize the acidity of the blood and thereby increase its "alkali reserve."

Below are two lists, which include all our common kinds of foods. At the left are those which, when burned up in the system, produce acid products. At the right are those that produce alkaline products. This "deadly parallel" is more important, in connection with our study of pep, than anything else I could say to

you about diet. Examine it carefully. I think you will be surprised to find that you are habitually overeating the acid-producing foods—those that bring lethargy and fatigue; and that you are under-eating those that give you pep and energy.

FOODS WHICH TEND TO ACIDIFY THE BLOOD

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. All forms of flesh foods, including meat, fish, fowl, meat broths, beef tea, etc. | 5. All cereals—rice, oatmeal, hominy, etc. |
| 2. Eggs. | 6. Peanuts, prunes, plums, and cranberries. The last two contain benzoic acid, which the body cannot fully oxidize. |
| 3. All kinds of bread stuffs, whether made of wheat, rye, or corn—bread, crackers, toast, griddle cakes, etc. | |
| 4. All sorts of pies and cakes, except fruit | |

FOODS WHICH TEND TO ALKALINIZE THE BLOOD

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. All dairy products, including milk, cheese, ice cream, buttermilk, etc. | 5. All kinds of vegetables; especially beets, carrots, celery, lettuce, and other "leafy" vegetables. |
| 2. All kinds of vegetable and fruit soups and broths. | 6. The legumes—beans, peas, and lentils. |
| 3. All the fresh fruits—except plums and cranberries. | 7. All the nuts—except peanuts. |
| 4. All of the dried fruits (except | |

If you will reform your diet in harmony with the facts shown in the above lists, you will begin, as the months go by, to get rid of some of your persistent fatigue and to enjoy a greater sense of energy and of well-being.

Of course, if you continue to take a lot of tea and coffee with your meals, if you go on smoking, if you drink a cocktail before dinner and take a headache powder semi-occasionally, your reformed diet won't have a fair chance to show results; for you will be putting *almost pure acid products* into your system.

You will notice that I did not include butter and sugar in the above lists. These substances are quite completely burned up in the body, leaving no ashes. So, in this connection, we needn't take them into account.

Now, please understand that the foods in that first list are good foods. We even have bread there. But, incidentally, many sedentary persons would be better off if they would eat less bread and more baked potatoes; for bread produces acid ash, while potatoes produce alkaline ash.

However, these acid-producing foods are good—if you don't show too much partiality to them. I merely want you to eat *less* of them and *more* of the alkaline foods.

THE third factor in controlling the amount of pep you will have is blood pressure. The average person, twenty years of age, should have a blood pressure of about 120, although it may vary 10 or 15 points either way, and yet be normal. As you get older, your blood pressure goes up, as a rule, one point for every two years increase in your age. At that rate, 150 would be a normal pressure when you are 40 years old, 135 when you are 50, and so on.

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FRED K. PARKER

There are many things that affect blood pressure. I can't touch on them here. But I want to explain that when your blood pressure is high—provided it does not go too high—you feel just grand! And when it is low, you generally feel "rotten."

But the high pressure, which makes you feel like a million dollars, is attended with serious danger; while the low pressure, which makes you feel rotten, is no cause for anxiety—not unless it follows a long period of high pressure. In that case, we call it "secondary low pressure;" and we don't like it at all! For it means that the heart has begun to fizzle out.

As a rule, however, if your blood pressure is below normal for your age, you may feel safe, even though you also feel "punk." Low pressure is found in many conditions, one of the commonest being nervous exhaustion—brain fag. If you are one of these people with tired-out nerves, don't worry about your loss of pep. Worry is the very thing that has brought it on. You are in no danger. Strike a proper balance of work, play, and rest; stop worrying and fretting; eat nourishing food; laugh at your fears, and keep busy.

IF YOUR condition has been brought on by worry, plus overwork and insufficient rest, you can correct it without much trouble. But you may be one of the people who are literally "born tired."

Not long ago, a woman about thirty-five years old came to me, complaining of an ever-present fatigue. She said that this sense of exhaustion had been more or less constant ever since she could remember. She practically never feels "full of pep." Investigation showed that she was suffering from psychasthenia—a sort of inherited nervous exhaustion. She is one of those who are born tired.

Now, we know of no cure for this condition. These people simply have to learn to get along *without* pep. They must plan to give themselves more time to do things than the rest of us need. Or they must not undertake to do as *much* as we can get away with.

They are the only patients who, while having no organic disease, are victims of a fatigue that cannot be completely cured. However, if they understand that they have this handicap, and if they learn how to reckon with it, they can be both happy and successful.

Let me warn you not to jump to the conclusion that you are a psychasthenic, if you don't happen to have much vim and pep. You are not competent to diagnose your case. The chances are that your condition is due to something that can be entirely cured.

To return to the subject of blood pressure: When it is high, you have a grand and glorious feeling; you are full of energy; a glutton for work. But let me tell you that there is such a thing as *false* pep! You may have made a great record in business last year—but you may have done it on high blood pressure. Say that you are thirty-five years old. Your blood pressure at that age should be around 125 points; certainly not over 135. But it may have been 150 points, or even more! That spells trouble in the near future. Yet, until the trouble actually comes, you feel fine.

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there are no warning signals that you can recognize. The only way of discovering the menace is by having your blood pressure tested by a competent physician. Every person, over twenty-five years of age, should have this done once a year. False pep—high blood pressure pep—is great, as long as it lasts! But you go up like a sky rocket; and you come down just a burned-out stick.

During the past thirty years, the mortality from such diseases as kidney trouble and heart failure has almost doubled. These premature breakdowns are due chiefly to over-worry and chronic poisoning; especially to the poisons we take through improper diet—alcohol, tobacco, and those naturally developed in the body but imperfectly eliminated.

NOW I come to a very interesting phase of the subject of pep, the influence of the ductless glands, also called the endocrine glands. The effect of these glands on personality deserves a future article all by itself; but I can tell you a little here about the one that may be called "the pep gland."

This is the thyroid, a little gland that sits astride of the windpipe and, to an astonishing extent, regulates your personal energy. If it is working hard, it enables you to put things over quickly and in a big way. "Super-thyroid" people are so peppy that they fairly eat up work. But they should watch their step! There is danger of their overdoing and breaking down, or blowing up. If, on the other hand, you are "sub-thyroid," you will find it very hard to whip yourself into an exhibition of energy.

Now, if you are deficient in pep because your thyroid gland is under-active, I warn you to be mighty careful about taking thyroid extract for the purpose of stimulating yourself. We doctors realize that this new field of medicine is, as yet, one of mystery. We are exploring it—but we still must be very cautious. Under no circumstances should you *prescribe for yourself* these powerful gland extracts obtained from the lower animals.

If you are sub-thyroid, don't be discouraged. It is true that the thyroid is probably the dominant gland in the average highly successful person. But there are plenty of fine types of able men and women who do *not* have a dominant thyroid gland. It is not the only factor. Without it, you may not be able to put things over as quickly and as brilliantly as some people do; but you can get there just the same if you stick to it. You may not be a "natural-born wonder," but you can make up for this by education, training, and persistence.

Sometimes a sub-thyroid condition is only temporary. For some reason, the gland goes on strike, or soldiers on its job. I had one patient, a young man about twenty years old, who suddenly lost interest in his work and in some special studies he was pursuing. He had liked to be with his young friends; but now he avoided them and became unusually quiet, even at home.

A careful study of the case showed that all his mental and physical operations were slowed down; it was a typical example of loss of pep, coming on rather suddenly and mysteriously. A metabolism test indicated that his thyroid gland was

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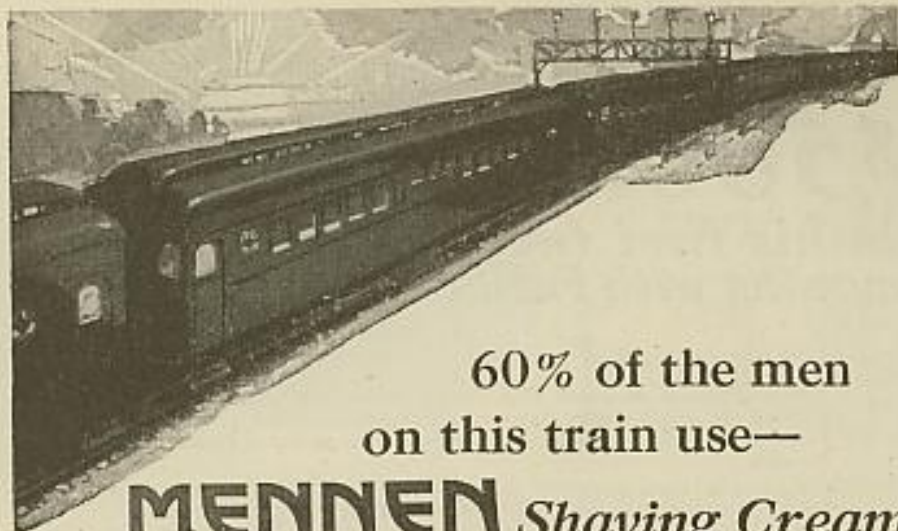
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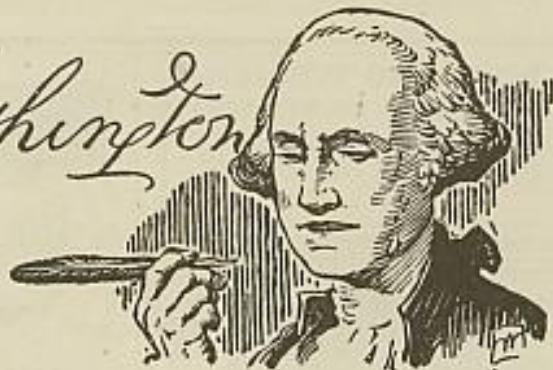
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not acting normally. A careful administration of thyroid extract was begun; and within three months he was completely cured. He resumed his studies and went back with enthusiasm to his work and his play. It has been some time since he has had any thyroid extract, yet he continues to be normal in every way.

It is difficult to know just what happened. But the case illustrates how profoundly our health and well-being are affected by changes in the ductless gland secretions.

THE fifth factor in connection with pep is *emotional control*. Under this head come worry, fear, depression, explosions of temper, peevishness, envy, jealousy—the whole train of mental and moral habits which, as I explained in a previous article in this magazine, profoundly affect the functioning of our physical organs.

There is one grand prescription for all these things: Forget it! Don't take yourself so seriously. Nobody else does! Have a sense of humor. Think more about other people and a lot less about yourself. If you don't control your emotions, they will make a slave of you. Mental poisons will destroy your pep, just as surely as physical ones.

The sixth factor is *lung capacity*. It is your *vital capacity*. Your lungs have to take in the oxygen you consume; and they have to expel the "smoke"—carbonic acid gas—after the oxygen has been burned up.

The standards for lung capacity vary according to sex and height. It is less for women than for men; but personally I do not think there should be much difference. All of us should have an amply developed chest, nose and throat free of obstructions and infections, and should cultivate proper habits of breathing. If we fail in these respects, we certainly will be lacking in vitality and energy.

The seventh and last pep factor is *resistance to disease*. Under modern conditions, microbes are always with us; in fact, in us. Whether or not the microbes get the upper hand depends on our power of resistance. That, in turn, depends on several things, perhaps the chief one being heredity.

I am forced to admit that your physical inheritance has a great deal to do with your chance of leading a long, healthy, satisfying life. But I'm afraid that is something we can't alter, *after* we are born. The only thing we can do is to make the best of what our ancestors give us.

But we can help ourselves by hygienic living and by having ourselves examined regularly to detect the early beginnings of trouble. If you are susceptible to colds, for example, have your nose and throat thoroughly looked into. Get rid of adenoids and diseased tonsils. Reform your diet and see that you have proper elimination. Don't overeat. Dress sensibly, with the lower extremities well protected in cold weather. Have plenty of moisture in the air of your office and of your living-rooms; and have plenty of fresh air in your sleeping-rooms. Keep your skin healthy and active by warm cleansing baths and tonic cold baths. All these things will help to make you mightier than the microbe.

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thing more about the blood cells, the white ones, this time. They are "the standing army of the interior." They eat up disease germs and are just as necessary to health and to pep as the red cells are.

People used to have a habit—some still have it!—of taking whisky and quinine when they felt a cold coming on. Well, of all the substances which quickly and completely *paralyze* the white blood cells in their efforts to destroy disease germs I know of none more efficient than whisky and quinine! Instead, stir a level teaspoonful of ordinary baking soda into a glass of lemonade and drink it while it effervesces. That will help the little white soldiers to fight the germs. It will also help to overcome the acidity of your blood, which is usually greatly increased at such times.

Now I come to one important bit of advice: A person who is just full of pep is like a high-pressure engine which generates a tremendous lot of energy. No sane mechanic would run such an engine unless it was provided with safety valves; for sometimes there is *surplus* energy to be taken care of.

It is the same with the "personality engine." If it is generating a lot of pep, we must have physical, intellectual, and moral safety valves to keep it from blowing up. I think you will find the safeguards you need—and which you must have—amply covered by this list: Love of Your Work; Love of Play; Love of Folks; Love of Home; and Love of God.

WHEN someone asked the late Theodore Roosevelt how he could work so hard and yet be so well and happy, he replied, "Because I like my job."


Liking your job is a great safety valve for pep. It actually helps to prevent high blood pressure, for one thing. Discontent, nervous uncertainty, and depression are disastrous to health and efficiency. The fellow who likes his job can do a lot more work without breaking down than can the one who is grouchy and dissatisfied.

Then there is the need of play: "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." Yes, and if Jack follows that program when he is a grown man, it will send him to the doctor with a case of nerve exhaustion, brain fag, lost pep. By play I don't mean a mechanical effort to do something which somebody else calls recreation but which doesn't interest you in the least. Find something you enjoy. Get a fad of some sort. Whatever it is, if you love to do it, then it is play for you.


Learn to enjoy people, all kinds of people. Talk with them, whether they belong to your set, or your crowd, or not. People are mighty interesting—if you'll take the trouble to find it out. Come down off your high horse. Join in the chorus. Learn how to enjoy folks, to be amused by them, to see life through their eyes. It's great.

Next there is that wonderful safeguard—love of your home and your family. I could preach a whole sermon on this point, preach it from the point of view of the physician. But I can say only this: Clean living, loyal affection and devotion to those who have the highest claim on you, this is a marvelous help in conserv-

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ing the power of your personality engine. Beware of those who whisper other counsel in your ear. They preach a lie.

Last on the list of safety valves, but not least in its importance, is the need of some form of religion; even if it is nothing more than a sincere and earnest philosophy of living. Personally, I am a believer in the Christian religion. You may have some other creed. But that makes no difference. It is the *sincerity* of your belief that counts.

I think all of us, as we grow older, do some serious thinking about this mystery of life and of death. What are we fighting and struggling for, anyway? After the whole thing is over—what next? Most of us, I believe, want to live in such a way that we shall develop *something worth salvaging* for the Great Beyond. I don't believe that the Creator has put this soul-hunger into us and then will deny it satisfaction—not to those who earn it! And in our efforts to make ourselves worth salvaging in that unknown but confidently hoped-for future, there is a great moral safety valve, the finest possible way of using the surplus energy which we generate.

THESE are the true safety valves. There are false ones also. Beware of those. Chief among them are narcotics and drugs, including tobacco, tea, coffee—when used habitually and to excess—and various kinds of patent medicines to which so many people become addicted. They are a mortgage on your efficiency. So is drinking. So is smoking. The human body is a wonderful piece of mechanism. It can stand a lot of punishments and yet make good—for a time. But the mortgage will be foreclosed sooner or later. Why court disaster when it isn't necessary? Old Mother Nature will have you in the receiver's hands one of these days if you are not careful.

Gambling is another false safety valve for pep. A good many people seek to relieve their pent-up feelings and indulge their craving for excitement by playing games of chance. But that sort of thing is not a safety valve for surplus energy. It is a terrific drain on the vitality you need for your real activities.

And last, but not least, let me warn you against imagining that vice is a safety valve. It destroys health, stunts the mental power, and withers the soul. There are safe and sane outlets for any superabundance of animal spirits. I could give you appalling figures on this subject. But I will ask you to take my word, when I say that any man who does not lead a clean life is a fool. Clean living is not only compatible with the highest development of manhood; it is *necessary* to it.

"HUMAN Nature on the Witness Stand," as described next month by Arthur Train, well-known lawyer and author, is a fascinating article about the way people act in the court-room. If you have ever been a witness or a juror, or even if you haven't, you will be interested in the stories he relates, and in his explanation of why children and negroes are among the best witnesses, why lawyers are the worst, and why the testimony of a pretty woman is always effective.

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