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Moderns Turn Sun Worshippers

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Moderns Turn Sun Worshipers . . .

By R. D. Miller, Physics

"Vita Rays" May Be Cure-All

THE sunbonnet days of fifteen years ago have been replaced by the sun-suit days of today. The same mothers who wore broad-brimmed hats and long gloves to protect their lovely skin from freckles and were saying, "Johnny, don't you dare play in the sun!" can now be found at the bathing beach, baked and browned to a turn.

If you and I were to fly to Corgnat, Switzerland, in the Alps, and there visit Dr. Rollier's famous "School of the Sun" for children, we would see many little children as naked as the day they were born, romping around in the snow, their little bodies glistening in the clear sunlight. These youngsters have learned the secret of the sun, and the valuable healing power that comes from its rays.

And now a word concerning these vital rays about which there is so much ado of late. Sunlight is made up of visible and invisible rays, all traveling on a medium known as ether. We have all observed the beautiful colors of the rainbow. They constitute the visible octave or spectrum of ether. The first octave above the visible spectrum is the ultra-violet octave. It is in this octave that we find a very narrow band of rays, the vita-rays, which play the great role in the production and maintenance of health in man.

BESIDES their value to the health of man, ultra-violet rays have been found to have an important part in certain plant and animal growth. Radishes which were grown under a glass substitute which transmitted a large percentage of the vita-rays, were found to be very much larger and heavier than radishes raised under ordinary window glass. Experiments with chickens have revealed a marked improvement in the health, and a stronger and better development in bone structure as the result of proper exposure to the vita-rays.

Probably the most valuable of all the uses of the vita-rays is the prevention and cure of rickets and other bone diseases in children. Rickets in children can be traced to an insufficient supply of phosphorus and calcium in the food or an inability of the system to properly assimilate the phosphorus and calcium which the food contains.

These days it seems we are almost compelled to live on vitamins, and one of the vitamins that we hear so much about is vitamin D. He is the gentleman who seems to be responsible for our general health, our vim and vigor and resistance to diseases. One of the important discoveries of late has been that ergosterol, a

sterole found in food, can be exposed and made to produce vitamin D by some chemical action of ultra-violet light. It is believed that it is the ergosterol in the skin of man and animals that explains



Miss 1931 Gets Her Vitamin D

the formation of vitamin D and the anti-rachitic properties of ultra-violet light. It is vitamin D that is responsible for the proper assimilation of the calcium and phosphorus from the food we eat.

We obtain our phosphorus and calcium for bone formation from our food. Milk, eggs and some vegetables are among the most common sources of calcium, and meat, whole cereals, eggs and milk are the most common sources of phosphorus. After being eaten, they are absorbed into the blood from the intestinal tract and drawn upon for bone formation. Naturally the conditions which would increase this

absorption would increase the chances for superior growth.

When the skin is first over-exposed to sunlight it becomes red, due merely to the heat rays from the sun. This reddish color soon disappears. A few hours later, however, the skin again becomes flushed and tender. This is a chemical burn due to the vita-rays from the ultra-violet octave. This erythema, or reddening of the skin, is commonly known as sun burn.

UNDER the action of ultra-violet light and infra red, pigment is produced in all humans except albinos, and some red blondes. It is formed most plentifully in the black race, not so noticeably in brunettes, and the least in blondes. It can in each case be increased by exposure to a strong source. It is believed that the tanning effect is connected with the adrenal glands and that the adrenal supplies to the skin a substance similar to adrenalin, which, under the action of ultra-violet light, produces pigmentation. Nature has provided this tanning effect for a purpose. A well pigmented skin acts as a protection against further burns from ultra-violet light. So a person with an extremely heavy coat of tan can better withstand the heat from the sun than can a person with a light skin. This explains why the children at Dr. Rollier's school can go coasting in the snow without clothing and be as comfortable as you or I with our heavy overcoats. It keeps the heat in as well as out. If this tan coat protects the skin against the action of the ultra-violet light, it follows that if we are taking a sun bath for its beneficial effects, we should not acquire a heavy tan, as this will render the skin impervious to further production of vitamin D.

STATISTICS show an increased death rate in the late winter. Vita-rays are not nearly so penetrating as the longer visible rays and throughout the winter we spend the greater part of our time indoors, wear heavy clothing and live beneath a veil of coal smoke. In fact, these rays cannot even penetrate the great thickness of atmosphere, which they must traverse when the sun is at its low altitude of winter, nor the ozone layer which is formed at the outer atmosphere. This ozone formation is maximum about June 21, so it is not until about the first of August that the ozone formation grows noticeably less and allows the vita rays to reach the earth in increasing amounts.

But today science is beginning to play

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Moderns--Worshippers

(Continued from page 7)

a joke on old Dr. Sun. We now plan to lay in a store of his famous pills during the summer that will hold out until he can come around again the following year.

It has been known for some time that cod liver oil and some other fish oils are rich in vitamin D and will prevent and cure rickets in children. Recent investigations have shown that many other foods can be rendered antirachitic and therefore containing vitamin D. In fact, there are many foods on the market today which have been "vitaminized" in this way.

Science is now producing another substitute for old Dr. Sun in the form of artificial light sources which in some cases are very much like the sun's rays. The market is now being flooded with lamps, each purported to produce the many rays in their proper proportion. While some of these lamps are very good as ultra-violet sources, it is probable that the public is being seriously misled in many cases.

It must also be kept in mind that the extremely short ultra-violet rays which are produced by many of these artificial sources, but which do not reach us from the sun, are very harmful to the eyes; each purported to produce the many rays produces an extremely painful malady known as conjunctivitis.

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Moderns--Worshippers

(Continued from page 10)

In the spring and summer the sunbath is available to all. Over-exposure at first, however, should be avoided. Expose the feet only for a few minutes the first day, then the lower limbs, gradually increasing the time of exposure and area of the body until the entire body is receiving the ultra-violet rays. The sun bath should leave you glowing with health, not exhausted and palpitating. Do not sun bathe during mid-day. The early hours and late afternoon hours are best because they irradiate us and invigorate with more light than heat. The eyes and head should be protected to guard against eye-strain and sunstroke.

Not far in the future we will, no doubt, be buying window glass at a reasonable figure which will transmit the vita-rays. We can then convert our solariums and even our chicken houses into health rooms. But at this time, when there is so much talk about ultra-violet light, sun lamps, etc., let us not become over-enthusiastic and let the ultra-violet "bug" run away with us, but rather, sensibly realize that light starvation must be avoided and that nature's doctor is one of our most valuable assets.

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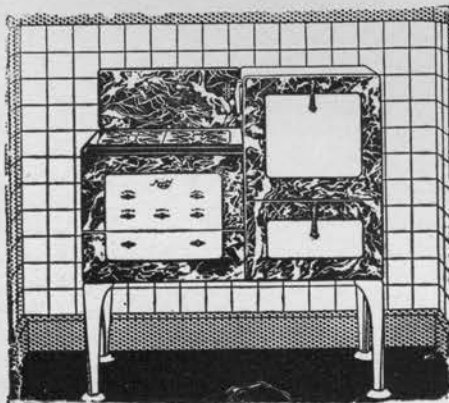
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