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**5,000,000 Casualties  
on the Home Front**

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

How to Help Your Hearing  
Jobs for the Physically Handicapped

LOUISE NEUSCHUTZ

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**5,000,000 Casualties  
on the Home Front**

WITH A FOREWORD BY MARGARET CULKIN BANNING

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Dedicated to the memory of the millions who needlessly lost their lives in accidents  
in the home

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DESIGNED BY SIDNEY SOLOMON

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## Foreword

**W**HEN we draw a breath of pity at the sight of a figure on crutches or a face disfigured by burns, we should be very sure that it is not merely a sentimental sigh but that we are doing our utmost to prevent such tragedies. Instead, many of us are actually sponsoring them, in sheer indifference. There is a carelessness existing in the nation which has made the shocking title of this book a matter of vital statistics.

We cannot afford such waste. No nation could afford it at any time. But least of all can it be tolerated in a generation which inevitably must carry the weight and grief of those maimed in a war to preserve civilization. Too many have been crippled in battle to allow more to be handicapped through negligence at home.

Industry is devoting serious attention to safety measures and getting results which pay dividends in human life. Fantastically it is the home, the one place where a person was supposed to be most secure, that continues to be indifferent and careless in regard to life and limb. It is family dwellings and family habits which are perilous.

This book, carefully written after much research, tells how to keep ourselves and others safe. We should be glad to know, very grateful for the advice. Useful books are not too common. Here is one which, in the name of proper family living, should be in every home which owns books. It should be on display in libraries and on reference in clubs. It is a wise book and an

interesting one. If you are fascinated by true stories, here they are. If you respect human life, this is your meat.

For its effort to help wipe out these terrible casualty lists of peacetime, the public should thank the author. To show its gratitude best, the public need only practice what the book so ably preaches.

MARGARET CULKIN BANNING.



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## Preface

**W**HY MUST thousands of men, women and children be killed or injured by accidents in American homes every year? Why, when it appears so simple to avoid these unfortunate accidents?

The National Safety Council reports that the toll exacted from America in 1946, not by enemy action on the battlefield, but by accidents on the home front, was the following:

Killed .....	34,000
Injured .....	5,000,000
The Cost .....	\$600,000,000

Non-fatal injuries from home accidents included 130,000 which involved some permanent impairment, ranging from minor amputations to serious crippling.

This gruesome record presents another question to be pondered. Why do Americans who have such a hatred for war take so little notice of the war that is steadily going on in their midst through accidents in the home, accidents that need never have happened?

The aim of this book is to delve into these questions, to point out the most frequent causes of home accidents; it endeavors to explain how they may be prevented and offers a workable program of home safety which can be carried out in the city home as well as in the home on the country lane. It is

not a book that can be read through in an evening, although the average reader could skip through it within that short space of time. It is a book that should be read slowly and be *used* as the occasion demands. It should prove of much help to the housewife, the family, as well as to the individual in many walks of life. It reports not only dangerous conditions and practices affecting the health and safety of the people of the United States, but also calls attention to safety measures that are within the grasp of everyone. Accident prevention is made the desired goal.

The facts presented here have been checked with great care. They should stimulate people to reason why and how a certain accident occurred and how it might be prevented in the future. How many accidents, one wonders, could be avoided under such personal scrutiny?

Our public schools, too, could double their efficiency in safety education of school children and thus reduce accidents in the home to a minimum. Although most public schools have a program of safety education, both for outdoors and for indoors, the results are not conspicuously successful, for many accidents among children continue to occur, and the end is not yet.

Home accidents are highest among older people and young children. According to the records of the National Safety Council, the current death rate among persons 65 years of age and over is 4 per cent above 1944, falls amounting to 62 per cent of the fatalities.

One out of three deaths due to burns was a child under five years of age, which is the saddest record of all, for his parents are wholly responsible for his safety. Not a few of these fire deaths occur during a mother's brief absence from home on a necessary errand. Just why a fire should start in the kitchen at the identical moment seems a deep mystery. Something has been neglected. But what? In many such cases the fire department reports: "Cause of fire undetermined." Might such a blaze not have been prevented or stopped before it gained much

headway, if someone had been left by the mother to watch the children during her absence? The moral of this is: *Never leave infants or young children alone in the home, not even for a few minutes.* It is the unexpected that happens most of the time.



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## Acknowledgments

**T**HE author is deeply indebted to the staff of the National Safety Council for advice and suggestions.

Thanks are due also to Mrs. Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg, Director of the Child Study Association, New York City, for constructive criticism of the chapter on prevention of child accidents.

Hearty acknowledgment is also made to Donald B. Armstrong, M.D., Third Vice-President of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, for permission to quote from the pamphlet, *First Aid*, published by this company.

To Mrs. Ethel M. Hendrickson, New York State Department of Health, Division of Public Health Education, Albany, N. Y., and to Mrs. Kathleen K. Devine, of the Greater New York Safety Council, grateful appreciation is expressed for valuable suggestions and unceasing interest in the volume.

To Mr. Milton G. Webb, of the National Board of Fire Underwriters, New York, warm thanks are due for reading the chapters on fire prevention in the home and in farm dwellings, as well as for many valuable suggestions offered to enhance their usefulness. Appreciation is also expressed for permission to reprint much helpful material.

Acknowledgment is also due to the editor of the *Farm Journal and Farmer's Wife*, Philadelphia, for permission to reprint the

story of a volunteer fire department which appeared in the October 1944 issue.

For permission to reprint the safety play, *Julie Forgets*, the author is indebted to the editor of *Safety Education*, official organ of the National Safety Council, Inc.

## Sabotage in the Home

**I**N THE daily press, in the magazines, over the radio, from the screen and through millions of copies of various types of safety publications distributed by public schools and social agencies, the American public is urged to avoid accidents—apparently without avail. The incredible number of accidents that continue to happen in homes, most of which are due to carelessness, haste, lack of forethought and similar factors, might, in many instances, have been prevented.

Carelessness is not a habit to be proud of; as a matter of fact, it is a great national sin. Careless people, even though they do not consciously violate any law, set fire to our towns and forests; endanger not only their own lives, but also those close to them; take unnecessary chances at every opportunity which, with some alertness to danger, could easily have been avoided. It is a dangerous state of mind, such as has been well described in the following quotation:

“WHO AM I?\*

“I am more powerful than the combined armies of the world.

“I am more deadly than bullets, and I have wrecked more homes than the mightiest of siege guns.

“I steal in the United States alone over \$300,000,000 each year.

\* Roy K. Moulton in the *Grand Rapids (Michigan) News*.

"I spare no one, and find my victims among the rich and the poor alike, the young and the old, the strong and the weak; widows and orphans know me.

"I massacre thousands upon thousands of wage earners in a year.

"I lurk in unseen places, and do most of my work silently. You are warned against me, but you heed not.

"I am relentless. I am everywhere; in the home, on the street, in the factory, at railroad crossings, and on the sea.

"I bring sickness, degradation and death, and yet few seek to avoid me.

"I destroy, crush and maim; I give nothing, but take all.

"I am your worst enemy.

"I AM CARELESSNESS."

### Carelessness

If you do not fully agree with the foregoing assertions, read the true story of a Four Million Fire and be convinced:

Years ago a lady ran a small department store. Late one afternoon she was using an electric iron. When she finished ironing, she put the iron aside. She locked up the store and went home. She *thought* she had turned the iron off.

The next morning the best part of the city was in ruins, three thousand persons had no homes, a thousand more were out of work. The iron had set fire to the building and the building set fire to the city. (Both the building and the city had been built to burn; most American cities are built that way—but that is another story.)

This is a true story. It happened in Augusta, Georgia. It cost America over four million dollars to rebuild that city.

Were the infamous German V-2 rocket bombs to strike in this country as they did in England, they could not wreak more destruction than this. And were such a calamity to befall this land, there would surely be a general outcry and uprising to protect our cities, towns and villages. Every patriot would help defend them. But against the enemy at home, against acts of



carelessness that endanger the lives of thousands in every community and destroy acres of valuable property, there seems no defense. Whoever, by careless acts, endangers the safety of his own home and that of his neighbors, as well as the lives of his fellow-citizens, must be considered a public enemy.

Carelessness has been defined as a failure to use common sense. It may not be so in every instance, but it certainly amounts to that in many an accident.

### Other Causes of Accidents

Step by step we will now delve into the other causes that pre-eminently lead to casualties in the home. Inattention and unconcern are next on the list. Many people do not have the proper attitude toward accident prevention. In other words, they are not safety-conscious at all times. They pay no heed to the many reports published in the daily press about avoidable casualties in the home.

Ignorance and poor judgment are affinities of the foregoing attitudes of mind. To these must be added disorder in the home.

You are asked to state what, in your opinion, led to the suffocation by smoke of three babies, as reported in the *New York Times* April 7, 1945.

#### "THREE BABIES DIE IN FIRE

"Soon after their father, Pvt. J— H—, started back yesterday to his Army camp in Alabama at the end of a fourteen-day furlough, his three young children were suffocated by a blaze in a two-room apartment at 1720 Amsterdam Avenue. Their mother, Mrs. J— H—, had left them alone for twenty minutes while she went to the bank near by. The babies were dead when she returned.

"The children, Edward, 3½ years old; Jesse, 1½, and Cynthia, 5 months, were found dead in the bedroom, with flames sweeping only the kitchen. The cause of the fire was undetermined, fire officials stated."

How was it possible for a fire to start in the kitchen? Had

matches been dropped while still glowing? Or what else could have been the cause of this disastrous blaze in a city home? Was it disorder or some other carelessness? Young children, it cannot be stressed often enough, must never be left alone, not even for a few minutes. This young mother surely failed to appreciate the danger of leaving her three babies unguarded. She has a lifetime to regret it.

Haste, too, is one of the causes of a great number of accidents in the home. Trying to do too much in too little time takes a terrible toll of human lives. The economic loss is estimated at millions, but the loss of loved ones cannot be measured.

American homes, there is little doubt, are among the most unsafe places in the world. The recent war surely made them even more unsafe, because many women worked in war plants as well as in business. They had less time for housekeeping than before and had to hurry through their housework, with unfortunate results now and then.

Worry, emotional upsets and fatigue, an unholy trio, are often among the underlying causes of injury. Sudden temper results in not a few casualties. Fear, too, takes its toll. Anger appears high on the list of causes of injury and worse. The worried child, just as in the case of the worried adult, may be worried about something real or imaginary. He thus falls prey to accidents more easily. The child may worry about troubles at home, about his lessons at school, or be resentful of real or fancied injustice, and become less alert in dangerous situations. The tired child, perhaps not in the best of health, is more susceptible to injury than the rested child. The relation between fatigue and accident has been frequently proved; hence, it needs little verification here. The same applies to the tired adult. When in a condition of utter fatigue, you cannot handle yourself as safely as when you are at your best.

As already stated, more than half of all fatal home accidents in 1945 occurred among persons 65 years old and over. You need to keep this in mind and make your home safe for the

elderly member of the family. Are you sure you have done everything to ease the way for those under your roof who are in this age group?

### Accidents by Habit

The accident-prone individual was described by Dr. Flanders Dunbar, New York psychiatrist, in *War Medicine*:

“Accident-prone people,” she states, “can make the kind of mistake that sinks a ship, loses a battle or explodes a munitions plant. Apart from the consequences, the mistake will appear just the kind of unfortunate mistake that anyone might make. But nevertheless, there is evidence that only certain people make such mistakes.

“A history of having had many accidents, some of them serious, is, of course, the first thing to look for in detecting the person with the accident habit.”

Dr. Dunbar finds the following 12 points characteristic of the accident-prone person:

1. Far better than average health, with no tendency to colds, indigestion, stomach ulcers or other of, what the doctor calls, “vegetative disturbances.”
2. Impulsiveness of action under stress.
3. Failure to finish school.
4. Frequent change of jobs and many ups and downs in income.
5. Spontaneous and casual in social relations.
6. Apparently gets along well with members of the opposite sex, but irresponsible toward husband or wife and family.
7. Interest in machinery, sports and gambling.
8. No interest in philosophy, beyond “a firm belief in fate.”
9. Makes up mind quickly.
10. Coffee, alcohol, or cigarets used to “let off steam,” not for sociability or to increase alertness and prolong working time.
11. Frequent conflicts with authorities. Attempts to deal

with these by "being nice." Ignores existence of authority as long as possible.

12. History of broken homes—his parents' or his own.

Can personality traits be changed? Psychologists assert that this is possible. An experience in early life may have established the harmful pattern and resulted in these personality traits. If, therefore, you have been "accident-prone," you need not adhere to this pattern. Personality traits often outlive their basic cause in a new environment. Search your mind and try to ascertain the source of this trait in yourself. A childhood event may be back of it. The realization of this fact may help you to dispose of your difficulties.

To learn good safety habits, however, means to work hard and to spend much energy in trying to overcome the limitations of the past. Everything worth doing at all, is worth doing well. Take yourself in hand, therefore, and learn to think and act safely. Master the art of being safe.

### **The Rôle of the Housewife**

What should be the rôle of the woman in helping to reduce accidents in the home? Not only do housewives sustain one-third of all serious accidents in the home, but they are responsible for one-fourth of those which occur among children under fifteen years of age. Good housekeeping means safety. Safe conditions and safe thinking go hand in hand. Safety habits must be acquired if they are lacking.

To make a good beginning, compile a home check list of the dangerous things that need to be avoided in your household. Ask yourself what are the unpleasant tasks that you have been putting off. Why not clean them up now? Earnestly begin to watch your ways; endeavor to form the needed new habits of safety and you will do your share in helping to make this country a safer, healthier, and more efficient place to live in.

It is you and the members of your family who must pay the price exacted through preventable accidents. It is you who

must suffer the pain and the cost. And it is up to you to find out what in your own household can lead to accidents and to do everything in your power to remedy the condition.

Assign to each member of your family group certain tasks that he or she can easily attend to in preventing accidents. Put up a set of rules that must be kept and adhered to. For instance:

1. Never hurry at any task that you have to perform.
2. Make up a working schedule for each day and hold to it as best you can.
3. When tired do not undertake anything that may further test your strength. Relax a bit first.
4. Don't undertake more in one day than you can easily finish, without neglecting some necessary task.
5. Don't get excited about trifles. Keep your emotions in check.

Up to now we have dealt with personal causes of home accidents. Many others happen as a result of mechanical causes. The following table will illustrate this:

HOSPITALIZED HOME ACCIDENTS\*

<i>Mechanical Causes</i> . .	<i>Personal Causes</i>
Disorder . . . . . 18%	Poor Judgment . . . . . 24%
Improper Equipment . . 10%	Child Injury, Adult Fault 10%
Improper Use of	Physical Frailty . . . . . 8%
Equipment . . . . . 10%	Hurry . . . . . 6%
House Needed Repair . . 8%	Intoxication . . . . . 5%
Ice on Walk . . . . . 4%	Physical Handicaps . . . . 3%
Lack of Light . . . . . 4%	Other Personal . . . . . 12%
Other Mechanical . . . . 10%	No Personal Factor . . . . 32%
No Mechanical Factor . . 35%	-----
-----	100%
100%	

\* 4,602 Home Accidents Hospitalized at Cook County Hospital, Chicago, Ill., *Accident Facts*, 1946, National Safety Council, Chicago, Ill.

Home accidents cause nearly as many deaths as diabetes, more than appendicitis, and many more than diphtheria, scarlet fever, whooping cough and measles combined. A large number result in permanent orthopedic impairment and blindness. They disable, for a week or more, adults in the most productive ages. Those that happen to aged members of a family group may lay them up for long periods, putting a great strain on everyone in the home. You should take into consideration the fact that an aged person's reactions slow down with increasing years and he is, therefore, less able to discern moving objects.

### Which Is the Most Dangerous Room in the House (or Area)

#### WHERE MOST ACCIDENTS OCCUR

Stairs and steps .....	23%
Yard .....	19%
Kitchen (takes the lead inside) .....	18%
Living room and dining room .....	8%
Bedroom .....	7%
Porch .....	7%
Basement .....	6%
Bathroom .....	3%
Others .....	5%

The types and locations of home accidents vary in different sections of the country, but stairs, yard and kitchen head the list everywhere. The stairs, both inside the house and in front, are the most dangerous places for falls. What are you doing to safeguard yourself and those in your home from this menace?

Kitchen and dining room have it in for sharp objects, burns and falls. On the porch and in the yard children often come to grief by playing with dangerous objects and also through falls.

Failure to observe safety rules has been the cause of countless wrecked lives of large numbers of our citizens. Many a person does not realize the heavy price he is paying by doing something unsafe, by using poor judgment, or by causing injury to a child or an adult through negligence.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOME ACCIDENTS ACCORDING TO  
VARIOUS FACTORS\*

<i>Type of Accident</i>	<i>Per Cent</i>		<i>Per Cent</i>
Falls from heights . . . . .	13	Floor coverings . . . . .	3
Falls on levels . . . . .	33	Slippery surfaces . . . . .	6
Falling material . . . . .	2	Toys and play equipment . . . . .	4
Handling materials, objects . . . . .	11	Tools and sharp objects . . . . .	14
Stepping on objects . . . . .	6	Utensils . . . . .	7
Collision with objects . . . . .	15	Food . . . . .	3
Hot or burning substances . . . . .	13	Animals, insects, etc. . . . .	3
Electric burn or shock . . . . .	1	Heating equipment, etc. . . . .	5
Inhaling gas or smoke . . . . .	**	Laundrying equipment . . . . .	5
Poison, not gas . . . . .	1	Inflammable liquids, materials . . . . .	5
Other . . . . .	5	Other household appliances . . . . .	1
Not specified . . . . .	**	Plumbing fixtures . . . . .	**
<i>Action of Injured Person</i>		Structural defects . . . . .	2
Walking and running . . . . .	37	Firearms . . . . .	1
Household cleaning . . . . .	3	Automobiles . . . . .	1
Laundrying duties . . . . .	4	Multiple . . . . .	**
Other household duties . . . . .	8	Other . . . . .	14
Cooking . . . . .	5	None, or not specified . . . . .	17
Eating . . . . .	1	<i>Nature of Injury</i>	
Playing . . . . .	24	Cuts, lacerations, abrasions . . . . .	26
Tending heating equipment . . . . .	1	Bruises and contusions . . . . .	12
Other . . . . .	13	Burns and scalds . . . . .	21
None, or not specified . . . . .	4	Strains and sprains . . . . .	11
			<i>Per Cent</i>
<i>Objects Involved</i>	<i>Per Cent</i>	<i>Part of Body Involved</i>	<i>Cent</i>
Household Furnishings, equipment . . . . .	12	Hands and fingers . . . . .	16
		Head, face, and neck . . . . .	11
		Legs, feet, and toes . . . . .	32

\* Armstrong and Cole, *Home Accidents, Where, How and Why*, New York: Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, 1940.

\*\* Less than 0.5 per cent.

Arms .....	12	Fractures and dislocations	20
Eyes .....	1	Poisoning .....	1
Trunk .....	16	Foreign bodies .....	1
Internal .....	2	Bites .....	2
Multiple .....	10	Multiple .....	3
Not specified .....	**	Other .....	3
Asphyxiations .....	**	Not specified .....	**

Accurate observation should become a mental habit with everyone in your home, a habit that needs to be fixed by frequent repetition. Learn to observe the objects and places in your home that need repair or adjustment *before* they become a menace. Vaguely you may have been aware of them, but you procrastinate and put it off for another day. It needs accurate observation and prompt action to correct a dangerous situation. And a good way to start is today, not tomorrow.

#### SAFETY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Where in the average homes are accidents most likely to happen?
2. What kind of accident causes most fatalities in the United States?
3. At what hour of the day are accidents most frequent and why?
4. On what days of the week are accidents most likely to occur?
5. What age groups are most likely to meet with accidents?
6. What is the most usual circumstance under which children are injured? And what in the case of older people?
7. What proportion of accidents can be said to be entirely due to (1) mechanical causes, (2) personal causes?
8. Are accidents more likely to occur in summer or winter; in bad weather or in fair weather?
9. What can be done to safeguard high places, porches, windows, etc.?
10. What improvements can you suggest in your own home to prevent accidents of every kind?



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- Good Housekeeping Magazine, November, 1944, *Bring the Laundry Upstairs*, by Katherine Fisher, 57th St. & 8th Ave., New York City.
- Parents' Magazine, September 4, 1944, *Make Your Postwar House Safe*, by Kenneth D. Sargent, Syracuse Univ., N. Y.

## PAMPHLETS AND LEAFLETS

- New York State Department of Mental Hygiene, State Office Building, Albany, N. Y.,  
*Anxiety and its Control*  
*Fatigue and its Control*  
*Morale and its Control*
- New York State Dept. of Health, Division of Public Health Education, Albany, N. Y.,  
*Architects Handbook on Home Safety*  
*Residence Design for Safety*  
*Designing Safety into the Home*
- Household Finance Corporation, 919 North Michigan Ave., Chicago 11, Ill.,  
*Better Use and Care of Household Equipment*  
*Time Management for the Home Maker*

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## Riding for a Fall

### Falls from Heights

**A** NEW YORK patrolman, a young man of 25, sleeping on a day-bed which was on a level with an open window in his apartment on the fifth floor, turned in his sleep and plunged to his death in the courtyard below. This patrolman had been married one month only, had just returned from his wedding trip and was to have reported back for duty the following day. It may puzzle most people why this officer, trained to protect human life in the community, did not apply some of the rules of the department which he served in safeguarding his own. To sleep flush with an open window was to court disaster; it should have been plain to him.

A fall out of the window also took the life of a Bronx woman, 39 years of age, not long ago. She had tackled the job of "fixing" the kitchen window screen which did not properly fit. In this attempt she lost her balance—one cannot hold on both to a screen and to something solid simultaneously—and thus she fell five stories to the pavement. Now, what prompted this woman to undertake this hazardous task herself? If a male member of her household could not attend to it, should she not have asked the superintendent of the building where she lived to make the repair? The screen, of course, ought to have fitted properly when it was first put into use; it should have been fastened with a strong lock, and it was mere negligence to let it go until it proved troublesome.

A man, aged 83, decided to repair the window shade of his hotel room around midnight. He climbed upon the window sill, but immediately lost his equilibrium and dropped nine stories to his journey's end. He was still clutching the window shade when his body was discovered. A hammer, tacks, chisel and other tools were found near the window of his room. So told a newspaper report. It seems incredible that a man of this age should have ventured to climb on the window sill at such an unearthly hour, and only lack of realization of the chance he was taking could have impelled him to do so. One cannot help wondering, though, why this aged man did not have the shade put in order during the day by the hotel staff. It was their duty to adjust it.

That aged persons are subject to falls is a well-known fact. Balance, muscular coordination, eyesight and mental awareness are no longer at their peak. Five out of six persons killed in falls are 65 and over. Unnecessary risks, therefore, must be avoided by this age group. Care must be taken to safeguard old people. No passageway from the sides of the bed to the doors should ever be obstructed. A great many falls occur in the bedroom.

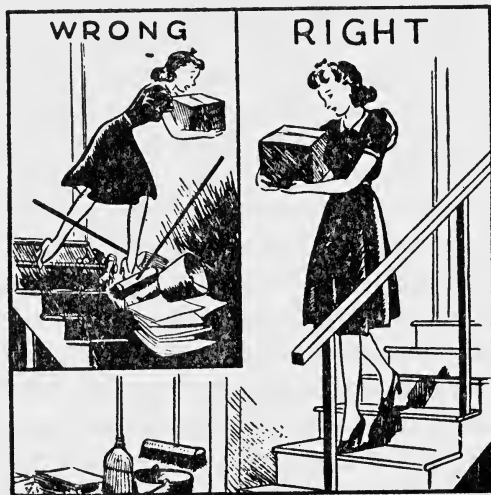
Falling down the stairs is another frequent hazard of the home. In most cases, aged people and children are the chief sufferers. But the housewife is no exception. Waxed stair treads and landings, loose runners and slippery floor surfaces at the top or bottom of stairways are the cause of many a fall. Missing or broken handrails, torn carpeting or a carpet that is not securely tacked on, make walking up or downstairs unsafe. Even though the stairs may be enclosed by walls, there should always be a substantial hand rail, at least on one side. Winding stairs, by the way, are not nearly as safe as straight flights.

Frequently, stairways are poorly lighted. Besides, they are often poorly placed with the top step somewhere between the bedroom and the bathroom, which leaves a gap for some drowsy wanderer to plunge down headlong into a dark abyss. If you have such a stairway, guard it by all means by a night

light or by a gate which can be folded back or removed in the daytime. Make this a hard and fast rule: *Light the way.*

Always look where you step, going up or down, and use the hand-rail. Walk—never run. Take extra care when wearing high heels, mules or clogs. Carry heavy objects so that you can see where you are stepping. Never try to carry anything else when you are carrying a baby on the stairs—keep one hand free to hold the rail. Use a covered container to carry scalding liquids; be especially careful when carrying glass or sharp objects. Sometimes articles are left on the stairway to be carried up or down and are forgotten when the telephone rings or someone is at the door. Brooms, mops, buckets, or other household utensils are deposited in dark corners where, coming from the light, you cannot see them at once. Never leave anything on a flight of stairs that may cause a fall to anyone unaware of the objects thus placed.

Be safety-conscious and inspect the stairs regularly once a month to discover if anything needs repair, whether it be a broken handrail, broken step or carpeting. Are the electric



(Courtesy Greater New York Safety Council)

Falls on stairways are a leading cause of death.

lights all in good condition or are some fuses blown out? Light switches ought to be of the "3-way" kind and placed at the head and the foot, so that the light can be turned on or off before and after going up or down the stairs.

Basement and basement stairs, when insufficiently lighted and obstructed by pails, mops or other objects, may prove a death trap. Many persons have taken a fatal plunge by falling over objects they did not know were there, or by attempting to carry too heavy a weight on the stairs. The following tragedy was reported in a newspaper:

South Plainfield, N. J., Sept. 1945, "Joseph Seamer, 56 years old, carrying a five-gallon glass jug out of the cellar of his home on New York Avenue, today fell on the stairway. The jug was broken, a fragment severed his jugular vein and he died before medical aid could reach him."

Cellar steps most often are narrow and winding, dark or dimly lighted, and thus cause many a casualty. Some housewives, moreover, not having adequate closet space on upper floors, have over-sized spikes driven into basement walls for hanging up aprons, old clothes, or infrequently used implements. In the semi-darkness this is extremely dangerous, for one may catch on an apron pocket or be injured by the spikes. Install a light in every dark corner. *Light the way.* This is far cheaper than to risk injury or a fractured leg. And paint the bottom step white, so that people will know when the last step is reached. Thus you and others will be safe.

Now consider the step-ladders in your kitchen or workroom. Have they broken rungs or are they too weak to carry the weight of the person ascending? Then they are a danger to life and limb. A firm level base in a sturdy step-ladder is an essential to safety. Do not store away for possible further use a rickety ladder or one that has a broken rung. Some day you may forget about it and use it, only to crash down and come to harm. When you use a step-ladder in the house or in the yard, convince yourself first that the braces are pulled down securely. Open the ladder all the way until the spreader locks itself.

Avoid ladders having rope, chain or other makeshift spreaders. Be sure to spread the ladder so that desired objects may be reached easily. If possible, have another person steady the ladder while you use it. Avoid standing on the top rung of a step-ladder; use one sufficiently high to permit you to stand at least two steps from its top.

Step stools, when properly built, are better for ordinary indoor use than ladders. Check these safety factors before selecting a step stool:

Is top sufficiently broad for comfortable standing?

Is each step wide enough to stand upon?

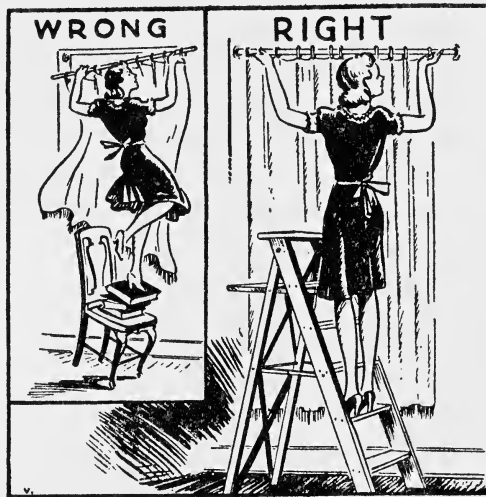
Are steps topped with non-skid surface?

Is stool securely built of strong material?

Is the base wide so that your weight may be shifted on the top without tipping the stool?

Is it in good repair?

Rocking chairs, rickety boxes, stools, small tables and similar objects should never be used for reaching high shelves, for hanging pictures or curtains. A chair with a broken back is a



*(Courtesy Greater New York Safety Council)*

A substitute for a ladder is a substitute for safety.

dangerous thing to use. Better throw it out. Severe injuries and death have often been caused by falls from such wrecks. *Be cautious—be safe.*

Many fatal falls are the result of sleep-walking or bad dreams. We all have heard of the man or woman who wakes up in the night and wanders around in a state of semi-consciousness. The sleep-walker, however, is not really asleep, for he can see, hear and feel, even though he moves with a certain degree of rigidity. Care should be taken not to startle the person walking in his sleep when he is in a place where he might fall, as on the stairs. Persuade him to return to his bed and to continue his regular sleep. A lukewarm bath or half a cup of hot milk or tea taken at bedtime may prove helpful in overcoming the habit of walking in sleep.

Aged people, wakeful during the night, often walk around in the semi-darkness and may stumble over a rug or a misplaced chair. To avoid an accident keep a clear passage to and from their beds, one entirely unobstructed by furniture and furnishings. An electric outlet should be within easy reach of the bed, so that they may be able to turn on the light in a jiffy.

Falls *out* of beds are no rare occurrence in this land, but who ever heard of falls *into* beds? One might consider this the most unlikely place where to get hurt. Yet, there are numerous cases on record of people getting injured in this manner. In a Chicago apartment house, for instance, a young woman, on retiring, slipped on a rug at her bedside and plunged precipitately into bed. As she fell her head broke through upright slats of which the headboard was constructed in such a manner that her head became wedged between them. Her screams brought help and she was extricated just as she was losing consciousness from what would have resulted in strangulation very shortly.

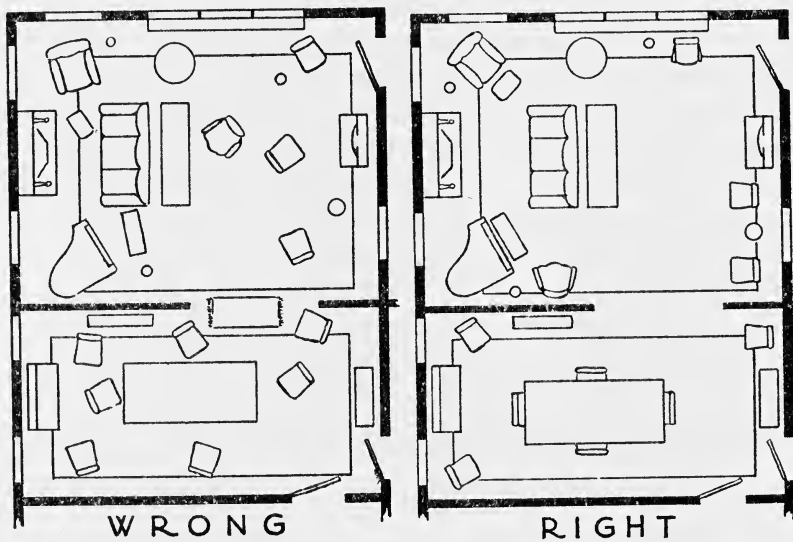
### Falls from Levels

To make a home really safe from unnecessary accidents means, first of all, to arrange the furniture without impeding ingress or egress and without resorting to frequent changes.

Such changes confuse people and are the cause of serious accidents. Here is a sad illustration of this point:

“A 12-inch sliver of glass from a broken mirror caused the death not long ago of Mrs. Nellie McCann, 57 years old. She had moved a chiffonier from its accustomed place, forgot about it, and accidentally knocked it over, falling backward on the shattered glass of the mirror. Her body was discovered in the late afternoon by her son who was home on a furlough from the army. The glass sliver, similar in shape to a long dagger, was imbedded in her back.”

The living room ranks fourth as location for fatal falls. Keep the pathway through it clear at all times. Sharp turns or protruding objects cause accidents. Furniture should be strong enough to stand hard use, especially where there are children. Never leave hassocks, end tables, bridge tables or foot stools in the pathway. Before retiring make a survey while the light is on in full and carefully put away every object which is out



How to arrange furniture in your home so as to insure the greatest degree of safety.

(Courtesy National Safety Council)



of its usual place, so that one is not likely to stumble over it in the dark.

Highly polished floors are slippery at times because the wax was not allowed to dry. A floor should be given a thorough rub-down after being waxed otherwise it may prove a menace to safety. Rugs, however, may cause accidents even though the floor has been properly treated. The sliding of rugs should be prevented by fasteners or by the use of underlays. Or the underside of the rug can be coated with a non-slip preparation. Rugs that curl up at the edges are a constant danger in the home, especially so to aged people.

Slipping and tripping in bathrooms have caused more than their share of accidents. Getting out of the tub is perilous to those along in years. A rubber mat should be placed in the tub and a hand-hold be installed on the wall. Here is evidence of the dangers lurking in bathrooms:

“Mount Vernon, N. Y., March 9, 1943. Edwin R., 61 years old, retired president of a business concern, was killed late yesterday when he slipped in the bathroom of his home, and his throat struck the handle of a drain pipe on the bathtub. His larynx was fractured by the fall.”

“East Jaffrey, N. H., June 25, 1944. Emile Quentin, 37 years old, was strangled to death today by his own undershirt. He slipped and fell in the bathroom of his home. A shoulder strap of his shirt caught on the bathtub faucet, tightening the shirt around his throat.”

Why did these two men slip on the bathroom floor? Was it due to a cake of soap inadvertently dropped in front of the tub, or to some liquid spilled? Had a bath mat been properly placed, would they also have slipped on the tiled floor?

Many kitchen floors are covered with linoleum. Grease spilled on it, a bit of banana peel, a small puddle of water, are known to have caused serious falls. Even a little water can make linoleum slippery, not to mention grease or food. If you have a waxed kitchen floor, don't apply too high a polish, and be sure that there are no specks of soft wax left to start those

dangerous skids. Wipe up spilled water or food at once. If linoleum becomes cracked or broken, tack down the loose edges so they won't trip you or others.

Falls, however, are not limited to those which happen in the house itself. Many have happened on porches or in the yard which could have been easily prevented by taking the necessary precautions. For some time you have noticed that the railing was coming loose. Have you done anything about it? No! You have been far too busy with other things. Then, one unexpected moment, the inevitable happened. Someone stumbled against it and was hurt. Porches should have railings in good repair. In case a slat comes out, don't wait until there is an accident; have it repaired without delay. The same applies to broken steps.

Porches on which small children play may be made safe if gates and strong railings are provided. Children should be taught to keep off railings. In winter when porch steps are covered with ice and snow, they are especially dangerous. Remove each new fall of snow before it packs. Never let the slush freeze and form ice. Keep outdoor steps and walks clean; the job must be done if you expect to be safe.

When ice forms, sprinkle sand, gravel, fine cinders, or a combination of salt with one of the others, to insure good traction and safe footing. Remove icicles from eaves and cornices by means of long poles. The greatest dangers on the back steps are ice and loose or rotten boards. Get rid of the ice by insisting on clean shoveling. A few large nails will, as a rule, fix a loose board; but if it is rotten, don't fail to have it replaced by a new one. Otherwise, a delivery man may crash through and break a leg and, if you carry no liability insurance, you will have to foot the medical bills.

In the back yard it is very easy to overlook garden tools, lawn mowers, or an upturned rake. Someone may trip over them. Do not allow any objects to lie in the pathway and to cause an accident. This includes Junior's bicycle and Baby's doll carriage, as well as your own outdoor paraphernalia.

“Things do not happen in this world,” said Will H. Hays, “they are brought about.”

### SAFETY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Are halls and stairways well lighted, free of boxes, toys, mops and other tripping hazards?
2. Are pads or other devices provided to prevent rugs from slipping?
3. Do you keep chairs and other furniture away from walking spaces in rooms?
4. Do you avoid placing a chair over a loose rug in an effort to keep it down?
5. Are floors free from protruding nails, splinters, loose boards?
6. Are top and bottom cellar and attic steps painted white?
7. Are screens strong and securely fastened to windows to prevent an accidental fall?
8. Is there a handhold on the wall at the side of the bathtub?
9. Have you a rubber mat for the bathtub and a bathmat in front of the tub to prevent falls?
10. Does the last person to retire at night see that all rooms are in good order, free from tripping hazards?

### SUGGESTED READING

- Balderston, Lydia Ray, *Housewifery*, J. B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia, 5th rev. ed.
- New York Herald-Tribune Home Institute, *America's House-keeping Book*, Scribner's, 1941, New York.
- Williams, Sidney J. and Charters, W. W., *Safety*, pp. 36-38, The Macmillan Company, New York.
- Wood, Clement, *Carlessness: Public Enemy No. 1*, Hillman-Curl, Inc., New York, 1937.

### PERIODICALS

- Good Housekeeping Magazine  
Better Homes and Gardens

## LEAFLETS

American National Red Cross, *Preventing Accidents in our Homes and on our Farms*, Washington, D. C., free pamphlet.  
New York State Department of Health, Albany, N. Y., *Prevent That Accident*, Home and Farm Safety Advisory Committee.  
Liberty Mutual Insurance Company, 175 Berkeley Sq., Boston, Mass., *Smash the 7th Column, What Everyone Should Know about Home Safety*.

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## Fire, Burn and Cauldron Bubble

### The Little Spark

“Robert Roloson, age 9, was the only survivor from a fire which caused the death of his father, Robert M. Roloson, 39, multimillionaire director of United States Airlines; his mother, Ella, 36, his sister, Cary, 12; and his brother, Edward, 5, all of whom lived in their 23-room house in a suburb of Chicago. The fire, according to Capt. David Woods of the Winnetka Fire Department, was started during the night by sparks from a fireplace, and swept so rapidly through the house that firemen were unable to make any additional rescues, for the flames were too intense.”

Four valuable lives lost, all for the want of a fire screen in front of the fireplace which would have kept the popping embers and sparks from leaping into the room and setting fire to rug or furniture! A fire screen surely need not have been lacking in that luxurious home.

Every fireplace needs a safe screen which reaches up to the mantel. Another precaution is not to throw into the fireplace large quantities of waste paper which exceed the capacity of the chimney. Open fireplaces, moreover, ought not to be used for lengthy periods unless the chimney is clean, in good repair and properly constructed for continuous operation.

To burn in an open fireplace resinous woods, such as fatty pine, is not safe; for they form a sooty deposit in the chimney

which may give rise to a sudden chimney fire. Hard, or anthracite coal burns quietly and does not snap. Soft, or bituminous coal burns with more of a flame, while chestnut and some other woods constantly snap and shoot out sparks. It is well to consider these facts before storing wood for an open fireplace.

Fires destroy approximately 10,000 lives annually in the United States. In 1946 they destroyed property to the value of \$561,487,000 as estimated by the National Board of Fire Underwriters. Every twenty-four hours there are sixteen deaths from fires in American dwellings. What a deplorable record!

Carelessness is the greatest single cause of fires in this country, fires that could easily have been prevented. Yet, Americans go calmly on their way, delaying from day to day the investigation and correction of fire hazards that imperil their families and themselves. Chimneys, flues, coal, gas or oil stoves, water heaters, electric fixtures and the like, all need frequent inspection for defects. A fire extinguisher, besides, ought to be within easy reach in every home for an emergency. Only then will the number of fires begin to decrease.

### **Adults and Matches**

You strike a match to light a cigar or cigarette while arguing some point with an associate or friend, then thoughtlessly toss it into the wastepaper basket. Unnoticed a tiny spark smolders on among the torn bits of paper to burst into flames very suddenly. And, presto! there is a fire that brings the engines roaring in front of the building. The damage of this thoughtless action may be counted in thousands of dollars.

Can you figure out how many matches are used daily in the United States? According to estimates of experts, more than 850,000,000. This means that an average of six hundred thousand matches are struck every minute. But not one of these matches could ever cause a disastrous fire if it were carefully put out at once. Treat every match, therefore, as a potential danger to your home and hearth, or to your business and act accordingly.

Matches ought never be kept near a kitchen fire or hot stove, nor should boxes of them be stored for future use where mice or rats can carry matches away to make nests. Don't carry matches loose in your pocket. An unexpected blow or collision may ignite them. Neither is it safe to strike a match in a small space; its head may fly off and set your clothing afire. Strike matches away from you and downward to avoid danger to yourself. If you strike a match on the box, first close the box. When putting matches in match stands never place the heads up where they may be accidentally ignited. When bunched together they are apt to flash and cause serious burns.

If you happen to spill a box of matches, don't neglect to pick up every one. This is a simple precaution against matches being stepped on and igniting things. You will, however, be literally playing with fire if you light a match to illumine the inside of a closet, for it is usually crammed with combustibles.

An electric cigarette lighter for the smoker reduces the danger at home; a pocket lighter makes the carrying of matches in pockets unnecessary.



*(Courtesy Greater New York Safety Council)*

**When matches cost more than flashlights.**

### **Cigars and Cigarettes**

Attempting to escape through a window from a fire in his sixteenth-floor room in the Belmont Hotel, Albert L. Miller, 39, an advertising executive, slipped and fell fifteen stories to his death. Mr. Miller had been at a private dinner party and had gone to the hotel for the night. He fell asleep smoking a cigarette. First signs of the blaze were noticed at 6:30 A.M. and an alarm was turned in. Although the fire was put out with but slight damage to the room, there had been a good deal of smoke. Besides his father, Mr. Miller leaves a widow, a son and a daughter to bear the brunt of the tragedy. Comment seems unnecessary.

It is inviting the undertaker to smoke in bed. One can multiply the afore-mentioned tragedy by the thousands. Smokers fall asleep not only in bed but also in upholstered chairs. The resulting blaze may be small; yet, inhaling the smoke from burning bedding or upholstery into their lungs, these smokers lose their lives.

The careless smoker throws away glowing cigarette or cigar stubs without thinking or without looking where they may fall. He is a constant threat to any community. Smokers should be very careful to extinguish cigarette and cigar stubs before disposing of them. Every smoker, moreover, needs to have a metal or glass ash tray within easy reach, so that stubs can gleam out without danger to anyone, including to himself.

### **The Kitchen Stove and the Furnace**

Not many kitchen stoves remain in the city, but they still are much in use in smaller towns, country districts and on the farm. Before you start a coal fire in the kitchen or in the basement, have the entire heating apparatus inspected and convince yourself that it is in a safe condition. This means that chimneys and flues must be cleaned of soot and all the joints be made free of rust. In case any rust is found, there may also be rust



holes which gradually grow larger, permitting sparks to escape. And even the smallest spark can cause a disastrous fire.

The National Board of Fire Underwriters reports also that in the last ten years property damage amounting to \$122,500,000 was caused by defective or overheated chimneys and flues. Check yours, have all defective parts or pipes replaced. If the smoke pipe or any other part that gets very hot is too close to burnable materials, either widen the space or protect the materials with sheet asbestos and sheet metal, leaving an air gap between the insulation and the material to be protected. The chimney, however, needs cleaning at least once a year, as well as inspection to ascertain whether there are any possible cracks or loose bricks. Chimneys supported by brackets, experts maintain, are unsafe. The woodwork and the floor beneath the stove or furnace need to be protected from the heat. The floor should have a metal mat at least twelve inches under the door of the ash pit to prevent live coals that drop out now and then from starting a blaze.

Avoid overheating coal stoves and do not permit pipes to become too hot. When articles of clothing are being dried near the stove, hang them at sufficient distance to prevent their catching fire. To clean the stove, never use polish containing benzine or other flammable liquid. It may explode. But you take your very life into your hands if you pour kerosene on any fire that is slow in getting started, kerosene vaporizes quickly when heated and the fumes may cause a terrific explosion.

"If your basement runs a fever," warns a leading furnace company, "your furnace is sick. One of the surest signs of a sick furnace is a hot furnace room. You will find symptoms of it in such details as brown warm-air ducts, scorched furnace casing, burned paint, even to scorched floor joints above the furnace. They are dangerous indications, likely to set your house on fire. The thing to do is not to guess. *Know for sure.* Call in your local heating specialist, just as you would call in your doctor to diagnose an ailing body. His 'prescription' may cost you a little and save you much in fuel costs and serious accident."

In the summer, the down draft shoots fly ash and soot through the cracks and loose joints to a leaky furnace, making it an even greater menace than in winter. Cleaning and air-tightening the furnace at the end of a heating season is the first safeguard against fuel leaks and repair costs the following season.

Hot ashes cause an average fire loss of \$7,300 every day of the year in the United States, chiefly through carelessness. Hot ashes have burned down blocks of city streets and destroyed property worth uncounted thousands of dollars. In removing ashes from stoves, never throw them into a wooden barrel or box; for they will still be hot and smoldering. Only a strong metal can is safe. You may scoff at all this advice, because you have never had a fire in your home and you may feel that all these precautions are extreme. Just remember once more that something like 900 homes in this country catch fire every day in the year, and you may be more lucky than prudent.

### The Oil Stove

“A twenty-four-year-old mother, Mrs. Jack Condra, and her two children were burned to death not long ago when fire swept the two-story frame house in which they lived, while the scantily clad husband and father watched outside in below-freezing temperature, unable to rescue them. According to the police, Mrs. Condra awakened at 3.30 A.M. and told her husband that she smelled smoke. He ran downstairs and discovered that an oil stove used to heat the lower floor had exploded. Lifting the blazing stove in his hands, he rushed out of the door with it, *but the flames, fanned by the high wind, roared past him back into the house*, swiftly consuming the walls and trapping the mother and the children in the bedroom upstairs.”

In another oil stove explosion—they happen with increasing frequency during the cold winter months—three children of a Walton, New York couple perished while the parents stood helplessly by. The father had been lighting the oil stove of a bungalow into which the family had just moved. It exploded

and completely destroyed the wooden structure, making it impossible to save the sleeping children in time.

Portable oil heaters employing a wick, in the opinion of experts, create the greatest hazard because of the large number in service, carelessness of users and the portability. Oil heaters should never be filled inside the house, but outside by means of an oil can, and *never while the wick is burning*. For greater safety and better operation, keep oil ranges and lamps scrupulously clean, the wick trimmed and the wick operating smoothly. Avoid placing them near curtains, table cloths or other hanging material, or where they may be knocked over. Ventilation is essential in rooms heated by oil burners. It is dangerous to go to sleep in a room in which a portable oil heater is burning.

### **Clear Out the Rubbish**

“Tell me what you do with your rubbish,” said a fireman, “and I’ll tell you what sort of a citizen you are. If you dispose carefully of every bit of your broken furniture, all your old newspapers and magazines, your oily rags, your worn out clothing, and all rubbish of that kind, you are a good citizen; but if you allow them to accumulate you are not only a bad citizen, but a menace to your neighbors.”

You might take to heart the foregoing statement by a fireman who knows all about fires and their ravages. Never neglect to have a “clean-up day.” Clear out all rubbish from your attic and cellar. And do it now! Keep all oil-soaked rags and paint cloths in tightly closed metal cans. One of the worst offenders is linseed oil on a piece of easily combustible rag. An oil mop or furniture polish cloth in a closet with the door closed, may quickly ignite. The closet is warm; there is a certain degree of humidity in the atmosphere; a limited amount of air comes through the cracks, and one day there is a fire. “Cause unknown.” To avoid fires from spontaneous ignition, it is best not to keep oily rags in closets. Keeping them near oils and cleaners that are flammable increases the danger.

Avoid storing papers, discarded articles, old packing boxes or pieces of lumber in attic or basement. You expose yourself to serious danger if you approach piles of rubbish and papers in the dark with a lighted match. Use an electric flashlight when looking for something that cannot be readily located in the semi-darkness.

### **Home Dry Cleaning**

“Three hundred women a year lose their lives attempting to clean clothing at home with gasoline, naphtha or benzine,” declared a fire chief. These three highly flammable cleaners have also disfigured or disabled countless persons and have caused thousands of fires with consequent property loss.

In Jersey City, New Jersey, a woman and five children were recently killed by a fire that swept a two-family house. One of the two tenants had been cleaning gloves with gasoline in the sink of the kitchen on the ground floor. The coal stove was burning and fumes from the cleaning fluid became ignited. The woman attempted to beat out the blaze and then ran upstairs to arouse the children. Meanwhile the fire roared through the flimsy structure so quickly that firemen were unable to save any part of it. The victims, members of the two families, were the woman who started the tragedy and her three children, and two other children whose parents were attending a motion picture theatre at the time.

In another case there were no fires in the house, therefore, no danger, thought the woman who was cleaning a garment in the kitchen. But her daughter decided to do some ironing, and plugged in the electric cord which was defective. A tiny spark shot out and ignited the heavy vapors. Both mother and daughter were blown through the walls and killed. This tragedy, too, happened despite all the warnings dinned into the ears of women about the dangers of flammable cleaning fluids.

Gasoline, naphtha and benzine as dry cleaners are dangerous because they vaporize so quickly, forming an explosive mixture with air. There is no telling when a tiny spark or flame

—out of the blue, so to speak—will ignite them, setting off a devastating explosion. Even the pilot light on the gas range will do it. Gas vapors may travel 200 feet to a pilot light. Rubbing materials together in dry cleaning, may cause a spark of static electricity to ignite the vapor. A cigarette or cigar smoked in an adjoining room can also touch it off. An open cellar door, too, may prove your undoing if the fumes reach the furnace. The vapor of these cleaning fluids is heavier than air, settles on the floor and spreads rapidly. Hence, don't take a chance with your own life and the lives of others in your home by dry cleaning with flammable fluids. Rather let commercial dry cleaners do the work. They will make a better job of it anyhow.

If you *must* dry-clean at home, use a non-flammable fluid. There are several of them on the market and this is so stated on the outside of the bottle or container. Be certain, however, that the cleaner you buy is both non-explosive and non-flammable. Then do the cleaning either by the open window or, still better, outside the house where all toxic or other vapors will be quickly dissipated. Dry the garments in the open and keep the children away, as some of the fumes are harmful when breathed in.

Never store gasoline in your home. It will automatically cancel your fire insurance policy.

### **Celluloid**

Celluloid and similar compounds are dangerous because they contain explosive elements and are flammable. Never buy toys, household ornaments, toilet articles or other objects which are made of these materials, even though they are cheap. As heat ignites them, they must be kept away from stoves, electric irons or electric lights. Never smoke while wearing glasses made of these flammable frames or an eyeshade made of celluloid. It may suddenly catch fire from your cigarette or match.

### **What to Do in Case of Fire**

If you find that you cannot put out a fire by yourself, either

by throwing a rug over it, by throwing water on it or with a fire extinguisher, turn in an alarm or call up the fire department without delay. If this is not feasible, shout "Fire" by the window, but don't do this in a crowded place; for this will immediately create a panic that may prove worse than the fire itself.

Should you awake at night and smell smoke, do not throw open the door of your room at once. First feel if it is warm to the touch, which means that the air is probably superheated on the other side of the door. Breathing such air is usually fatal, even though flames may not yet have reached the floor. Opening the door wide, moreover, you will be unable to shut it again because of the draft which will rush in and set everything in the room on fire. If you find that there is a strong pressure against the door and that the fire is close, shut it and look for your escape by the window.

In case there is dense smoke but no flame, tie a wet cloth over your mouth and nose, and crawl. Cooler and cleaner air will be found near the floor. Close all doors as you pass them.

*Do not run* if your clothing is afire, for this will fan the flames. Lie down on the floor and wrap yourself in a rug, couch cover or blanket. If you cannot find such a wrapping quickly, roll over on the floor and try to put out the flames with your hands.

Don't jump out of the window unless there is no other way out. If you must jump, make a bed sheet or blanket into a rope and slide to the ground with it; or throw out of the window the mattress or pillow of your bed, so that you will have something soft to fall on.

If the clothing of another person catches fire, throw him on the floor or ground, so that the flames do not reach his mouth or nostrils. Then stifle the flames with a hearth rug or roll the victim in the carpet. Remember to keep the flames from his face to prevent the entrance of hot air into the lungs.

Once more, close the door of a burning room behind you to check the spread of the flames. And don't waste any time trying to save valuables—they may cost your life.

### Kinds of Burns

Burns are divided into three kinds: first degree, second degree and third degree. The least serious are first degree burns. Second degree burns are more serious, for blisters form which break open at the first touch. They expose the second layer of the skin. Third degree burns are, of course, the most serious, for they destroy the upper layer of the dermis and may reach the blood vessels or nerves. Such burns are very painful and dangerous, because they destroy so much of the skin tissue. Infection may set in unless the burn is properly treated at once.

The chief dangers from burns are shock and infection. Shock is usually severe if the burn is extensive. Severe burns should receive prompt attention. Remove all clothing covering the burned area. Do not try to remove clothing that sticks, but merely cut around it. Leave the part that sticks for the doctor to remove.

### Remedies for the Home

1. *Sterile gauze*, several layers thick. Prepare a solution of baking soda or Epsom salts by adding two or three teaspoonsful to a quart of warm water. Soak a piece of folded sterile gauze in the solution. Apply the gauze to burn and bandage gauze into place.

2. *Picric acid gauze*. Moisten picric acid gauze with warm water and apply. For more detailed directions see the *Red Cross First Aid Textbook*, p. 180.

Do not attempt to treat a third degree burn, but call a doctor. For first and second degree burns you may use some home remedies, such as olive oil, vaseline, together with a small amount of baking soda slightly warmed. Apply a sterile gauze several layers thick. Keep the victim warm.

### Some Do's and Don'ts in Treating Minor Burns

These directions were given by Dr. Roy D. McClure and Dr. Conrad Lam of Detroit at the Chicago Congress of Industrial

Health, sponsored, in 1943, by the American Medical Association.

#### DO'S

1. Wash the burned part if it is dirty, using white soap and water, but being careful not to wash the raw area.
2. Do not break the blisters or otherwise "debride" the burn.
3. Cover the burn with a piece of fine-mesh gauze impregnated with petrolatum. If you do not have this specially treated gauze, put the petrolatum directly on the burn and cover with gauze.
4. Apply a dressing large enough to keep out the dirt and maintain some pressure.
5. Change outer dressing only as necessary.
6. For more severe burns of the hand, supply more pressure with cotton waste. Severe burns should, of course, be treated by a physician.

#### DON'TS

1. Don't use tannic acid solution or jelly; it retards healing.
2. Don't use unapproved but much advertised and expensive proprietary preparations.
3. Don't use sulfa drug preparations. They do not prevent infection and may cause a rash.
4. Don't break the blister. The plasma in the blister is an ideal dressing.
5. Don't delay skin grafting if indicated for small third degree burns.

#### Fire Extinguishers

There is no telling how many a disastrous fire could have been put out without doing great harm if a fire extinguisher had been available at the right moment. Keep one in the kitchen, one in the basement, another on one of the upper floors, near the bedrooms. You should also have one in the garage and in each farm building, if your home is located in the



country. There are several makes of fire extinguishers for special purposes and for various types of fire. Be sure to acquire a good make and follow the instruction given by the manufacturer in regard to use and installation. Do not use the extinguisher haphazardly. Aim at the burning material itself, not at the flame. Teach each member of your family group how to use fire extinguishers. It is too late to learn to handle them after a blaze has started.

Other devices for fire protection now on the market are the automatic sprinkler system and fire alarms. They are said to be very efficient.

When a fire is still small, it may be beaten out by a broom, a rug, or a coat. But if it has made some headway, keep it from spreading by using the extinguisher.

Fabrics may be fireproofed in the home without much difficulty. This includes window curtains, draperies, ironing board covers, rugs near fireplaces, and so forth. Textiles so treated are fire-resistant and will not readily flare up.

### How to Fireproof Fabrics

In a gallon of warm water dissolve 9 ounces borax and 4 ounces boric acid. Dip *dry* articles in the solution until they are thoroughly wet. Hang them up to drain and allow them to dry. You may spray the solution directly on rugs and draperies by means of a garden spray until the articles are thoroughly wet. In case the fabric is water-resistant, add sufficient soap to the solution to make suds. This fireproofing lasts only as long as the articles are not laundered. They need to be treated anew after each washing.

### SAFETY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Have you several fire extinguishers readily available in your home?
2. Do you and the members of your family know how to operate a fire extinguisher?
3. Do you know what to do in case a fire starts?

4. Do you burn out chimneys or flues with a hot fire, instead of having them properly cleaned?
5. Does the fire screen in the living room fit snugly against the mantle at the top as well as at both sides?
6. Do you keep basement and attic free from trash which may start a fire?
7. Are closets and storerooms kept free from paint- and oil-soaked rags or mops?
8. How much gasoline have you stored away? And where do you keep it?
9. Do you know where to find the nearest fire alarm box?
10. Do you know how to send in an alarm?

#### SUGGESTED READING

The National Board of Fire Underwriters, 85 John Street, New York City, *Safeguarding the Home Against Fire*, Fire Prevention Manual.

McCarthy, John J., *The Science of Fire Fighting*, W. W. Norton Company, New York, 1944.

Stack, Herbert J., and Siebrecht, Elmer B., *Education for Safe Living*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York, 1942.

Williams, Sidney J., and Charters, W. W., *Safety*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1940.

#### GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

U. S. Department of Agriculture, Farmers' Bulletin, Washington, D. C.

*Fireproofing Fabrics*, No. 1786.

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## Elysium by Electricity

**M**ARY WARD, age 12, was ordered by her mother to take a bath before retiring in the evening. Not wishing to miss her favorite broadcast, she took a radio with her into the bathroom and plugged it in. At dawn the following morning her mother found her dead in the bathtub, victim of an electric shock caused by the radio. Somehow it had slipped from its moorings and crashed into the tub. The little girl's mother should, of course, have known that electrical appliances of any sort are dangerous in the bathroom. Yet, there appears not even to have been an attempt on her part either to dissuade her daughter from taking the radio into the bathroom with her or to place it beyond her reach while bathing.

Electricity has been a household convenience for a long time and its usefulness in the home is constantly being extended. It has found its way into the smallest community, to the farm and even to the distant homestead. The use of electric lights and appliances, however, has also introduced new hazards which make it necessary to use caution in its employment. Electricity, as will be seen, is a friend that needs to be treated with respect.

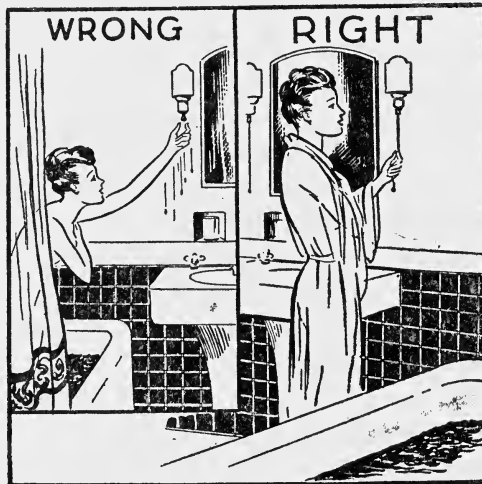
If you touch an electric fixture while standing in a bathtub containing water, your body may act as a lightning rod for 110 volts of destruction. Never handle an electric appliance—heater, curling iron or light socket—while standing in a tub.

Light switches in the bathroom need to be out of reach from tub or wash basin. If a pull type switch is used, the lower part of the pull should be cord instead of metal, and there ought to be also an insulated joint. If the insulation of an appliance and its cord are kept in good condition, shocks will not be received even though the hands may be wet; but as a safety-first practice it is far better to dry the hands before touching an electric fixture connected with the circuit.

### Safe Wiring

Electricity starts many a rip-roaring blaze. Defective or amateur wiring, too many appliances on one circuit, makeshift or wrong amperage fuses, extension cords under rugs—these are the all too common dangers in the home.

Frayed lamp cords and the looping of extension cords around nails, fixtures and other projections contribute in no small measure to electric hazards. Every household has a number of extension cords for the connection of portable appliances. Particular attention ought to be paid to the correct type of connecting cord. There are cords suitable for lamps, for heating



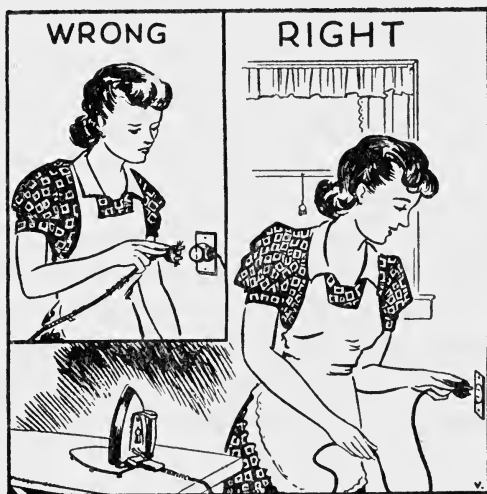
(Courtesy Greater New York Safety Council)

Switch to safety with a piece of string.

appliances such as pressing irons, for washing machines, radio, and so forth. When replacing a flexible cord, be sure it has the same voltage and size as the appliance to be connected. Should you be unable to secure such a cord at short notice, ask your electrician for advice what to use in its place.

Long connecting cords trailing across rooms, under rugs or along baseboards are not only a constant fire hazard, but also a tripping hazard. For young children, moreover, they may prove a shock hazard. Neither should electric cords touch hot radiators or other sources of heat. Stop open electric wall sockets with a plug, so that baby fingers cannot touch them.

Safe wiring ought to start when the house is being built. Its electrical equipment will never be safe if improper materials are used, or if it is not installed according to approved practices. Makeshift wiring is both a fire and accident hazard. All wiring in a house should be done by a licensed electrician who not only knows the requirements for safety, but will also install wiring which is adequate from the standpoint of both service and utility. In case additions or alterations become necessary,



(Courtesy Greater New York Safety Council)

Repair or replace defective electrical equipment.

consider these, too, a job that needs the special knowledge and skill of an expert. Amateur work is rarely safe. Flexible cords in the household are subjected to much wear and tear. They are pulled and twisted, stepped upon and often kicked. Heater cords often come in touch with hot parts of the appliance or are rubbed against the edge of the table or ironing board. The cords of portable or floor lamps are subjected to even worse abuse. Thus accidents happen without number.

Frank M., 44 years old, manufacturer of a washing fluid, was recently killed by electricity when his wet hand came into contact with a bared spot on an extension cord in the cellar of his home, where he mixed and bottled his product. His body was found by his daughter.

A worn cord on a metal lamp, by the way, may make the frame come "alive." Should a toddler try to hold on to such a lamp with one hand while touching the radiator or a water pipe, he is most likely to receive a shock.

No matter, therefore, how safe the permanent wiring that has been built into the house may be, it cannot guarantee safety if you use connecting cords that are either worn or not suitable for the purpose. Portable cords have to be of a type carrying the bracelet label of Underwriters' Laboratories, Inc. They should not be bent if they are too long nor have knots tied into them. Remove the plug carefully from the outlet by grasping the plug. Never pull on the cord, for this will loosen the connection, or cause a short circuit. Light sockets are constructed for lighting only and have not the capacity to supply the power needed by most appliances. Using electric light sockets for flat irons or cookers may not only cause a short circuit but also a fire.

### **Why Fuses Are Important**

To prevent possible overloading of wires with current too heavy to carry, fuses are provided. The fuse is said to be the safety valve of the electrical system. In protecting the system, the house and its occupants are also protected.

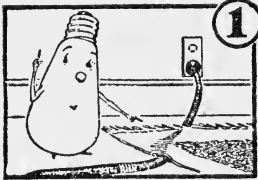
Fuses are placed in every circuit to prevent accidents. Fuse wire is made of softer metal offering greater resistance than ordinary house wire. Fuses of proper rating should always be provided to protect the circuit from excessive current. They must not be replaced with fuses of higher ratings or be made ineffective in other ways, as is sometimes done by amateur electricians. Tampering with fuses is taking a chance.

In case you are connecting too many appliances to one circuit more current will be drawn through the supply wires than they were meant to carry. If more current passes than is safe, the fuse wire will melt and break the circuit. Overloaded wires become hot, not infrequently to the point of injuring the circulation. It is necessary, therefore, to spread the load of appliances by plugging them in different circuits.

When a fuse "blows" something is wrong. The trouble may be due either to a defective cord or the appliance, or too many appliances connected at the same time on one circuit. Find out the cause of the trouble and have it removed. If this is not done before a new fuse is put in place of the old one, the new one will also blow out. It is safest to keep a supply of regulation fuses on hand of a make approved of by the Underwriters' Laboratories, Inc. The rating in amperes is marked on the fuse. To attempt to overcome fuse-blowing by using a fuse of a higher rating is dangerous practice. A makeshift substitute for a fuse, moreover, may result in a fire or a bad accident. Better not take a chance.

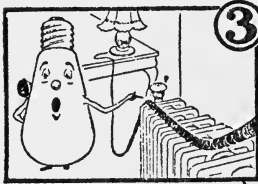
### **Electric Pressing Irons**

About forty fires every day in the week occur in this country due to electric irons left in the circuit. Such fires annually cost the country approximately \$1,625,000. Improper maintenance of flexible cords is responsible for an additional number of conflagrations with consequent loss of human lives and destruction of property. Most of these fires start in apartments or dwelling houses. Electric pressing irons, it has been stated by experts,



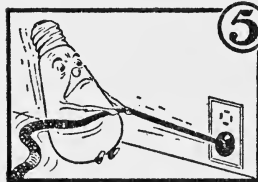
**1. NEVER RUN CORDS UNDER RUGS**

They become worn too quickly.



**3. CORDS SHOULD NEVER BE RUN OVER RADIATORS OR STEAM PIPES**

Squeezing like this breaks the protective covering.

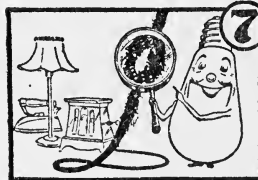


**4. NEVER LEAVE HEATING APPLIANCES CONNECTED WHEN NOT IN USE**

Fire is frequently caused this way.

**5. DO NOT DISCONNECT APPLIANCES BY PULLING ON THE CORD**

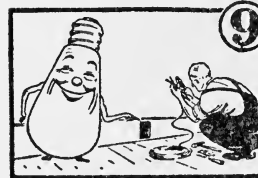
This loosens the connections and is often a cause of trouble.



**6. CORDS SHOULD NEVER BE USED AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR PERMANENT AND PROPERLY INSTALLED WIRING**

**7. CORDS SHOULD BE EXAMINED REGULARLY**

Worn out cords should be replaced to prevent short circuits and possible electric shock.

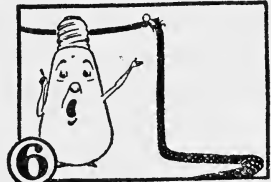
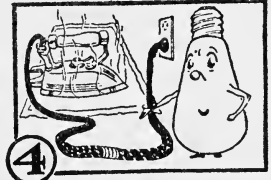
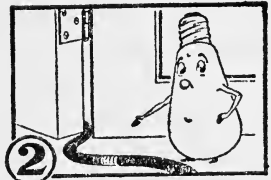


**8. CORDS WITH THIS LABEL ARE SAFE. INSIST ON LABELED CORDS WITH ALL APPLIANCES AND LAMPS**

**9. BE SURE TO HAVE ALL ELECTRICAL REPAIRS AND WIRING MADE BY A COMPETENT ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR**

**10. HAVE ALL WIRING INSPECTED BY AN ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR**

This is your assurance that the work is properly installed and will give better service under safe conditions.



(Courtesy Underwriters' Laboratories)

How to safeguard electric service in the home. Observe these simple safety rules.



cause more fires than any other electrical appliance. Why not make a mental note of this!

Are you using a pendent cord, controlling the iron from a wall switch or with the key or pull chain in the socket? If you do you cannot tell whether the current is on or off. You may think that you are turning the current off when you are actually turning it on. You need not be surprised, under these circumstances, if combustible material in contact with the iron suddenly ignites. Disconnect the cord, when you have finished ironing, and be safe. Other safeguards are red bull's-eye lamps, built in conjunction with wall switches. So long as the red light shows, the appliance is connected. The greatest safety, however, is provided by the iron which has an automatic temperature control switch. This protects the iron from excessive temperature and considerably lessens the danger of fire. To keep the iron away from combustible material when at rest, use a good pressing iron stand. Under this stand place a sheet of asbestos, at least  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch thick. It may be fastened to prevent slipping.

### **Electric Washing Machines**

The equipment of an electric washing machine must be properly insulated. For this reason alone it is essential to buy the needed equipment from a responsible dealer. If you buy it from a dealer not well known to you, be sure to get a local electrician to install it.

Electric motors of washing machines are, as a rule, well insulated; but it may happen that the motor gets wet. This may lower its insulation qualities. Use only rubber-sheeted cords of good quality on your washing machine and secure new ones just as soon as the old show signs of wear.

Never allow an amateur to tamper with the wires. A special outlet close to the washing machine, moreover, needs to be provided, a wall outlet controlled by a switch. It is dangerous to connect it to a lamp socket. A raised platform of wood, large enough for the machine and the laundress will prove another

safeguard. While the basket is revolving do not put clothes into the spinning dryer. It is taking a chance to do this. Wringers, as a rule, have a safety release. Learn to use it efficiently. Do not touch a washtub, a faucet, the washer or the wringer while touching an electric switch.

Washing machines must necessarily be used in the vicinity of water so that special precautions are advisable. Water is a good conductor, so it is imperative to keep electric appliances dry. Water is apt to be spilled in laundry work. Mop it up at once and keep your hands and clothing as dry as possible.

The electric wringer may, however, prove a hazard of another kind, if either the hand or the blouse of the laundress is caught in its revolutions. This is borne out by the following newspaper report:

“Minneapolis, Minn., Oct. 19, 1944. Mrs. Dorothy Lange, 19-year-old wife of S/Sgt. Lawrence T. Lange, was strangled to death last night when her blouse caught in the wringer of an electric washing machine. The young couple had moved here last April after their marriage in New York.”

### **Electric Heaters**

An electric heater should not be kept in operation during the night. During the day keep it away from combustible material; for even a slight irregularity in the surface of the reflector may cause it to act as a sun-glass, focusing enough heat to ignite curtains or upholstered furniture. Portable electric heaters must not be connected to lamp sockets or to a circuit which is overloaded with lamps and other appliances. A solid base ought to be provided for all heaters, so that they cannot easily be overturned.

The misuse of electrical appliances, it needs to be restated here, costs the American people \$50,000 a day. To a large extent this loss is due to defective wiring, bad insulation, poor switches and the careless handling of heaters, toasters, hot plates, pressing irons and the like.

### **Vacuum Cleaners**

Vacuum cleaners are sometimes run against the steam radiator or touch some metal which makes electric contact with the ground; this results in sparks and a blown fuse, a sure indication that insulation at some point is defective. A cord may have worn out at the place where it enters the cleaner and a wire is touching the metal case. Notify the repair department of the firm manufacturing your vacuum cleaner without delay and have the needed repair made by a specialist. You will not be able to plug your cleaner into the same outlet until the repair is made; for the sparks will fly and ruin the circuit.

### **Heating Pads**

Heating pads for the alleviation of pain or illness can be used with safety if some fundamental rules are observed. Always keep the pad dry. It should not be used when there is excessive perspiration or other moisture, for it may cause a shock. Do not overheat it. To keep the pad in good condition do not pull it by the cord from one place to another, or the wire connections of the heating element may thus be broken. Avoid sticking safety pins through the pad to keep it in place; the pins may come in contact with the heating element and cause a shock. Do not fold the pad or hang it by the cord in your closet. It is best to keep it in the box in which it was purchased. And never go to sleep with a heating pad in operation, no matter how little current is used. If these rules cannot be observed, it is far safer to use a hot water bottle or a chemical pad.

### **Electric Fans, Wringers and Other Kitchen Utensils**

They need to be handled with care. Wringers with uncovered cogs are not safe in the household where there are small children. When cleaning the toaster or the waffle iron, electric

mixer or percolator, do not immerse them in water, since insulating materials often absorb water. When using the electric mixer, hold it so that it touches no other metals. When it is necessary to wash an electric appliance, keep the electrical elements dry.

Vibrators, curling irons and hair dryers must be kept away from running water, pipes or radiators, and be disconnected at once after use. Never touch them with wet hands.

### **Electrical Toys**

Electric toys operated by dry batteries only are safe. Electric shock may occur from the type that is attached to the electric current. Make sure, therefore, that the electric toys you buy for your children are safe. Toys that have a transformer may be safely connected to the current in most homes. When you select such toys convince yourself that the transformer is entirely enclosed in an insulated case. In case electric toys or wires of toys have become worn from much use, discard them, particularly if the cords are of sub-standard variety.

Christmas tree lighting sets, if the lamps do not fit well into sockets, may cause decorations to come into contact with metallic tinsel or other metallic decorations and cause a short circuit. This may happen also if the molded insulating material of which the small lamp sockets are made, does not extend far enough beyond the end of the small screw shells and thus becomes exposed. Before buying a Christmas tree set, screw a lamp into one of the sockets and observe whether hanging tinsel can make contact with live parts of the socket or lamp. The safest way is to select only such Christmas tree sets as have been approved of by the Underwriters' Laboratories, Inc.

### **Radio Aerials**

Unless you set up your radio antenna with much care as to location, it can be a serious hazard, both electrically and mechanically. Locate it at a safe distance from all electric lines, and do not attach the antenna or the guy wires to the poles of

electric power, light, telegraph or telephone wires. Thus you avoid accidental contact which might not only result in shock but also prove a fire hazard, not to mention the damage to the radio itself. A safe distance would be the entire length of the aerial in every direction.

A short vertical aerial on the roof gives good elevation and good reception. The part of the wire that goes through the walls should be encased in rubber or porcelain. The antenna ought to be equipped with a well-grounded lightning arrester.

High voltage wires are generally known to be dangerous. No radio wire, therefore, should ever be strung above, below, or near such a line. Any fallen wire is a source of danger. Hence, play safe and avoid it.

### **In Case of Emergency**

The first thing to do in case of electrical shock is to shut off the current at the meter. If this is not feasible, separate the victim from the current as quickly as it can be done. To do this cover your hands with any available rubber article such as a rubber raincoat, rubber gloves or rubber overshoes. A silken garment, too, can be used. Never touch the victim with bare hands. Remember, too, not to touch any part of the live wire or appliance which carries the current, especially not with wet hands or clothing. As soon as the victim is removed from contact with the current, administer artificial respiration (Chapter XII, *First Aid*) until the doctor comes.

Should an emergency arise which involves the wiring system of the house, pull the main service switch and cut off all current at once. You should know where this switch is located. It may be in the basement or in a hallway of your house. If you are not sure of the extent of the emergency, call up the electric power company for advice.

### **SAFETY QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. Are the wires which enter the house well insulated?
2. Is there a fuse plug for each wire that leaves the fuse box?

3. Do you use cords as substitutes for permanent and properly installed wiring?
4. Do you run cords under rugs, steam radiators or between door jams?
5. Have all chains insulating links?
6. Do you replace a blown fuse with one made for a larger circuit?
7. Are you and other members of your family acquainted with the proper method of using each electrical appliance in your home?
8. Are all your electric fixtures kept at a safe distance from running water?
9. Do you make sure, before leaving the room for any length of time, that the electric pressing iron, toaster, waffle iron or any other appliance is disconnected?
10. When using an electric heating pad, do you take care that it is not overheated and that no liquid or extreme moisture can come into contact with it?
11. Do you know the location of the wall switch in case of a short circuit?
12. Do you know what to do in case of electric shock?

### SUGGESTED READING

- International Association of Electrical Inspectors, 85 John Street, New York, N. Y., *Electric Service with Safety* (free pamphlet).
- Westinghouse Home Economics Institute, Mansfield, Ohio, *The Care and Use of Electric Appliances in the Home* (free pamphlet).
- Stack, Herbert J., and Siebrecht, Elmer B., *Education for Safe Living*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York, 1942, pp. 128-129.
- Williams, Sidney J., and Charters, W. W., *Safety*, The Macmillan Company, 1940, New York, pp. 74, 75, 77-93, 103-104, 110, 112-113, 118, 135-136, 364-366.

LEAFLETS

*How to Make Your Electric Cords Last Longer*, Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C.

*The Home Repair of Electrical Equipment*, Bulletin 621, New York State College of Home Economics, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y.

## The Lethal Cup

ONLY a few hours before she was to have been married, Kathryn Marshall, 20 years old, of 2537 23rd Street, Coney Island, New York, died in a hospital emergency ward after taking by mistake a dose of insecticide in place of bicarbonate of soda. The young woman and her fiancé had spent the day shopping for a ring. The marriage license, too, had been issued. It was the eve of their marriage and they wanted to celebrate it by having dinner together and seeing a movie. Returning home, Miss Marshall complained of a stomach ache and went into the bathroom for the bicarbonate. A small low-watt bulb was the only illumination in the room and, fumbling in the semi-darkness, the girl mistakenly picked up the container of the insecticide from the shelf of the medicine cabinet, mixed a dose in a glass of water and drank it. Her screams brought the young man and her mother to the scene, where they found her in intense pain. An emetic was immediately given her and she was rushed to the hospital where efforts to save her life proved unsuccessful."

Thus read a report in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* not long ago.

The most dangerous place in the bathroom, as is well known, is the medicine cabinet. Thousands of people die annually from medicinal poisoning. Time after time reports appear in the press of the country, telling of mistakes made in choosing



poorly marked or mislabeled bottles or containers. Yet, poisonous drugs are still left easily accessible to blundering adults and from curious children to sample. Such needless loss of life due to negligence is as though destruction had been deliberately planned. The medicine cabinet, instead of holding only first aid and household remedies, as well as prescriptions in current use, serves also as a storage place for rodent and disinfectant compounds, lye preparations as well as poisonous drugs, not to mention various toilet preparations in daily use.

Poisons rank third as a cause of accidental deaths. As a matter of fact, in 1945 only one type of accident increased—poisonings. And all accidental poisonings among adults and older children were the result of mistakes as to what was being taken. The wrong thing was picked up. Instead of preserving life, as will be seen, the medicine cabinet in many households acts like a death trap. Low visibility and poor judgment do the rest.

Since so much danger is inherent in many medicinal and other chemical preparations kept in the home, which might be mistakenly swallowed in a moment of fatigue or during a sudden indisposition, there ought to be in every household a thorough understanding as to what may be kept in the medicine cabinet and what not.

### **The Medicine Cabinet†**

The first thing to do in rearranging the medicine cabinet for safer use is to clear out all the old bottles and containers which have not been needed for a long time. The active ingredients of prescriptions, especially in liquid form, lose their healing value through deterioration. Hence, keep nothing in the medicine cabinet that is not of immediate use. Throw out any dried up bottles of milk of magnesia, iodine or argyrol, too old to be effective. Stock up the medicine cabinet with a selection of the following:

½ oz. bottle of a mild solution of iodine

8 oz. bottle of rubbing alcohol (marked "For external use")

box of boric acid powder (marked "For external use")

box of baking soda

box of bicarbonate of soda

small container of aspirin tablets

jar of vaseline

a laxative, such as castor oil or Epsom salts

a simple cough syrup

a bottle of aromatic spirits of ammonia

a roll of absorbent cotton

a roll each of 1", 2" and 3" bandages

some sterile dressings

a roll of adhesive tape 1" wide

All bottles and containers of medicinal poisons currently in use should be so labeled. It is safer, however, to store them in a different place; for mistakes will happen in moments of mental upset. Further evidence of the danger you can encounter when you are out of sorts is shown in this story:

"A mistake made by their mother when she reached for the castor oil bottle, the other day, sent her two children, a girl, age 4, and her small brother, 2, to the General Hospital in a critical condition. Mrs. Fanny Moore, the mother, told the police that she gave them each a tablespoon of camphorated oil, thinking it was castor oil. She was treating them for the 'flu.'"

The lesson to be learned from this experience is: Always read carefully the label on the bottle or container which you are taking from the medicine cabinet *before* using its contents, not *after*. A good way to guard against making fatal mistakes is also to tie a little bell around the neck of a poison bottle. Some housewives stick pins into the cork or fasten adhesive tape on the cork and down the sides, or keep the poison bottle in a large container, such as a jar with a screw top. Last, but not least, put it on the highest shelf, out of easy reach of every one.

There is another potential hazard in refilling empty bottles that previously held soft drinks, with some other kind of a liquid, without plainly marking the bottles with a label indi-

cating what has been put into them. Recently, two men died instantly from poisoned drinks when a poisonous garden spray was inadvertently poured from such a refilled bottle to mix a cocktail. Strange as it may seem, people often drink the contents of a bottle without carefully examining it, or fully turning on the light to see what they are taking. If accurate thinking and workmanship are essential to business men, inventors or engineers in the pursuit of their occupations, is it not likewise necessary to think accurately in the daily affairs of the home? The housewife, too, is to be blamed for not using better judgment in keeping locked all dangerous poisons or potions.

#### INTERNAL POISONING

In case of internal poisoning the first thing to do, particularly if the victim is unconscious, is to call a doctor. If the victim is conscious, at once induce him to vomit. This is done by making him drink large quantities of lukewarm water to which either salt, mustard or soap has been added. Emetics which may easily be prepared in every household are as follows:

1. Warm salt water—1 tablespoon salt to one glass of warm water.
2. Warm mustard water—1 teaspoonful of dry mustard to one glass of warm water.
3. Soapy water—a piece of Ivory soap shaken up in warm water to make a good suds.

If it becomes necessary to urge vomiting after the victim has swallowed several glasses of emetics, tickle the back of his throat with your index finger several times until the fluid comes up. As soon as the fluid raised from the stomach comes clear, administer an antidote. Keep the victim warm and quiet. Milk or hot coffee may prove stimulating after an antidote has been given.

#### **First Aid for Some of the Poisons Most Commonly Taken\***

*Acids, Strong*—Hydrochloric, sulphuric, etc. (See under Alkalis.)

\* Courtesy the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, *First Aid*, pamphlet.

*Alkalis, Caustics*—Ammonia caustic lime (quicklime), caustic soda, caustic potash, lye, etc.

The victim's lips, mouth, and tongue are stained and burned. Usually it is unwise to force vomiting if the poison was taken in concentrated form, for fear of rupturing the corroded walls of the esophagus and stomach. After diluting and counteracting the poison as described below, give a soothing drink, such as a wineglassful of olive oil, a glass of milk, or flour and water.

*To dilute and counteract an acid swallowed*, give two glassfuls of diluted milk of magnesia, or two tablespoonsful of baking soda in a pint of water, or finely divided chalk in water, or lime in water (if necessary, scrape plaster off the walls, powder it, and mix it with water).

*Arsenic and Preparations Containing Arsenic*—Insect poisons, rat poisons, Paris green, etc.

Induce vomiting repeatedly by giving several glassfuls of warm salt water. In the meantime, send to a drug store for freshly prepared hydrated oxide of iron and magnesia, the official arsenic antidote. When it comes, give the victim a wineglassful and induce vomiting again.

*Bichloride of Mercury*—Corrosive sublimate.

Give the whites of from three to five eggs *immediately*, and then induce vomiting repeatedly by giving warm mustard water or warm salt water.

*Strychnine*—Nux vomica, medicines and vermin-killers containing strychnine.

Administer one tablespoonful of powdered charcoal in water or one pint of potassium permanganate solution prepared according to the directions given under sleep-inducing drugs. *Keep the victim very quiet* in a dark room remote from all noises. Do not give a stimulant, as doing this is apt to bring on convulsions.

*Carbolic Acid*—Phenol and preparations containing it.

Immediately give soapsuds or two tablespoons of Epsom salts in a pint of water, and follow with enough lukewarm

water to induce vomiting. Then give flour and water to soothe the injured tissues. Do not give oils or fats.

Alcohol checks the caustic action of carbolic acid, and skin burns caused by it should be washed with diluted alcohol, whiskey, or brandy. But alcohol should not be given for carbolic acid taken internally, since it hastens the absorption of the poison.

#### *Iodine.*

Give several glassfuls of thin paste of starch in water or flour in water and induce vomiting until the vomited material no longer has a blue color.

#### *Phosphorus*—Rat poisons which contain phosphorus.

Induce vomiting by giving several glassfuls of warm mustard water. If copper sulphate is on hand or can be obtained quickly from a drug store, a weak solution consisting of a scant penknife-pointful of copper sulphate (3 grains) in a tumbler of water should be given every 15 minutes until vomiting occurs. The copper sulphate forms a coating over the phosphorus so that it cannot be absorbed. Then give lukewarm water and induce vomiting again to get the coated phosphorus out of the stomach. Do not give oils or fats.

*Sleep-inducing Drugs*—Opium, morphine, codeine, chloral hydrate, etc.

If the victim is conscious, induce vomiting by giving several glassfuls of warm mustard water. If potassium permanganate crystals are available or can be obtained quickly from the drug store, mix a penknife-pointful (about 4 grains) in a pint of warm water and strain, and have the victim swallow it again. Keep the victim awake if possible. Give strong black coffee as stimulant. Give artificial respiration if breathing stops.

#### **Other Poison Hazards**

There are several other poisons or poisonous substances not infrequently kept in the home, of which you should know, and which should be stored in a place not easily reached. Keep as

few of them as possible and get rid promptly of what remains of those that have had temporary use. Label all cans, bottles and containers carefully and tie a stopper tightly around the most dangerous one that you have to store in the home, so that anyone coming across it will know instantly that this means "Hands off!" Never keep any of these substances in a place close to the medicine cabinet, or where children can reach them.

### **Paints and Varnishes**

Paints and varnishes stored in the home present not only a poison risk, but also a fire hazard. Some of the paints contain heavy metal salts, while others, as for instance lead and mercury pigments, are among the most dangerous of their kind. Acute poisoning may result from soluble lead salts in larger quantities when they are absorbed by the skin for any length of time or are absorbed by the system in other ways. In the hands of children, however, such substances are even more hazardous.

Methyl alcohol, known also as methanol, the main constituent part of which is wood alcohol, is very dangerous, because of its paralyzing effect upon the optic nerves. When inadvertently swallowed, it has caused permanent blindness in many a case. Don't keep undiluted methyl in the house if you can do without it, and never use it in a room where windows are closed. Undiluted, it is also a fire risk.

Linseed oil and other drying oils when used in paints and varnishes, likewise constitute a fire hazard. They are also applied with rags of cotton or other textiles and may become ignited from the friction of rubbing against a surface. Silk is the worst of materials to use for this purpose, cotton comes next, then wool. Rags soaked with these drying oils should never be left exposed in closets or other places where they can ignite themselves and start a fire. Keep rags for polishing furniture and floors in a tightly closed metal box. Thus they will never prove a danger.

### **Polishing and Cleaning Materials**

In every household there are several polishing creams, as for instance, for metals, floors, shoes, and so forth, which often contain chemicals that are unsafe; especially so when they come into contact with the hands or other parts of the body. Oxalic acid and some of its derivatives, for example, are used in certain shoe polishes or ink eradicators. It is also sold for cleaning straw hats and to remove ink spots from linens. Some metal polishes contain it, too. If you are not careful enough you might mistake this for Epsom salts, with fatal results, for it resembles oxalic acid closely. Floor polishes and shoe polishes, moreover, sometimes contain nitrobenzine for no other reason than to conceal unpleasant chemical odors. To inhale it even in small quantities is dangerous. Such polishes should be used with great care, for they are also inflammable. Carbon tetrachloride for dry cleaning is non-inflammable, but when deeply inhaled may cause anesthesia.

Using lye in the kitchen is also fraught with danger. Take unusual care when opening a can to prevent the fine dust from getting into the eyes or nostrils. You should know, too, that concentrated lye quickly absorbs moisture from the air and, if you have not closed the can tightly enough, some solution may be produced which may spatter into your face when the can is suddenly opened. The same applies to chemicals used in cleaning drains. Be particularly careful to prevent any of it from spattering into your face when it first comes into contact with water. Keep lye completely out of the reach of children, for they might mistake it for sugar and taste it, with disastrous results. It paralyzes the vocal apparatus and constricts the windpipe, often permanently disabling the child. Many such cases are on record in hospitals.

### **Other Household Poisons**

Fumigating and disinfecting materials. This group of poisons is one of the most dangerous hazards in the home. Formalde-

hyde, sulphur dioxide and hydrocyanic acid are the chief materials used as gases in destroying bedbugs, ants, fleas and sometimes rats and mice. They are dangerous in the extreme when inhaled by human beings. The safest thing is to let an expert insect exterminator do the job. The U. S. Department of Agriculture issues a leaflet on this subject. You may have it on request. Don't enter a room while it is in the process of being fumigated, and keep children from entering it by all means at your command.

Corrosive sublimate (bichloride of mercury), carbolic acid (phenol), as well as its derivatives, used as antiseptic and, in a stronger solution, as disinfectant or insecticide, need to be stored separately.

White arsenic is often used to kill rodents or as poison for flies. Handle it with respect. If you use arsenic or other poisonous solutions to spray your garden, wash all fruits and vegetables before cooking or eating them, even though they may not have been directly sprayed.

### SAFETY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Who was to blame for the accidental poisonings in the first case history related in this chapter? Who in the second?
2. Where should poison bottles be kept? And what identifying characteristics ought they to have?
3. What is the first thing to do in case of poisoning? And what after that?
4. Is it safe to refill old, empty bottles with poisonous liquids, or liquids not fit for human consumption?
5. Do you fully turn on the light in the bathroom before you open the medicine cabinet to take out some needed remedy?
6. Do you swap your favorite prescription with your best friend, without realizing what harm you may do? Remember the old adage: "One man's meat is another man's poison."
7. Do you indulge in patent medicines which contain narcotics or other dangerous drugs?



8. Why did deaths by poisoning rise about five per cent in 1943?
9. Who has major responsibility for things that happen in the home?
10. Do accidents happen when people are relaxed and calm?

## SUGGESTED READING

Armstrong, Donald B., and Hallock, Grace T., *What to do Until the Doctor Comes*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1944. \$1.

*American Red Cross First Aid Textbook*, The Blakiston Company, Philadelphia, 60c.

Dolce, James A., M.D., United States Public Health Service, *Until the Doctor Comes*, 15c.

Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, New York, *First Aid*, free pamphlet.

Norlin, Elinor E., and Donaldson, Bessie M., *Everyday Nursing for the Everyday Home*, Macmillan Company, New York, 1943.

## Valhalla by Gas

**D**EATHS from gas asphyxiation have increased 50 per cent since 1943," declare authorities. During 1945, gas killed 1,900 Americans in their homes. About half of these deaths were caused by illuminating gas. The housewife is to blame in most cases for these easily preventable tragedies. Liquids boiling over and extinguishing the gas, account for a considerable number of deaths by asphyxiation. Defective gas water heaters and other gas heaters, leaky pipes and faulty connections are the cause of the remainder.

A police emergency crew worked four hours and exhausted twenty-seven tanks of oxygen to revive Mrs. Agnes Reese, 34, a school teacher, and her daughter, Mary, 6, who were overcome by gas in their apartment at 600 Cabrini Boulevard. Both were taken in a serious condition to the hospital. The police report stated that Mrs. Reese had gotten up early, put a pot of coffee on the gas stove and then went back to bed. The coffee boiled over, extinguishing both pilot light and the lighted jet. The gas fumes seeped into the hallway and the superintendent of the building notified the police. It is hard to explain why this woman, a school teacher, should have been so careless, and it is still more difficult to speak fair of such practices as lighting the gas stove and then returning to bed.

It amounts to committing unintentional suicide, as well as endangering the lives of others.

Another case is that of a small boy, John Watson, 3 years old, who was asphyxiated after he had apparently become cold and turned on gas jets in the kitchen in the belief they would provide warmth. His infant sister and his aunt, 18, were overcome, but could be revived. The question arises whether this is a home where children can be reared in safety. To prevent just such a calamity as this, safety clips should be put on all gas cocks and children must be taught to stay out of the kitchen. The housewife needs only to release the safety clips in order to light the gas jets. Loose burner cocks should be repaired or replaced at once to prevent leaks and the danger of being turned on unintentionally.

### **How to Take Care of Your Gas Range**

Pilot lights of the push button type on kitchen gas stoves sometimes go out and allow gas to escape. They must be cleaned at once in such a case. Use a fine wire or hair pin to remove soot or grease. Should the pilot light need readjustment in order to light all other jets of the stove properly, turn the regulating screw to the side which permits increase in size of flame, and then the other way to decrease it as needed.

It is important to keep the burners of the gas stove clean and in a good condition. Carbon monoxide may escape into the room when a gas burner does not get enough air while burning. When lighting gas burners, have the match lighted and hold it near the burner before turning on the cock. Should the flame flash back and burn inside, turn off the gas, wait a moment, and then light once more. In case the flashback continues, have the burner readjusted and cleaned before you use it again. Keep the air shutter near the cock of each burner meticulously clean so that you get a regular blue flame. Once a week wash burners in warm water with some washing soda dissolved in it to remove grease. The cause of the yellow flame is too little

air. This will blacken the bottom of your pans. Hence, get the gas flow of each burner properly adjusted without delay.

The first thing to do when you notice the odor of escaping gas is to open doors and windows; then use an electric flashlight to look for the leak. Never strike a match while searching for it, nor use a lighted candle or a lamp. If you cannot trace the leak by smell, the safest thing to do is to turn off the gas at the meter. Then, immediately notify the gas company or a gas fitter.

When boiling liquids, be sure that the drafts from the window near the stove do not blow out the gas flame. A fatal accident is often the result of such a blowout. Always turn away protruding handles of pots and pans from the edge of the stove; then you cannot accidentally brush against them. But, don't push them too close to the burner. Cover scalding liquids before carrying them from the stove and use a cloth or pad in lifting the pot.

When frying potatoes or other food, be sure they are dry, for water makes the grease spatter. Keep youngsters out of the kitchen when you do deep-frying. If the grease in the skillet catches fire extinguish the flame with a handful of salt or soda—never use water. Clean up any grease that may have dropped on the floor.

“Mrs. Mary Moore, 77 years old, was fatally burned when flaming grease in a frying pan set her clothing afire in her home. Although neighbors responded to her screams, beat out the flames and turned off the gas, Mrs. Moore, who had been preparing supper for her daughter and herself, died within a short time.”

So read a recent newspaper notice in the *New York American*. It proves again that safety is not always to be found in the home.

Venting the gas range is also important. Never stuff steel wool into an exposed pipe if it is not directly connected to a flue or chimney. It interferes with safe, efficient operation. Consult your gas company before installing a new gas range;

they may have valuable suggestions to offer in regard to the best make for your kitchen.

### **Gas Heaters**

Equally important is ventilation in rooms which are heated by gas. The oxygen consumed by a gas heater must be replaced and the by-products of combustion dispersed. Leave windows and doors slightly ajar. Do not use gas heaters with flues in bedrooms at night. They are absolutely unsafe. Have a periodic inspection made of your gas equipment and get possible defects repaired promptly by competent gas fitters.

Gas heaters, wherever possible, should have fixed iron piping. If flexible tubing must be used, the shut-off should be located in the pipe and not in the tubing, to prevent the possibility of leaks. Protect gas heaters from drafts which may blow out the flame and fill the room with deadly and explosive gas. Keep portable heaters out of the path of household traffic and safe from contact by children. Woodwork and furniture can be set afire by prolonged exposure to heat.

“Newark, N. J., Jan. 2, 1944, *Newark Evening News*. Three children died of gas poisoning in a freak accident early today, while their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Russell R. Scull of 325 Main Street, Paterson, were out visiting. A pet dog, tied to the base of a hot water heater in the kitchen, twisted the gas jet, in an attempt to loosen itself. The dog survived.”

Here is another report which causes one to wonder why housewives are not better informed about the dangers lurking in the home. Mrs. Rose Marie Scibelli, 42, and her daughter, Mary, 3, were found dead in their apartment at 154-40 106th Ave., Jamaica, N. Y. A water heater was found burning and it was believed that the mother and the child had died from carbon monoxide poisoning caused by the heater eating up all the oxygen in the home.

### **Carbon Monoxide Gas**

Poisonous gas may develop in your garage from the exhaust

of your automobile. This is particularly dangerous. It contains carbon monoxide which kills even in small quantities, overcoming the victim without warning. To get the car outside the garage, open windows first. Don't run the motor indoors any longer than is absolutely necessary. Warm up the motor outdoors. Never work the car in the garage while the motor is running.

The person overcome by poisonous gas should be taken into the fresh air, but the air must not be cold. A warm, ventilated room is best. Artificial respiration may be applied even before the doctor arrives.

### SAFETY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Are you always careful to turn off the gas entirely when through using the burner?
2. Are there any loose burner cocks on your gas range?
3. Do you teach small children never to touch the cocks on the gas range?
4. Is a gas pipe or gas fixture used to support clothes lines, clothing or utensils?
5. Are you sure that lamps, stoves or heaters that burn gas in your home, and all pipes and their connections are well made, tight and free from leaks?
6. Do you buy cheap rubber tubing to connect gas pipes?
7. Is a gas heater used in the bathroom for any purpose?
8. Has your gas refrigerator adequate ventilation? Is it kept clean?
9. Do you buy gas appliances that have not been approved of by the American Gas Association Laboratories?
10. Do you use so-called "gas saving" devices?

### SUGGESTED READING

National Safety Council, *Checklist for Home Safety*, free folder, 20 N. Wacker Drive, Chicago, Ill.

The American National Red Cross, Washington, D. C., *Pre-*

*venting Accidents in Our Homes and on our Farms*, (free pamphlet).

Stack, Herbert, J., Seaton, Don C., and Hyde, Florence S., *Safety in the World Today*, p. 161, Beckley-Cardy, Atlanta, Ga.

## Let Them Live

**W**HILE the infectious diseases of childhood, heart disease, and other organic diseases continue to exact their usual toll, fatalities due to accidents are increasing in numbers rather than remaining stationary. Mortality statistics for infants and children reveal this astonishing fact. The age group of 1 to 5, in particular, is prone to fall prey to accidents in the home. A large number in the age group 5 to 14, occur also in the streets, the parks and in resorts. They include falls, drownings, shootings, burnings, poisonings and many other mishaps. In numerous instances children come to harm because of the mistakes or neglect of their parents; they suffer, too, from the consequences of their own heedless acts. In 1945 nearly 15,000 children lost their lives in this manner.

Children form many of their habits during the first years of life. Very early the child either learns to obey and respect his parents, or he is disobedient and given to temper tantrums. Parents are supposed to bring up a child in safety until he is old enough to take care of himself. This means teaching him to form good habits, seeking the cause of disobedient acts and striving to avoid repetition. Firmness and consistency are often needed to accomplish this.

A little child, of course, has to be active in his process of growth. Does that mean that you should permit him to do any-



thing he wants to do? Just what is he up to? You wonder. You rush in and find that the youngster has stuck his head through the bottom rung of a chair and toppled over with it. He lies howling on the floor, waiting to be extricated. And that may be a mere beginning. As his strength and power of locomotion increase, you will hardly be able to keep pace with him as he scoots from room to room or rushes around the house. You merely have to answer a telephone call and, as you stand listening, you keep guessing whether that noise you hear comes from your child's having climbed on the kitchen table, the window sill or, perhaps, on the bathroom stool to try and sample from the various bottles or jars in the medicine cabinet.

During the early years a child behaves as he does because he cannot help it. His mind is in the making; he is driven by curiosity to find out, by the desire to handle things, to reach for them. To what extent, then, can the young child be taught safety habits that will remain with him through life? The paramount need is to train the child to form the right safety habits until they are fixed. If lapses are permitted, he will promptly know that you are easy-going, and will take advantage of it. "Will I have to punish him for trying to pull hot pans from the stove or for playing in the water?" You ask. The answer is: There is no need of letting your child run wild. He can be taught self control and obedience by efficient methods. If he likes to play in the water, give him a small basin or dishpan and some toys that he can navigate, or a toy kitchen with some tiny pots and pans to play with. By degrees teach him to beware of the things that can injure him, to avoid dangerous situations and objects, such as sharp knives, tools, poisonous drugs, and the like. He must know that he has to keep away from boiling kettles, and from all sharp-edged kitchen utensils. Every child differs in his habits and his emotional make-up, so you will need to discover for yourself how your boy or girl should be taught to avoid accidents.

The need of preventing child accidents in the home takes on even greater import where there are two or more children to

protect. There is simply no telling what things or activities lively children will think up while playing, with the result that now and then they get themselves into a situation from which they have to be rescued. Many a father is too occupied with business problems to take an interest in what his children are doing, and many a mother may be too immersed in household duties or in looking after their physical welfare. Such parents may be non-cooperative with their children, or they may not have the strength of mind to insist that orders given must be carried out for their own good.

Yet, children need to be provided with outlets for their energies and drives. Remember this at all times. In an orderly household, too, each member of the family group, beginning with the oldest child down to the toddler, has his share of duties to perform, which include safety precautions. Make each child feel important in regard to his own share of duties, which include the putting away every evening of his toys and books. Nothing must be left on floor or staircase. Help him to pick them up and show him where to put them. There must be "a place for everything and everything in its place," as the saying goes. The lack of such safety habits is what most often leads to accidents, both to youngsters and adults.

Consider the case of Mrs. Anna Browne. Her baby died not long ago as a result of an almost incredible mishap. An autopsy performed by the medical examiner disclosed two safety pins, one open and one closed, in the stomach of her 3-month-old baby girl. Mrs. Browne had found the baby seriously ill and summoned a doctor. But the baby was dead when the doctor arrived. How was it possible for a 3-month-old infant to swallow two safety pins? How was she able to get hold of them? These questions give one much food for thought.

Or take Donald, a 5-year-old boy, who swallowed a metal lock and had it in his stomach for 13 days. A physician fished this lock out by means of a magnet that had to be made small enough to enter the boy's stomach. Otherwise he could not have survived.

The cause for such accidents is easy to find. The mothers of these two children had never been taught to be tidy. The lesson to be learned is this: Keep out of reach anything small enough that children can put into their mouths and swallow.

"But, how can I get my child to obey if he is by nature unruly?" you want to know. Shall you divert his attention, and by what means? The best way to meet this difficulty is by suggestion. Suggest to him to occupy himself in some safe way. If, for instance, he insists on going out in the rain or doing any of the countless other things that may be harmful, change his line of thought entirely by suggesting some activity you know he always likes. For example: "Why not play with your blocks or the tool set you got for Christmas?" Provide a place where he can play without interference and without disturbing others. "Where's your dolly?" you might suggest to your little girl. "I have some nice colored remnants for you to make a dress out of."

To be occupied with absorbing things and praised now and then for trying to fashion something out of bits of wood, clay or textile, are sure to improve the child's behavior and make him more obedient than can be hoped for by constant reprimands such as, "Stop that!" or "No, you can't have that!" Show confidence in your child's ability to accomplish what he has set out to do and give him a good example in everything you yourself do. For, we all learn by example.

In her treatise, *Living With Children* (Macmillan, 1944), Gertrude E. Chittenden, in a sub-chapter, *Destructiveness*, expresses this tendency of children exceptionally well:

"A young child likes to feel that he has power over objects. He squeezes, pats, pounds, sits on, tears, and throws almost anything that he can get near. . . . Much of a little child's destructiveness occurs because *the wrong objects are within his reach.*" (The italics are mine—L. N.)

Make sure your child gets the right objects to play with. In every household there are times when all kinds of objects are left lying around, objects that are dangerous to children. Real-

ize every moment that there cannot be any lapse in your caution and that such objects must be carefully stored away. Leave within his reach only those things which cannot do him any harm.

Parents have an important duty in teaching children to become aware of the dangers around them. Explain to them again and again what can injure them and what can lead to serious accidents, and do all you can to protect them. Every boy or girl presents a different problem. When they get older teach them good habits of safety. Put the greatest emphasis on "playing safe."

A 6-year-old boy, during his mother's absence from home, found the door to the refrigerator in the kitchen wide open, because she was defrosting it. Thinking to surprise her and, not realizing that the door of the refrigerator could not be opened from the inside, he climbed in and slammed it behind him. When the mother returned and opened the refrigerator door, she found her boy dead inside.

How could this tragedy have been averted? In many cases verbal warnings are of little avail. Such children need to be taught by experience. Electricity can produce a shock. "Shock" is a word with meaning. So is "fire," and "heat." If your child likes to play with the electric toaster or percolator, *let him feel that it is hot*. Repeat over and over: "It's hot! It hurts!" Teach him to know the danger he faces by taking chances with such objects. "A burnt child dreads the fire." It is an old adage.

You warn your boy not to climb on the window sill, but he still keeps on doing it. Should you scold or punish him? The better way would be to impress upon him the consequences of previous acts of daring that resulted in injury. "You haven't forgotten how you hurt yourself the last time when you fell from the ladder, the apple tree, or other height? Have you?" He is sure to remember it.

A variety of toys for playing indoors or out should always be on hand to keep the children occupied, and there should always be a *safe* place where they can play. Toys ought to be

simple and of a good quality, without sharp corners or edges that might hurt the children when they fall. Jigsaw puzzles and peg block sets from which they can construct complex buildings will be enjoyed by the 4- or 5-year-old child. Well-made, well-proportioned hardwood blocks, moreover, make a worthwhile addition to any child's play equipment.

Instead of teaching them merely nursery rhymes, add a number of safety slogans and safety rhymes and songs to their repertoire.

### *Safe Play Song*

(TUNE: Sidewalks of New York)

Safe play is our motto,  
Safety every day,  
We'll need arms, legs and heads  
For work as well as play.  
Take no needless chances,  
Give cars right of way,  
If upon this grand old world  
You have a wish to stay.

CHORUS:

In parks and playgrounds,  
All around the town:  
"We'll play "ring-a-rosy,"  
"London Bridge is falling down."  
Sure, we'll mind our mothers,  
Observe each Safe Way rule;  
And be very careful  
Each day on our way to school.

When we're playing marbles  
We'll choose a safe retreat,  
And we'll keep our kites up  
Anywhere but in the street.

We're not hopping autos,  
We have no legs to spare;  
So the ones we now have  
We will give the best of care.

—Robert C. Bell

This song was awarded first prize in a radio contest in 1929, sponsored by the Denver Post on Station KLZ. The author was a 14-year-old Denver boy.

### **Jack Fell Down and Broke His Crown**

As in the case of adults, falls are the most common cause of accidents among children. The wonder is that they are not smashed to smithereens much oftener than is actually the case. At times there are lapses in carefulness and orderliness in homes which are followed by almost unbelievable accidents.

Dickie Dannacker, for instance, a 3-year-old boy, lost his life when he fell six stories from a fire escape in the rear of his home. He died at the hospital from a fractured skull and of internal injuries. It is plain that the boy was not sufficiently supervised.

Jimmie Butler, 2 years old, fell from a window in his home on the third floor, and was taken to the hospital in a critical condition. Sammie O'Neill, 3 years old, suffered a fall from a second-story window, and died at St. Vincent's hospital. Carl Dunne, 19-month-old son of Major and Mrs. Alexander Dunne, died in Nassau Hospital after he fell from a third floor window of his home. So read the newspaper reports of but a few months' accidents to children.

The instinct to climb is one that is common to all children. Most of us in our childhood days climbed poles, fences, ladders or trees, and parental warnings were scarcely listened to. The problem of preventing young children from leaning out from windows and exposing themselves to falls, recurs again and again. The solution is very simple. All windows to which your children have access should have tight-fitting screens or locks that cannot be removed by them. Habits are not broken in a

day. Prevention, therefore, is the easiest way out of such a dangerous situation.

### Teaching Safety Habits to Prevent Falls

#### *A Daily Dozen*

1. I look where I go.
2. I don't lean too far out of a window or press against the pane.
3. I don't slide down the banisters or porch railings.
4. I don't stand on rocking chairs, on rickety step ladders, pulled-out dresser drawers or anything that may tip over.
5. I never leave my toys or books on the floor, the stairway, or anywhere where others may trip and fall over them.
6. I never throw banana or orange peelings on the sidewalks where others may fall over them.
7. I will be very careful when climbing trees or fences.
8. I will see to it that small rugs on the floor are not crumpled.
9. I will sprinkle ashes, sand or salt on icy walks or steps.
10. I will not run up the steps to the house too fast.
11. I will not pull chairs from under others, when they are about to sit down. It may cause serious spinal injury.
12. I will remember the saying: "If one climbs safely one may climb another day."

### **S'Mother Love**

Albany, New York, February 26, 1945 (A.P.). Deaths last year of sixty infants under one year old, of accidental suffocation are reported by the New York State Health Department, which notes that this type of mortality has increased alarmingly in recent years.

Every year in the United States between 1000 and 1500 mothers suffer this terrible shock of finding their infants smothered to death in their cribs or carriages, in most cases healthy, bouncing infants. Such accidents are now a leading cause of death in early infancy.

While awaiting the birth of your baby you may have been embroidering a decorative pillow or blanket to keep him warm and cozy; you cover him up snugly after his birth to safeguard him from drafts or cold air, only to discover that the same pillow or blanket was the cause of his death. How did this come about? Suffocation of an infant comes either from his becoming entangled in his blanket or by wriggling himself under it when it is not securely fastened. Special covers are obtainable in department stores. They are so constructed that they give warmth and protection without the risk of suffocation. A specially devised collar obviates this danger.

Never use such heavy bedclothes in the crib or carriage that the child can smother under them. Many a pillow in cribs for decorative purposes has fallen over a sleeping infant's face. Tuck him carefully into his crib or carriage and fasten the blanket, if you have no special covering, with large safety pins or sewn-on tapes which prevent the blanket from snarling over his head no matter how he twists or turns. Don't use pillows. And beware of putting your baby into bed with adults or older children who might roll over him during the night. Even a nursing mother can smother her own infant brought into bed for feeding when the drowsy woman drops off to sleep. This happens an average of 150 to 200 times a year in the United States.

The bottle-fed baby may also fall victim to accident if the proper caution is not exercised. Feeding should never be done by propping a bottle up in the baby's mouth and then leaving him to shift for himself. The baby may roll over, causing the fluid to flow into his mouth and to gag him.

And don't turn your baby's face downward after feeding. Give him a chance to let the "air bubbles" caused by feeding to escape. Statistics show that the "after-feeding" period is the most dangerous one for babies because of the possibility of suffocation.

When a bed or crib is bought for your child, be sure it is of safe construction. The upright bars may be a danger, if they



are of a width that permits him to crawl between. He may be caught between these bars and be strangled to death. Such accidents have happened. At any rate it is best to line the sides of an iron bed with thin washable pads or pieces of strong cloth tied on with tapes, which serve not only to keep off draughts but also prevent the baby from pushing his head through the bars.

### **Into the Mouth of Babes**

Charlie S. Baker, 18 months old, of 53 Lincoln Avenue, Perth Amboy, New Jersey, was pronounced dead not long ago at the General Hospital of that town. According to the hospital authorities the child had swallowed a marble and strangulation resulted.

Young children, as is well known, have a tendency to put anything into their mouths that is small enough to enter—beads, marbles, buttons, coins, peanuts, and so forth. If swallowed, such an object may be passed within a day or two; but there is danger that it may lodge in the throat or in the food pipe and cause strangulation. Are you careful enough to keep out of his reach everything that can be taken into the mouth by a young child? Celluloid toys, too, can prove a hazard if the child chews off small bits. Rattles and other toys are made of such material. Beware also of giving your baby hard foods, hard rolls or chicken bones to chew on; they may lodge in his throat. Even a very young child can be trained not to put objects into his mouth. It is not easy to break such a habit, but with perseverance it can be done. If he still insists on putting his toys into his mouth, provide him with an ivory toy or a silver spoon, which he can suck on without danger to himself.

Throw nothing into the waste paper basket that your child can find and sample. Recently a child died from having tasted from a jar of facial cream thrown into the waste paper basket by the mother. Some of these cosmetics contain poisons and are harmful if taken internally.

Nancy Engle, 2, of Camden, New Jersey, died at the Cooper

Hospital, according to newspaper reports, as a result of drinking part of the contents of a bottle of furniture wax. While at play in the kitchen she had found the bottle of wax with its cap removed. Accidental poisoning by acids, alkalis, drugs, antiseptics, germicides and household cleaners is not uncommon. It happens so quickly that mothers can hardly prevent it. A lax moment, and a little hand reaches out with alacrity to drink from the poison bottle. An ounce of prevention here is worth a pound of cure. Once more! Store on a high shelf all poisonous substances needed in the kitchen, and keep under lock and key all those that you absolutely need to have in other parts of the house.

### **The "Fun" of Starting a Blaze**

"A 3-year-old boy and a packet of matches started a fire the other day which for a while threatened the entire district in Brownsville, N. Y., and routed fifteen families from their homes. Some 150 persons had to vacate the buildings and a nearby trolley line was disrupted for three hours."

"Fred Thiry, 3-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Thiry, of Paterson, New Jersey, got hold of some matches while his mother was shopping at a nearby store, and set fire to the apartment, causing the death of his brother, John, 19 months old, and injuries to himself and his 2-year-old sister. Fred and the little girl were taken to the hospital with serious burns. Mrs. Thiry was also severely burned, but it was said at the hospital that she would recover. She had tried with her bare hands to beat out the fire."

A dozen or more other newspaper reports of fires started by children while playing with matches, tell a terrible story of conditions in many a home where small children not properly supervised have access to matches.

Again. NEVER LEAVE A CHILD ALONE IN THE HOUSE! Left to his own devices he will almost surely attempt to play with matches or ignite paper or textiles on the pilot light of the gas range, thus setting himself and the home on fire.

Some children are possessed by the desire to play with matches. They have a fatal attraction for them. Such children want to see the little sparks flying and are eager to ignite something with the flame. Treat the situation the right way. Let your child feel the heat of the flame and tell him how it can hurt him; burn his finger a trifle with a lighted match to scare him. After that put the box of matches entirely out of his reach.

Provide a suitable occupation for the little one, if he has none. A child's nervous system needs exercise as his body needs food. Spend some time talking to him, teach him a safety rhyme, and get close to him. A happy relationship between mother and child is sure to result in lessening accidents in the home. The following safety rhyme may be appropriate in the case of your own child.

*I Am a Match*

I am a match.  
I will work for you,  
But, if you don't watch me,  
Much harm I will do.

When you are through  
With the fire I give,  
Be sure I am dead,  
I must not live.

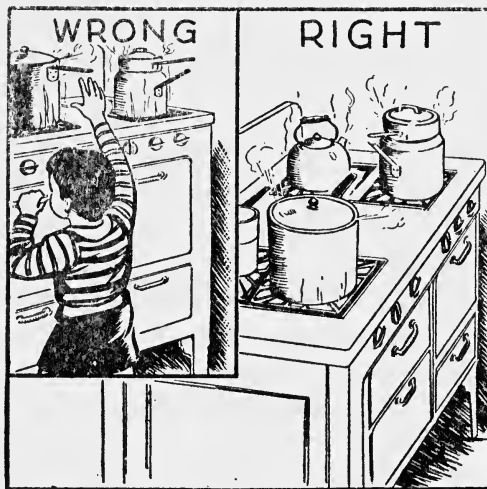
—MARIE BARTON,  
in *Safety Education*

Bonfires, too, constitute a deadly fire hazard. Some time ago, a 7-year-old boy, Ben Como, suffered burns on the face, hands and body when his clothing caught fire in the backyard of his home. Ben and the other boys, playing in the yard, had set fire to a pile of rubbish and Ben's clothing became ignited. His mother rushed to the yard and beat out the flames, suffering severe burns on both hands. Mother and son had to be treated by a physician.

The danger of bonfires should be strongly impressed upon children as soon as they are old enough to understand. Nip the habit in the bud, substituting safe outdoor play at all times. Most of the bonfire tragedies occur during the spring and fall housecleaning seasons, when much trash is disposed of. In the fall months, bonfires of leaves are an additional menace. Take these facts into consideration and turn the attention of your children to more wholesome games.

### The Boiling Kettle

An A.P. story dated Pittsburgh, August 14, 1944, tells about the death of Glen Austin, Jr., 20-months-old, of Verona. The child died of scald burns suffered when he tumbled into a bucket of scalding water his father was using to clean chickens. A child of this age, just learning to recognize his surroundings and beginning to use his muscles, wants to imitate others, especially his parents. He must, therefore, be carefully watched when dangerous objects or pitfalls are near. Why could not this father have understood this?



*(Courtesy Greater New York Safety Council)*

Children are often victims of burns and scalds.

Realizing this natural trait of imitation in your child, you should be doubly careful that he does not indulge in it to a degree that might cost his life or health. A pail of scalding hot water must never for an instant be left for a curious baby to explore. If you are called away when the door bell or the telephone bell rings, take the child with you or lock the door of the room where the hot water receptacle stands. A moment's negligence may cause you a lifetime of regret.

There is danger also in permitting the handle of a kettle or pan of boiling liquid to extend over the edge of the stove. Young children are apt to reach for it in an effort to investigate the contents and to tip the scalding water or other fluid over themselves. Set all boiling pans far back on the stove and turn the handles out of the way. You will thus protect your children from scalding and pain.

In using a hot water bottle, never pour boiling water into it. Boiling water not only ruins the rubber, but may also scald the child on whom the bag is to be used. Put a cloth over the bag after filling it half full and allow the steam to escape. Remember that water that is not hot enough for an adult may cause a fatal injury to a young child. His skin is much more sensitive than yours. You need to assure yourself, therefore, not only that the water you pour into the bag is not too hot, but also that the water you use to bathe him will not scald him. Test the temperature of the bath either with a thermometer or with your elbow.

### **The Sharp-edged Tool**

Children like to experiment with perilous objects. From the mere toddler to the school boy, they want to play with knives, shears or other sharp-edged tools. A baby may pick up a razor blade, carelessly thrown into the waste basket, and immediately may want to imitate his father in "shaving" himself with it or put it into his mouth. Pins, tacks and sewing needles found lying on the floor prove a thrilling adventure to such youngsters. Consequences may be serious.

This is the story of Eleanor Hughes, a 3-year-old girl. She

lived for two weeks with a sewing machine needle imbedded in a muscle of her heart and died at the Children's Hospital in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. A physician said that the needle had apparently torn a hole in the heart muscle. It was driven into her chest when she fell while playing at home. An attempt to recover the needle by surgery was unsuccessful. You may draw your own conclusions from this story.

Blindness, too, may be the result of children handling sharp-edged or pointed objects. A child playing with a carelessly placed knife or razor blade is almost certain to sustain a cut, which may be serious enough to entail much loss of blood or an infection.

Many injuries result from children walking up or down the stairs with sticks, pencils, scissors and the like. Mothers do not always realize the chance that a boy or girl takes by walking or running with such an article either in the mouth or in the hand. Education in safety habits must begin with the parents, so that they may be able to teach their children to avoid unnecessary hazards and to protect themselves from accidents. Keep a pair of blunt scissors on hand for the use of your youngster who likes to cut out pictures, and carefully throw away all tin cans that have sharp edges, as well as broken bits of glass or china. Remove all nails from boards of wooden cases that you store in your attic or basement. Rusty nails may cause blood poisoning. And teach your child never to pick out trash or broken bits of cast-off articles from the rubbish heap or the garbage can.

Once more: If your child is to play safely he must have a space in which he can do so. Have you provided such a space for your children, as well as wall rack where they can store all their playthings and precious possessions?

### **Teaching Safety Habits to Prevent Cuts and Bruises**

1. I never walk or run with knife or scissors in hand.
2. I never carry things in my mouth while playing.
3. I won't ever fool with articles that have a sharp edge.

4. If I find a knife I take it by the handle and put it in the drawer or rack where it belongs.

5. I am careful not to endanger my own life or other children's lives or eyesight by playing with sharp-pointed objects.

6. If I break a glass or china cup I call an adult to have every fragment picked up and disposed of.

### **Bravado with a Gun**

A boy finds a pistol in a drawer or a rifle in a closet. He wants to show off to his playmates, or he wants to play a game of "cops and robbers" with them. Pointing what he believes to be an unloaded gun on one of the "robbers," he unwarily pulls the trigger. A flash and a crash: a child lies either seriously wounded or dead. This is a frequent occurrence.

Nine-year-old Anthony Best, of 90 Scribner Avenue, Staten Island, got a new cap-pistol for a present. Proudly he ran down the street to show it to his friend, William Kelly. "That's nothing," said the Kelly boy. "I'll show you the real thing." Then, according to the police, he took a 25-caliber automatic pistol, belonging to his father, a Coast Guardsman, from a bureau drawer. The gun went off and a bullet struck Anthony in the chest. He died on the way to the hospital.

A 4-year-old Oklahoma City boy playing soldier fatally wounded his mother with a rifle. Both his parents were resting in the back yard of their home when their son, Jimmy, picked up a rifle his father had used on a recent hunting trip. He pointed it at his mother. "I'm a soldier," he said—and fired.

"Boy kills brother, 6, with 'Harmless' Gun." "Boy, 16, Shot Dead on Crowded Bus by Pal." "Youth Confesses Killing Playmate with Gun and Hides Body." "Pal Dies of Shot from 'Unloaded' Gun." So read the headlines of but a few dozens of newspaper clippings gathered within a comparatively short space of time.

If you must keep loaded firearms in your home, then for God's sake lock them away so that children cannot get at them.

Guns, of course, are designed to kill and, therefore, constitute a deadly hazard, the responsibility for which always rests on you. Every year hundreds of innocent children and adults are killed with guns thought to be unloaded. About a quarter of all fatal firearm accidents occur in the home and are always due to carelessness on the part of parents.

Observe the following precautions if firearms need to be kept in your home:

1. Before examining or cleaning a firearm, always open the breech and check the magazine to make sure it is not loaded.

2. Keep firearms and ammunition in separate places, and always carry or handle every gun, rifle, pistol or revolver as if loaded.

3. Never point a gun—even if unloaded—at anything you do not wish to shoot.

4. The .22 is dangerous within a mile. Despite its small size it is not a toy, but a weapon that can kill as readily as any other. Never give it to a boy to hold, unless he has had thorough instruction in the safe handling of firearms. And then only if a competent adult is on the scene.

The National Rifle Association, 1600 Rhode Island Avenue, Washington, D. C., has a good program for teaching juniors and adults to shoot safely and expertly. It will supply printed material, or perhaps suggest where competent instruction can be had in your locality.

When hunting, shooting, or engaging in target practice, unload your gun as soon as it has served its purpose. Never take it for granted that your companion has done this if you carry his gun. And before you return home or into the house, double-check to see that your gun is not loaded. It has happened that a loaded rifle was stood up in a corner of the hall or in the living room and during the night someone stumbled over it and was killed by the discharge.

Air rifles, toy pistols and other firearms are not safe playthings for your children. Even though no fatal accidents occur from their use, they train your boy to point guns at other peo-



ple. In time he is eager for the real thing, and before you know it he will have ordered a rifle from a mail order concern and will be practicing with it. Or he may, by chance, come across the gun you have been hiding under some handkerchiefs in the top bureau drawer and shoot away with it.

Gun plays in motion pictures, in particular, have a bad influence on many a growing youth whose imagination runs amuck, who imagines himself the hero of an action and is eager to reproduce it in real life. Keep them away from such performances. They are too exciting for immature minds.

Some years ago the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness made a survey of eye accidents of all kinds. This study disclosed an especially high toll of damage to the eyes of children caused by air rifles during the month of January and February, when children have to stay indoors.

Blasting caps and detonating fuses, too, are dangerous playthings for children and may cause blindness or other serious eye injuries. More than 150 juvenile casualties of this kind, including 24 eye injuries, were reported by the Institute of Explosives, with which the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness is cooperating in its educational campaign to reduce the number of these tragedies. Parents must be held accountable for the great number of eye accidents among children.

### **The "Vasty" Deep**

Nearly every community that has a body of water within or close to its confines, records drownings throughout the year, and especially during the summer months. One of the saddest of such accidents occurred in 1945, while the author was spending her summer vacation on the Massachusetts coast. Three sisters, 8, 10 and 12, daughters of a Brookline couple, lost their lives when they ventured too far out into the surf. Perhaps these three little girls were not good swimmers. Or they were caught in an eddy. It is possible, too, that the swiftness of the current caught them unawares. Whatever the cause of this

tragedy may have been, it not only cost the lives of three healthy children, but also wrecked the lives of their parents.

On December 20, 1943, the A.P. reported that a twelve-hour search for two boys ended near dawn when their bodies were found in the Millstone River near Princeton Junction, N. J. The victims were Charles S., 12-year-old son of a Princeton professor, and Julian, 13 years old, his brother. The boys had gone out together shortly after noon. When they had not returned as darkness fell, a search was instituted. At 11:30 P.M. members of the reserve police force came upon a hockey stick and a scarf floating in the open water about a mile and a half up the Millstone river. It was nearly 3 A.M., however, before the two bodies were recovered.

Such calamities as the two described in this chapter can be duplicated often enough; the press reports them year in and year out. They tell their own story.

Parents, before permitting their children to go swimming or skating or boating, should make sure that they really know how to swim and that they are able to save themselves in case of need. In every instance there must be a firm hand controlling children.

### **Teaching Safety Habits in Swimming**

1. Before you take a swim in a strange lake or stream, find out first about possible dangers. Are there any holes, shore slopes, swift currents, tides or undertows in that particular body of water?
2. Until you are really a good swimmer, do not swim in deep water. Preferably choose a place where there is a life guard.
3. To avoid danger, never go swimming alone. Follow the example of the Boy Scouts who use the "buddy" plan, in which two swimmers keep company for safety.
4. Wait two hours after a meal before you go into the water.
5. If you like to dive, make sure first that there are no rocks or other projections which might strike your head. Keep your eyes open for such before you dive.

6. Do not swim against the tide, it may carry you far from your starting place.

7. To bathe in stagnant water is not always safe. Find out before you enter whether it has been properly disinfected. Don't bathe in unsanitary waters.

8. Young children, under a competent instructor, learn to swim very quickly. Six years of age is not too early to learn. All children should learn to swim for safety's sake.

### **Teaching Safety Habits in Skating**

1. Unless you are sure that the ice is several inches thick, do not skate on lake, pond or river.

2. In order to be safe at all times, have a rope within reach when skating on lake, pond or river. This rope will also prove very useful in rescuing anyone who might fall through. It is best to have a stick fastened to one end of the rope.

3. It is not safe to skate in the street or on the roadway.

4. It is dangerous to pour water on the sidewalk to make ice for skating or sliding. Unwary passers-by may slip and fall over it, and come to harm.

5. In an emergency use a board, ladder, or branch of tree when attempting to rescue someone who has broken through the ice. A heavy overcoat of a bystander may be used, if nothing else is available.

6. Do not rush to the rescue unless you have such supports at hand; otherwise both lives may be endangered, yours and the victim's.

#### *Safety Rhyme for Skating*

One inch, Keep Off!

Two inches, one may;

Three inches, small groups;

Four inches, "O.K."

### **Teaching Safety Habits in Boating**

1. Before you enter a boat, canoe or raft examine it for leaks.

2. Unless you know how to swim, do not go into a canoe or raft on a river or in deep water. It is taking a chance to do so.

3. Whenever you go boating on a river or deep lake, carry a lifebuoy for each person in the boat.

4. Learn how to row a boat or to paddle a canoe properly before you attempt to use it alone. Practice this on the very boat or canoe you intend to use.

5. Never rock the boat. Don't allow anyone to "fool" in the boat. In case it is necessary to move about, do this in a manner that will not disturb the boat's balance.

6. In case your boat or canoe upsets, try to hang on to it and float until help arrives. If you can swim well, however, you will be able to reach the shore in safety.

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*To Keep Them Safe*

*Safe at Home*

*Home Safety Guides*

*Child Protection*

## The Crucial Six K's

1. The Kitchen
2. Cutlery
3. Cans (Tins with Jagged Edges)
4. Cracked Crockery and Glass
5. Cookstoves
6. Cupboard Doors and Cracked Craniums

**A** WELL-KNOWN home economist called the kitchen "one of the most hazardous spots on earth." It is an especially hazardous spot for children. She urged intelligent kitchen planning as a means of reducing accidents. The first step toward this aim may be: "Keep the kids out of the kitchen."

"Nearly every accident in the home is due to two causes," stated another authority: "(1) to a dangerous thing and (2) a careless person." In other words, poor housekeeping is responsible for the largest number of accidents in the home.

Knives and other sharp tools cause 14 per cent of casualties to citizens of this land. Are you using your knives so that injuries are avoided? And do you keep sharp knives safely on a rack to prevent children from getting at them?

How dangerous to life such lack of experience in handling a knife can be is shown in the following case. Donald Keller, 19 years old, severely injured his hand with his own knife while unwrapping a bundle of Christmas trees at his place of employ-

ment. He died at the Dobbs Ferry, N. Y. Hospital. Donald had been graduated with honors a year before from Ardsley High School. He was a promising young man and a useful citizen. A splendid life wasted.

Elizabeth S. Markham, again, a young woman, but recently married, cut her wrist in slicing bread, severing an artery. She died from loss of blood.

### **How to Use Your Knives**

To avoid such a calamity, use a sharp knife and a bread board. Lay the loaf on its side and slice with a light sawing motion. Don't press down heavily on the loaf and keep your fingers out of the path of the knife. The best way to obtain even slices is to hold the knife parallel with the face of the loaf. Remember always to cut away from yourself. When cutting the heel, be particularly careful not to cut into your hand. When carving a roast, hold the roast with a fork that has a knife guard. This will protect your hand in case the knife slips while you carve. Make all cutting motions away from yourself.

Cuts and scratches that result from the use of knives are usually closely associated with bad habits or poor skill. Learn to use your knives and other sharp-edged tools properly. In passing a knife to another person, do so with the dull side of the blade toward the palm of your hand, and the handle extended to the person receiving it. Be sure not to do this too rapidly, so that neither you nor the other person gets hurt.

Always return knives to the special rack on the wall or to the special drawer and leave them there until needed. It is, moreover, unsafe to run upstairs or down with a knife in hand.

When washing dishes, keep all knives separately. You may cut yourself severely when you place them together with other dishes into the dishpan. See to it also that scissors and shears with sharp edges are not left for youngsters to play with.

Before we leave the subject of knives, let us point to the need for keeping the tool kit of your home in best of order. How

many sharp-edged tools does your kit contain? Do you know how to handle these tools properly?

### Using a Hand Saw

George Banks, of Elizabeth, N. J., lost his hand not long ago when using a saw. How could this happen? Perhaps the saw was not in a good condition, or he may not have used it right. There are no other possibilities. Make note of the following rules how to use a hand saw:\*

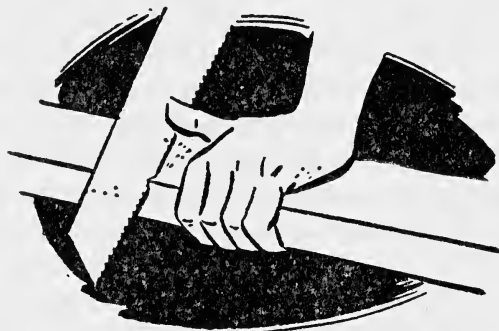
*First select a sharp saw*; make sure the teeth are set properly. For cutting across the grain, use a cross-cut saw; for cutting with the grain, choose a rip-saw.

*When starting the cut*, guide the saw with the left hand, as shown in the illustration. Take one or two long slow cuts upwards only. Remove your hand from the danger zone and proceed.

*Keep the saw blade in direct line with the cut*. It will cut more easily, reducing the likelihood of sudden binding which might throw you off balance. A little oil or paraffin on the blade usually will prevent the saw from sticking in the wet or gummy wood.

*Do not "ride" the saw*. If it fails to cut well under normal pressure, it probably needs sharpening or setting.

\* Courtesy, National Safety Council, Chicago, Ill.



(Courtesy National Safety Council)

Using a hand saw.



*Obtain first aid promptly* for cuts and scratches, blisters and wood sliver injuries, no matter how slight.

When you sharpen your tools on a small stone or with a file, be sure always to make strokes away from you and the edge of the tool. Then you can't come to harm.

Be cautious also in the use of shears and scissors. They are sharply pointed tools. Do not use them for prying open bottles, containers, or for any other purpose for which they have not been designed. The blade of the scissors may "fly off the handle" and gash your hand.

### **Tin Cans**

Now for a warning on that dangerous business of the jagged edges of an opened tin can. If you own the old-fashioned type of can opener, hold the can tight in hand near the bottom and away from the cutting direction. A dollar spent on the modern type of can opener which opens with a revolving motion and that folds the sharp, freshly cut edges under, is much cheaper than paying for the services of a physician to bind up your wounds made with the other kind. See to it that the blade of your can opener is always sharp.

Dispose of every opened tin can at once after it is emptied, or a child may pick it up to play with it. This happened in the case of Billy Parker, a 2-year-old boy, who toddled about with a sandwich in one hand and the jagged top of a tin can in the other. His mother started toward him to take the tin away. Billy ran and fell on the sharp edge of the tin, severing an artery in his hand. The child was rushed to a hospital for blood transfusion, but he could not be saved. He died the day after; hemorrhage was responsible. Still more responsible, to be sure, was his mother who left the tin within his reach. Attention must never lag where there are small children in the home.

### **Overhaul Your Kitchen**

The urgent need for a thorough overhauling of many a household is becoming more evident every day. Broken pieces

of crockery and glass should immediately be swept up with a broom and thrown out where they belong. Why take a chance by picking them up by hand? Yet such carelessness is still rampant. Mrs. Bertha Horner, of East Orange, N. J., is an example. She died a while ago after accidentally severing an artery in her left wrist with a broken drinking glass. Police investigators said that Mrs. Horner was found on the floor of her sun porch with a towel wrapped around her wrist. Her life might have been saved had she called for help early enough.

Porcelain faucets which can break in your hand should be exchanged for metal or plastic ones. Fragments of all kinds of broken articles ought never be thrown into the waste basket where children can lift them out.

Is your kitchen table too near the cookstove? There is danger that hot foods overturned may scald you or another person in close proximity. There should be sufficient room for you to move in between the table and the stove. Use holders to protect your hands from the heat and from the steam coming from the roasting pan or any saucepan when the cover is lifted. Remove the cover carefully, so that the steam will fly off at a tangent instead of shooting into your face.

More than half the fatal burns occur in the kitchen. Some of the outstanding sources of burns are boiling water in the pipes and on the stove, unguarded open flames, the use of kerosene or gasoline to start or speed up fires, and the failure to use safety matches.

Miss Elizabeth Griffin, 19 years old, was fatally burned in the kitchen of her home at Maspeth, Queens, when she poured kerosene into the stove and the fire flared up and ignited her clothing. Her mother and her 13-year-old sister suffered from smoke poisoning and shock when they attempted to smother the flames with blankets.

The preventive measures against burns from such sources are obvious, yet often disregarded. The kitchen, as will be seen, presents a fertile field for some inventive genius along safety lines.

### Safe Canning

Now for a few words about oven canning. Authorities claim that oven canning is unsafe. Pressure canning is far safer, jars do not explode, and there is no scalding in this process of canning. Some safety rules for pressure canning are given below:

1. Use only standard preserving jars in your pressure canner. If you use commercial jars (coffee, peanut butter, etc.) see to it that they have proper closure and use them only for foods that require but a short processing time.

2. Have jars hot when filling.

3. Use tongs or other safe devices to transfer hot jars and lids.

4. Allow  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch or more at top for expansion.

5. Leave space around each jar in canner.

6. Do not subject jars to sudden chill.

7. For lids that are sealed completely after the jar is removed from canner it is suggested that jars be removed one at a time until all are out of the canner and then tightened in the same order.

8. Follow the canning directions given by the manufacturer of your pressure canner.

### SAFETY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Is the kitchen ventilated when oven and cookstove are in use?
2. Do you wash sharp knives separately from other cutlery?
3. Are sharp knives kept in a knife drawer or on a wall rack where children cannot reach them?
4. Do you use a modern can opener—not a makeshift one—to open tin cans?
5. Do you dispose of sharp and jagged tops of cans where children cannot get at them?
6. Are broken china and cracked glass thrown out immediately?
7. Do you open both oven and broiler doors when lighting

- oven or broiler gas burners? And do you protect yourself by standing to one side when doing so?
8. Are pot handles turned away from stove edges?
  9. Do you use pot-holders to lift hot pans from the stove?
  10. Do you close all closet doors when you are finished with your household tasks?
  11. Is grease wiped up at once after it is spilt on the floor?
  12. Do you keep the kids out of the kitchen? Particularly while you are preparing meals?

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## Safety for the Physically Handicapped

### The Blind

**T**HERE are many conditions under which the sightless live and work, some of which may not be considered absolutely safe. Lack of understanding of the problem of blindness, too, puts many obstacles in the path of those who cannot see. This much is sure. Although most people have a realization that the blind should be assisted in crossing a street or in getting on or off a public conveyance, there is need for still greater safeguarding of the men, women and children who are blind. Consider the story of Mr. Martino:

Biagio Martino, 50 years old, of 19 Henry Street, blind for twenty years, got up early and said to his wife, Maria, "Don't forget to take your medicine." Having a cold, she went to the medicine chest and a moment later returned to the living room and found her husband gone. She looked out of the open window to a courtyard in the rear of the tenement, and, five stories below, saw her husband's body on the ground. The ambulance physician pronounced Mr. Martino dead. The police listed the death an accident. *The window had been open all night.*

In another recent instance a blind-deaf man, Aaron K., 48, plummeted from the window of the furnished room on the second floor of the house in which he lived, landing on the side-

walk near the front entrance. He was still living when they got him to the hospital, but died a little while later, without regaining consciousness.

Now, a window left open in a room where such an afflicted person lives, is a sure invitation to disaster. In warm weather either a screen should be fastened securely to the window, or it should be opened on top. No matter how well adapted a blind person may be to his handicap, a moment's fatigue or an indisposition may cause him to become dizzy. Therefore, tighten all screens on windows and double all safety precautions.

In a third instance, an aged man who had been blind for two years burned to death when his bathrobe accidentally brushed against an oil stove and ignited as he was leaving his room. Why was there no protective screen placed around the oil stove? And how was it possible for an open flame to come in touch with this man's bathrobe? Why was this blind man not warned to keep out of the way of such a dangerous oil stove? Answer if you can.

The blind are supposed to have a "sixth sense" which aids them in detecting danger, not only in the home, but also outside. Hearing, in most cases, enables the blind to "see." A number of the blind, moreover, have a particular ability to avoid obstacles; they *sense* any danger from without. This "sixth sense," however, is not always dependable. The good scores that blind people make at one time may be replaced by relatively poor ones at another time. The U. S. Army, therefore, is training permanently blinded veterans to make more efficient use of this "sixth sense," called by their experts "facial vision," or "sound perception." Through facial perception of reflected sound blinded soldiers are learning to walk alone, thus becoming self-sufficient—their first step toward normal life and employment.

On his return home, though, a blinded man's folks may not fully understand his problems and, unconsciously, put obstacles in his path. The advice given them by the Army authorities is this: "Don't watch your blinded relative apprehensively, ex-

pecting him to bump into things and get hurt. His facial vision, as a rule, helps him find his way. The *right kind* of help is needed in every case."

What is this *right kind* of aid? This is shown in the following quotation from *It Was Not My Own Idea*, the story published by the American Foundation for the Blind, written by Robinson Pierce, who lost his eyesight as a young man. He was on the threshold of a career as a scientist and took up poultry farming because of his handicap. In this story he tells of some experiences with people of normal vision. He speaks of a man who was leading him to a brooder house.

"The man knew that I could not see, but as he did not offer any assistance, I assumed that it was plain sailing. I followed his voice. He walked on a plank across the boiler pit and I did not. I caught the plank under my arm and avoided the mess of soft coal, but it was a surprise to realize my position."

When walking with a blind person always draw his attention to any irregularity or obstacles in the path. Advise him when crossing a street when there are steps to mount or to descend. "One step up" or "one step down," as the case may be. Don't allow him to stumble.

"A seeing eye" dog will often prove a faithful friend to the blinded person; these dogs are much in demand in safeguarding them from preventable accidents.

### **The Visually Handicapped**

"Every minute a person is accidentally killed in this country," states Matthew Luckiesh in his volume, *The Science of Seeing* (Von Nostrand Co., New York, 1937). "How many of these accidents are due to poor seeing? Studies indicate at least one-fifth of them. The estimate may be conservative."

Defective vision is responsible also for a considerable number of accidents in the home. It is not hard to determine which member of a family, child or adult, has poor vision. An eye-specialist needs to be consulted in every instance, so that proper eyeglasses may be prescribed—not only for his own

safety, but also for every other member of the family group. This holds especially true of the aged members of a household.

Indirect lighting best meets the needs of the aged. High levels of illumination will save them much eye strain from strong light or glare. The elderly, moreover, need to see clearly their way in the house to prevent falls or collision. For those who suffer from cataracts, the light should be concentrated only on the visual task, whether it be writing, reading or sewing, and the eyes should be shielded from all other sources of light.

“Correct lighting results when light is (1) adequate in amount—according to needs; (2) properly distributed; (3) properly diffused and controlled (used when needed); and (4) properly directed without glare,” wrote Lula P. Dilworth, R.N., in *The Sight-Saving Review*, Summer, 1944.

“What is glare and what are its effects? Glare is the unequal stimulation of different parts of the retina by light. When all parts of the visual field are equally stimulated glare is absent. Bright rays of light striking the retina tend to set up a local irritation of the retina. When there is an unequal stimulation of the retina the part receiving the least stimulation experiences a depression of vision. The greater the contrast between the two stimuli the greater the depression of vision in the less stimulated part.”

Again and again we must harp on the point that good lighting in the home will help to prevent accidents as few other things are capable of doing.

## **The Deaf and the Hard of Hearing**

### THE DEAF

The average person frequently does not know how to differentiate between these two groups of the acoustically handicapped—the deaf and the hard of hearing. Both suffer from loss of hearing in varying degrees, that is true. But, in the first instance, when it occurs in infancy or in early childhood, this



means growing up in deafness and being educated in a day school or residential school for the deaf, where speech is taught the pupils by laborious methods. In the case of the second group, the hard of hearing, individuals whose hearing becomes defective to some degree either during school years or in adult life, after years of experience in a hearing world and in full possession of speech, it means readjustment to altered conditions of life and rehabilitation where the defect is severe. Of the former there are estimated to be 50,000 in the United States.

The deaf, as a rule, do not easily fall prey to accidents. Most of them rely on their sharp and keen eyesight which serves them in place of the "sixth sense" of the blind. Carefulness and caution become part of their physical makeup, so to speak. Only when they cannot *see* any danger approaching is there need of vigilance on the part of those with whom they reside or work. This is evident from the story of Tarzan, a six-month-old collie, who recently joined the ranks of dog heroes. He was in the kitchen with his mistress, Mrs. Alvina N., 34, deaf since infancy, at 803 Hunter Street, Newark, New Jersey, when fire broke out in the building next door. Mrs. N., in her second-floor flat, was unaware of the fire, even when flames had leaped across the alleyway and began to threaten the hall leading to her door. Tarzan began barking and jumping, but Mrs. N. paid no attention. Finally, the dog got part of her dress between his teeth and tugged her out into the hall, which was already smoke-filled. Realizing then that the building was on fire, she grabbed Tarzan up in her arms and fled to safety.

Much has been said and written about "seeing eye" dogs who help the blind to find their way in safety. Little, however, has been heard about the unsung dog heroes who protect many of those who cannot hear. A dog knows when his master or mistress is hard of hearing or deaf. He will bark like mischief when the bell rings or when something happens, until his appeal is answered and the door is opened.

Every home that harbors a deaf person—especially one who

is alone during certain hours of the day or night—should have a flashlight connected with the doorbell. This means an electric lamp with a wire connected to the doorbell which causes the lamp to light up when the button is pushed. It is a simple device that will help those with defective hearing to *see* the bell ring and to be alert at all times. The flashlight should be in plain view and always in good repair.

#### THE HARD OF HEARING

In the past decade or two about eight million Americans have become decibel-conscious. Just what is a decibel? You may want to know. The word was coined from the name of the late Dr. Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone, minus one *I*. A decibel, as the acoustic experts have it, is one-tenth of a bel. What you can hear or cannot hear, depends on the number of decibels in hearing that you have lost on one ear or both, as shown by an audiometer test. Such tests are given either by an ear specialist, by manufacturers of hearing aids and, recently also by hearing aid clinics\* which have been organized in a number of cities in the United States. How does a loss in decibels affect you in particular? The following table will show.

#### *Hearing Loss*

##### *Decibels*

##### *The Consequences*

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 30 | When tired or listless you will have difficulty in hearing when addressed in a natural tone of voice, or in rear seats of theater.      |
| 40 | General and group conversation becomes difficult. Lip reading advisable.  |
| 50 | In everyday life you won't be able to hear much of what is being spoken at random. Hearing aid is indicated; also study of lip reading. |
| 60 | The voice has to be raised to enable you to hear. Hearing aid and the study of lip reading essential.                                   |
| 70 | The raised voice is heard only close to the ear.  |

Hearing aid and the study of lip reading imperative.

80           Hearing aid needed for face to face conversation as well as lip reading.

100 to 120    Almost complete deafness. Lip reading only resource.

The last, fortunately, is extremely rare with adults. If you wear a suitable hearing aid and your loss in hearing is no worse than 50 to 60 decibels, your power to hear should be increased an average of 30 decibels. During the night, however, or at a time when you have taken off your instrument, you can count on that hearing only which has remained to you, so-called residual hearing. Therefore, you will have to acquire habits of safety whether you use a hearing aid or not.

Make sure every time you leave the bathroom or kitchen that the water is turned off and is not dripping from the faucet. You cannot hear the drip from an adjoining room and the water may overflow as a result of a defective drain pipe or other cause. If you are unable to hear a rap on the door, don't lock yourself in a room unless it is absolutely necessary, and then only for a short time. You are likely to be left in the lurch in case there is a fire and rescuers cannot get into your room. Should you have to travel and stop off at a hotel, acquaint the desk clerk with your defect in hearing and your difficulty in using the room telephone. You will save yourself many anxious moments thereby. Always take your handicap into consideration in your plans and, thus, keep on the safe side.

### **The Orthopedically Handicapped**

With the great increase in the number of the orthopedically handicapped as a result of World War II, it is necessary to think of the safety of the disabled and others who have returned from the services with some orthopedic impairment. This, naturally, leads to the question: Do orthopedically handi-

\* Obtain a list of hearing aid clinics from the Volta Bureau, 1537 35th Street, N.W., Washington 7, D. C.

capped persons meet with accidents more often than the able-bodied? Authorities claim that this is not the case, that the handicapped person is instinctively more careful and that he will be able to keep out of danger, just as the able-bodied do. As a matter of fact, newly disabled veterans of this war resent being treated as though they were different from what they used to be before they became war casualties. They are being trained in Army hospitals to take care of themselves and of their prosthetic appliances.

As for older disabled men, there is need for more care and attention to safeguard them from accidents. Here is a story which confirms this. John Harris, 65 years old, a legless cripple, was fatally burned yesterday in a fire which destroyed his home. His wife was in the garden when the fire started but was unable to rescue him. How was it possible for the fire to gain so much headway without the woman noticing it? Hadn't he called her? Why had she not smelled smoke? It is necessary to be on the alert when there is an older physically disabled person in the home, as this story shows.

As regards physically handicapped children, parents must never relax their vigilance. The period of convalescence after hospitalization may be long. In rural areas this often brings about many serious problems. To safeguard a crippled child from hazards, therefore, it may be best to remove him to a state hospital or to a supervised foster home. Each case has to be decided after consultation with the attending physician.

Children may become deformed as a result of inadequate or unsuccessful treatment of injuries. Even a dislocated elbow or shoulder may result in a stiff arm for the rest of the child's life, if it is not properly set. Any injury, in fact, may become the starting point for a crippling deformity. It may not look serious at first, but may develop into a more or less serious deformity in time.

When your child suffers a minor wound or laceration, wash it with Ivory soap and warm water to remove all dirt. Then cover the wound with a sterile gauze. (See Chapter XII.)

Then put the youngster to bed and keep him warm and quiet.

For the treatment of fractures or dislocations, or more serious wounds, secure competent medical aid at once. If the patient must be moved, it should be done with the aid of a stretcher or a blanket. Do not trust unscientific methods, or believe in the notion that "nature will take care of it." It may cripple your child for life.

#### SUGGESTED READING

*Watch*: a periodical published four times a year by the American Mutual Liability Insurance Co., 142 Berkeley St., Boston, Mass.

Colcord, Joanna C., *Your Community—Its Provision for Health, Education, Safety and Welfare*, New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 130 East 22nd St. 1939.

#### LEAFLETS

Hathway, Winifred, *Lighting the Home for Health and Happiness*, National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, 1790 Broadway, New York City.

Merrill, Eleanor, *Peril at Play*, No. D152, 4 pp.

Town, Arno, M.D., *First Aid for Eye Injuries*, No. 386, 6 pp.

Sheppard, William B., M.D., *The Prevention of Deformities, Following Accidental Injuries to Children, The Crippled Child*, 11 South La Salle Street, Chicago 3, Ill.

## Home, Sweet Home on the Farm

**H**AD we space here, we could fill several hundred pages with details of farm accidents that, with a little care, could easily have been prevented. Deaths due to farm home accidents, in 1945, numbered 6,500, and injuries nearly 1,000,000. Falls constitute 39 per cent of fatal farm home accidents—falls, not only in the home, but also in the yard from ladders, haymows, haystacks, windmills, and roofs.

Rotten rungs on ladders are a constant menace. So are broken and worn steps, which can be repaired at small cost in a few minutes. Inspect all rungs of a ladder before you use it. Never use improvised supports for reaching high shelves; they may break under your weight and injure you. Be careful when walking down basement steps or mounting attics, especially when they are not well lighted. Hold on to railings to avoid the danger of falls.

Slipping on loose rugs, in soapy bathtubs can trip and cripple you and other members of your household. Hence, use every precaution in avoiding such hazards.

“A chair with a broken leg, broken rockers or broken back, is a tricky thing. If such a chair isn’t worth repairing, better take the ax and demolish it before it throws somebody,” declared Ralph A. Hayne, in his pamphlet, *Stop Carelessness! Prevent Accidents*, published by the International Harvester Company, Chicago, Ill.

### What Can You Do to Help Stop This Waste?

About 200 farm buildings burn every day in the year in the United States and Canada. Farm fires, according to the United States Department of Agriculture, kill from 2,000 to 3,500 persons each year and cost the country \$100,000,000 annually. Can we as a nation afford this waste? At a time when peoples of entire continents are starving and we are faced with the tremendous task of feeding whole populations, what can the individual farmer do to stave off this needless loss of life and property?

Are you aware of the fact that about 40 per cent of farm fires occur in dwellings, which means that \$40,000,000 worth of farm homes go up in smoke every year? Just who is to blame? And what does this mean to the farmer and his family in homes uprooted and work-days lost?

Nobody can help you in preventing such terrible havoc. You will have to do it yourself with the cooperation of your household. After you have decided to take the necessary steps of efficiently safeguarding your home, your farm buildings and your crops, you will have to work out the details how this may best be done.

### How Farm Fires Start

Knowing the principal cause of rural fires is a good step in the right direction in controlling or preventing them.

<i>Cause</i>	<i>Per Cent of Cases</i>
Lightning	11.53%
Defective chimney and flues	9.58
Spontaneous ignition	7.26
Sparks on roof	5.68
Matches and smoking	5.17
Petroleum and its products	4.69
Stoves, furnaces and their pipes	4.24

<i>Cause</i>	<i>Per Cent of Cases</i>
Misuse of electricity (except irons and small devices)	2.67
Hot ashes and open fires	1.09
(Percentages based on latest five-year average of property losses.)	

Other causes of rural fires are tractor and truck exhausts, power machinery, incubators and brooders, burning rubbish, and bonfires.

### **"Lightning Never Strikes Twice"**

So the saying goes. But why not do something to protect your property from being struck by lightning the first time? Lightning is one of the more frequent causes of fire in farm buildings. They are actually unfinished unless they have a standard system of protection against lightning.

"Oh, none of those contraptions is any good!" you declare with some vehemence. Perhaps, you haven't tried the better makes. Or you made a botch job of it yourself. There are accepted modern methods and standard lightning protection which have proved their value. The efficiency of these has been calculated as ranging from 85 per cent to 99 per cent. The cost of a complete set of lightning rods is infinitesimal when compared with the cost of putting up a new farm building. You should also provide the silo with a lightning rod, since this is the highest building on your farm and thus most exposed to lightning.

To repeat: Don't attempt the job yourself. Employ a lightning rod factory that subscribes to the Master Label Service of Underwriters' Laboratories, Inc. This assures that the installation is one designed in accordance with the best modern knowledge to give complete protection from lightning to an owner's property.

### **Chimneys**

Defective chimneys are next in order of causes of fires in



farm buildings. The first commandment in erecting a new farm building, therefore, should be: "Give your chimney special attention and, under no circumstances make your home a fire-trap by trying to save on its construction." It should be built of substantial masonry, which must always rest safely on the ground.

Another place to keep your eyes on is the top. That is where chimneys go to pieces most often, due to the double action of weather and hot gases. Look out for sparks escaping, for cracks in the bricks and escaping smoke. They are an indication that your chimney is in need of prompt attention. Don't put it off another day, or you may be sorry.

### **What Causes Spontaneous Ignition?**

If your fire department reports a fire with the added statement, "Cause unknown," you may suspect spontaneous ignition as having started it. Storing hay in the barn before it is well dried has caused many a barn fire that extended to the home. And even though you may have cured your hay properly, if it has become wet after storage, either from rain coming through a leaky roof or from any other cause, this will also heat the hay and cause it to ignite. The same applies to alfalfa, clover and soybean hays. These plants with heavy stems retain much moisture after the leaves appear to have dried. Play safe, therefore, and cure all hay sufficiently before storing it in the barn, not only to prevent loss from fire, but also spoilage.

The Department of Agriculture and the Underwriters' Laboratories have carefully investigated the subject; hence, it is suggested that you obtain their printed instructions on curing hay, a procedure which differs with climates and regions.

Spontaneous ignition may also start from oily mops, rags or polishing cloths left in a closet or on a wooden shelf where the sun can shine on them.

### **The Roof Over Your Head**

Now, you know very well that heat is essential to you in

keeping your home warm and the kitchen stove supplied. Does this not at once suggest to you that the chimney needs to be kept clear of accumulation of soot? Otherwise sparks will fall on the roof and they may ignite it, particularly on days when there is a strong wind blowing. Have you provided for such an exigency by getting an effective spark arrester to nip ignition in the bud? Also to safeguard your other farm buildings from catching fire on stormy days?

The quality of the roofing material, too, is of great importance. Even though tile, slate, metal or other non-combustible roofing materials cost more than shingles or wood, the former add considerably to the safety of your property. They also lessen the danger of flying brands setting fire to the other buildings, in case a fire starts in your home dwelling. Another thing that you should never neglect is to keep the roof in good repair and, when making repairs, to avoid using cheap, low-grade roofing materials.

### The "Pernicious" Twins

What happens when a match is carelessly dropped without being fully extinguished or when a smoker falls asleep in his bed or armchair? It hardly needs repetition here. The fire danger on the farm from matches and smoking, however, is far greater than in urban homes. The danger results not only from the accidental dropping of matches in dry hay or litter where they may later ignite by being stepped upon or by friction in other ways, but also from dropping matches while they are still glowing. Smoking or lighting matches inside the barn is more than dangerous practice. A match head may fly off into the hay and make short work of the entire loft by burning it down to the ground in a jiffy. An after-dinner smoke in the hay may be the cause of \$1,000 worth of hay going up in flames *with* the building. It happens often enough. Hang up a NO SMOKING sign in all your farm buildings and insist that this rule be carried out.

**Handle Petroleum and Its Products as Carefully as Dynamite**

Although electricity has been installed in many farms of the United States, oil lamps and lanterns will, no doubt, continue to be in use for some time as the most common source of light. Oil stoves and heaters, too, are needed in many a farm home of the older type. Watch your lamps carefully. Never fill a kerosene lamp with gasoline, either mistakenly or by design. Keep all oil lamps out of reach of children who may knock them over or play with them when you are out of sight for a minute. Beware of hanging up a lantern near hay or other flammable material. Lamp shades of paper or cloth are inflammable; hence, never use them around your lamps.

It is human nature to wait until we learn by sad experience, lazily remembering the misfortune of others who have come to grief. "It can't happen here!" you maintain. "We do things differently." Still, explosions and fires due to kerosene, gasoline, coal oil, benzine and naphtha continue to take a terrible toll in human lives and property.

Don't fool with gasoline or any of its affinities. A spark yards away or static electricity may ignite any one of them. Keep all cans or bottles of these flammable liquids tightly corked, so they cannot evaporate. The fumes are highly explosive. Your oil stoves must have a safe footing so they cannot be upset.

Have some agreement with your neighbors that the following safety rules be consistently kept:

**Safety Rules for the Proper Storage of Oil Products\***

1. Gasoline and kerosene should never be stored or handled in open containers.
2. Gasoline should never be stored in buildings but should be kept in underground tanks. If installing underground tanks is too expensive, get a metal drum provided for that purpose

\* Courtesy, National Board of Fire Underwriters, *Safeguarding the Farm Against Fire*.

and store your supply in a shed or under an open cover at a safe distance from buildings.

3. Gasoline or kerosene should never be drawn or handled near an open flame or light.

4. Gasoline and kerosene should never be used to start or revive a fire.

5. Gasoline or kerosene lamps should never be made of glass, but should be made of metal and should be provided with a broad base to avoid upsetting.

6. Leaking gasoline and kerosene stoves and lamps should never be used.

7. Lanterns, when not being carried, should be hung on a substantial hook away from wood, cobwebs and other combustible material.

8. Kerosene stoves should be provided with drip pans under burners.

9. Do not use gasoline or naphtha for drying cleaning at home.

10. Use only gasoline stoves and gasoline lamps advertised by the maker as being listed by Underwriters' Laboratories.

11. Do not store automobiles, trucks, tractors or gasoline engines in barns. They should be kept in garage or other buildings with incombustible floors and where no hay, straw, fodder or other combustibles are stored.

12. Do not clean automobiles, tractors, engines or motors with gasoline, for the vapor produced creates an explosion hazard.

13. Do not operate gas or gasoline engines in buildings unless adequate arrangements have been made. Provide fixed exhaust pipe through wall protected by a metal thimble, with at least 6 inches from pipe to wood, and have pipe extend 18 inches outside of the wall. Keep floors and engine clean and free from oil and refuse.

14. Oily waste or rags should be removed from premises. When finished working on motors or engines and when through

with painting job, clean tools and safely burn oily rags and waste. Also clean your clothes.

15. Water, except in the form of spray, is not effective in fighting fires involving flammable liquids, such as gasoline, kerosene and oils. The use of water buckets, for example, may make control of fire more difficult because the burning liquid may be washed about, spreading the fire over a larger area. When gasoline, kerosene and oils of any kind are present, use fire extinguishers of the type that effectively smother gasoline and kerosene fires. In the absence of the correct type of extinguisher, gasoline, kerosene and oil fires must be fought by smothering the base of the fire with sand and dirt. This is not ordinarily effective except with small fires.

### **Don't Let It Burn You Up**

Even if everything in the way of safety precautions has been taken in the construction of your dwelling place, there still remain the hazards to which you and your family will be exposed from stove or furnace. Thousands of farm homes are lost every year due to lack of care and foresight in the selection, installation, placement and operation of stoves and other heating or lighting apparatus.

It should never be forgotten that farm buildings are usually made of wood; that farms are for the most part far away from fire departments; and that farms are not properly equipped to fight larger fires. As a matter of prudence, therefore, have your stove put up in such a way that it cannot ignite surrounding walls, woodwork, or floor. Use a protective covering, such as metal or asbestos, for all surfaces exposed to heat coming from the stove or furnace. An 18-inch clearance from burnable material is recommended all around and above heaters. Also have the stove and pipes regularly cleaned by removing all accumulations of soot. Replace pipes that are rusted or have holes in them. A fire cannot start in a chimney without a cause. Perhaps you have covered the flue hole with paper, or if you used metal,

it has become loose or rusty. Do not delay one minute! Clean up!

Stove pipes should enter directly into the chimney without passing through walls, closets or partitions. This is far from being safe. Your stove may become overheated and start a fire which may not be discovered until it has gained much headway. If you don't get as much warmth as you should, the stove or heater is probably out of order. In that case consult a heating expert. Never "force" a fire in cold weather, nor pour kerosene on it to make it start faster. It is inviting disaster to do so.

### **Playing Safe with Electricity**

Electricity on the farm has many uses, but it also brings various hazards. What is true of the urban home in regard to using electricity safely, applies also to the farm home. Faulty wiring should not be tolerated, nor home-made equipment. These add danger to the use of current, which is more severe than in the city. Have all wiring done by a competent electrician. One of the most frequent fire hazards on the farm is the use of improvised fuses of too great amperage. This will permit the wiring to carry too much current and get dangerously hot. To prevent ignition use fuses of the correct amperage, usually 15 amperes. When going to the barn or to outbuildings, use a flashlight and eliminate another danger, for portable electric lights may prove dangerous when carried from place to place.

### **How Else to Burn Down the House**

If you are careless in the removal of hot ashes from your kitchen stove or furnace, you have no one else to blame but yourself if you cause a fire to start. No matter how dead ashes may seem to appear on the surface, they may contain live coals which a wind may scatter in dry grass and fan into a flame. Nor should you dump loose ashes against a building or a wooden fence. Live coals may smolder for hours and suddenly break into a blaze at a time when you are either asleep or in another building.

"But, a metal container is too expensive for me," you complain. It is not too expensive when you figure how much it will save you in preventing a costly fire. Get a metal drum or barrel at little cost and be safe.

Keep your basement free from fire danger by disposing of all trash near the furnace. A spark may ignite such accumulations and your house may go up in smoke.

### **Plan Safely in Building a Home**

Abner Brooks, a farmer in Wisconsin, returned to his home late one afternoon, after a hard day on his farm lands. He looked forward to his evening meal and to a good night's rest. The country roundabout was in full bloom, the outlook for a fine harvest was excellent, and his spirits soared. Presently, as he looked up, he saw smoke rising in the distance. It seemed to be over his place. What could be the cause of that dense smoke? He ran as fast as his legs could carry him. By the time he reached his home, flames shot out from all directions. His house was on fire and his wife was trying to put it out with the modest fire-fighting equipment he had provided. The fire, he learned, had started in the basement and mushroomed up through the open stairway to the top. Soon the stairs became impassable and his wife and son had to jump from the kitchen window to the ground. They were fortunate, indeed, not having had to leap from an upper floor.

Open stairways are a constant source of danger, because when a fire starts on a lower floor of a house there is no way of escaping, passageways become impassable and victims may be trapped on an upper floor, unable to come down safely. A second stairway in another part of the house is an urgent necessity. If this is not feasible, provide a porch deck or roof onto which your family can escape. It means all the difference between safety and serious injury.

### **Keep a Fire from Starting**

"The best defense against fire anywhere is (1) to keep it

from starting, and (2) to put it out while it is still small," advises the National Board of Fire Underwriters.

Ask yourself what you would do first in the event a fire started in your farm house. As sixty per cent of deaths from fire occur in and around dwelling houses, your plan of action is vitally important. Have you instructed each member of your household how to escape from the house? Did you ever hold a fire drill? Have you assigned special tasks to each member of your family? If there are children in your home, who is to guide them to safety without confusion? Fire breaks out so quickly that a definite plan has to be agreed upon and carried out in such an emergency.

Since all buildings are in danger when fire starts in one of them, be sure that your fire-fighting equipment is in best of order every day of the year. Ladders should be of the best make and always in good condition, so that they do not break down under the strain of carrying the weight of one or more persons. They should be long enough to reach to the highest point of your buildings. Ropes for rescue work must be within easy reach and of a good quality. The same applies to axes which are a necessary part of any fire-fighting equipment. Small fires may be extinguished with a few pails of water, so thrown as to drench the burning materials. Sand may be used, particularly for oil fires or grease. Keep some sand pails ready just for such an emergency in garage or tractor shed. Do not use fire-fighting pails for any other purpose. Have a plentiful number of extinguishers of approved make on hand. An inferior kind may fail to work when needed. Keep your extinguishers in good condition at all times; have them inspected and refilled at least once a year.

Have some understanding with your neighbors for cooperation in case of fire. Lend a hand when the need of help for fighting a fire arises and you will be able to depend on others to come to your aid in case of need.

The following questionnaire, issued by the National Board of Fire Underwriters, should be in the hands of every farmer:



## FARM FIRE QUESTIONNAIRE

Can persons escape from each room of upper story if fire has involved first floor?

What provisions have you made to fight fire?

Have you ladders which will reach the roof?

Can some of your farm equipment, such as sprayers, be used for fires?

Is there any organized fire protection in your community?

How would you call for this protective service?

Where can fire engines take water?

Have the following been checked within the past six months? Chimneys, smokepipes, fireplace screens, floor protection of stoves, storage of oily rags, storage of gasoline, and location of kerosene.

What is the general condition as to leaves under or around the house? Dry grass near buildings? Underbrush endangering buildings?

Has danger of ignition of buildings been eliminated in regard to manure, feeder, hay, and fertilizer?

Are oils (kerosene and gasoline) handled only in the daylight? Only where spillage cannot be ignited?

Are all electric fuses of right capacity (15 ampere for branch circuits)?

Are all lights, including electric lights, in the house, barn or other structure so located that they cannot come in contact with combustible material?

Are places provided in barns, etc., where lanterns can be hung and not set on the floor?

Is hay loft well ventilated?

Can animals be quickly removed from barns?

Are incubators and brooders listed by Underwriters' Laboratories, Inc.?

Are gasoline stoves and kerosene heaters of types listed by Underwriters' Laboratories, Inc.?

Has a suitable incinerator been provided for burning leaves, papers and rubbish?

If you have a wooden shingle roof, have spark arresters been provided on stovepipes?

Where feed has to be cooked, is this done outside the barn?

Do you use gasoline for dry cleaning?

How hazardous are the insecticides which you use?

Do you give your house, yard and other property a general spring and fall cleaning and get rid of useless things?

Do you make general inspection before retiring to assure all fires and lights are out or suitably protected?

*Fire prevention is thoughtfulness, and carefulness, combined with action in correcting those things which produce and increase fire. It cannot be a success without expenditure of energy and money.*

### **Firearms in Woods and Dales**

The fall hunting season is usually the time when most serious accidents due to firearms happen in the country. Bullets or shrapnel may go astray, rebound, and hit an unsuspecting person. Some youths, for example, were recently shooting at water rats with .22 rifles in the wooded suburbs of a large city. A six-year-old boy, Jackie S., was playing with his sister, 8, in some tall weeds. Suddenly Jackie cried out, "Something hit me in the leg. Look, I'm bleeding." His sister hurried him to friends living near by. They called an ambulance and notified the police. At the hospital it was found that the boy had a bullet wound which needed medical treatment to prevent infection.

Shooting into the brush or hedges is dangerous practice and may cause serious accidents. You might kill a person whom you cannot see from your vantage point. Even experienced hunters have been shot when they were not careful enough and exposed themselves to "target practice."

The following rules for hunters should be obeyed in hunting in the country or suburbs:

1. Never take a gun out of its case until you are ready for the chase.
2. Don't open the safety lock until you are actually ready to shoot.
3. In climbing fences, don't pull the gun through; carry it above. Don't point the muzzle at anyone, but away from yourself and others.
4. When you cross a body of water, don't lay the rifle down in the boat, and don't lift it out by the barrel.
5. You tempt the fates if you set a loaded gun against a tree or fence. Someone may trip against it and "pop goes the gun." Leave the gun lying on the ground, safely away from pedestrians.
6. After a hike through plowed fields, woods or hills, or after you have had a fall, examine the gun to make sure that the barrels are still clear.
7. Don't shoot at random if you are not sure what you are aiming at. You may hit people at rest or at play.
8. If your game is in plain view and you are just aching to shoot, make sure first that no human being, livestock or building is in the line of fire.
9. Keep your rifle and ammunition at a safe distance from an open fire.
10. If you are not skilled at shooting, keep yourself and others out of danger by taking up some other form of outdoor sport.

### **Toadstools and Such**

According to an A.P. report from Buffalo, Donald Smith, 11 years old, died in a hospital of mushroom poisoning, twenty-four hours after his twin brother, E. Scott, Jr., succumbed to the same ailment. Three other members of the family who ate the wild mushrooms recovered. The medical examiner, issuing a certificate of accidental death, said the mushrooms were picked up in Lincoln Park, town of Tonawonda.

Toadstools should be known and steered clear of. If you are not sure which of the mushrooms growing wild are edible, write to the U. S. Department of Agriculture and request them to send you Farmers' Bulletin on Edible Mushrooms, and also their publications on poisonous fruits and berries.

Poison ivy, poison sumac and poison oak, if contacted, will cause serious skin irritations to many people. Avoid these plants when you are in the country. Know their form and characteristics. In case you are unusually susceptible to such skin irritations, wear heavy gloves when roaming in woods or fields. The poison from these plants may even adhere to your clothing months after and infect those who touch them. For this reason it is advisable that you have your outer clothing dry-cleaned if you know that you have been exposed to these plant poisons.

### **Pets Can't Always Be Trusted**

An infuriated animal, even though a household pet, may turn suddenly and viciously attack a person. Recently newspapers published the account of a pet dog which killed a two-year-old girl by sinking his teeth into her throat. This happened in the presence of the child's mother.

The cross dog, to be sure, is useful on the farm and a great friend of the members of the family; nevertheless, he may attack an innocent passer-by and seriously wound him. Put a sign on the lawn of the front yard reading, "Beware of the dog," to forestall any attack upon strangers coming to your door.

Rabies are carried by dogs if they are affected by this dread disease. If you notice that your dog acts strangely without apparent cause, have him examined by a veterinarian before he does any harm. Keep on file the Farmers' Bulletin, issued by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, which gives information how rabies may be stamped out. A dog bite should be immediately treated to prevent infection.

Cats, when they are cross or teased, may also bite and claw. "Don't tease the animals" is a slogan well worth while remembering. When a cat gets a sudden temper for which there is

no explanation, better shoot it. There is no lack of cats; hence, play safe.

Rats on your farm may prove a real problem. Do all you can to exterminate them. Treat rat bites just as dog bites, to prevent infection. Rats and mice may carry contagion. Consult your county agent regarding the use of red squill, a rat poison which will not kill other animals. Babies and young children must be protected against rats, for they have frequently attacked and killed infants in their cribs.

Rabbits, especially the wild species, may carry tularemia. Handling or eating an infected animal may cause this disease. Wear rubber gloves while dressing rabbits and cook all rabbit meat very thoroughly. Be particularly careful not to expose a small cut or break in the skin to infection by rabbits.

Snakes are a constant danger in the country. They hide under bushes and ledges, suddenly springing into action when their hiding place is discovered and they are uprooted. Some of the snakes are entirely harmless. The bites of the following four, however, are dangerous: the coral snake, the copperhead, the water moccasin and the rattlesnake. Learn to know them by appearance and watch out for them when afield. Wear high boots or leggings to protect your legs in places where these snakes have their habitat. If a member of your party is bitten and there is pain and swelling, call for a doctor at once.

### **Store Your Tools Where They Can't Trip You**

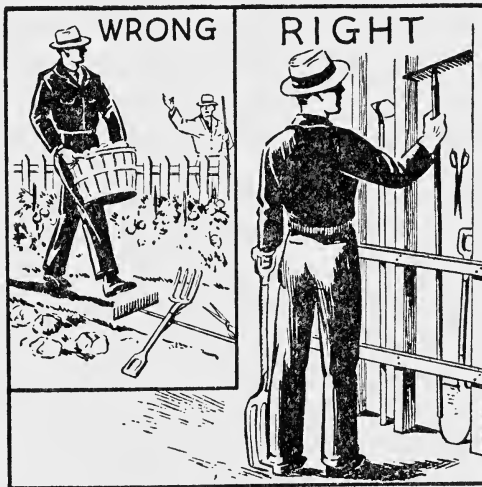
All farm implements need to have a fixed place which should never be changed. Defective hand tools, too, are the cause of many needless accidents. Heads of sledges, hammers and axes flying off, cause wounds or may kill. Handle all tools with care and keep them in first-class condition. Store them in an unused shed, each in its assigned place on the wall.

Hanging your scythe on the branch of a tree while at work is a great menace. Someone may walk into it or, if it is left lying in the grass, may fall over it. Rakes and hoes left leaning against the fence or barn door may cause you to trip over them

when it is dark and you may break a leg, if nothing worse happens. The pitchfork leaning against the hay has caused many a serious injury to men and boys sliding down on them. When these forks are not in use, return them to their place in the tool shed where they can always be readily found. The spade, too, deserves your special attention. The handle, exactly as the handles of all other tools, must be smooth and strong, the grip free from splinters and splits. Otherwise splinters may enter your hand and cause an infection. Make sure also that the blade is smooth and sharp for efficient working.

A sharp ax for chopping wood needs to be carefully handled. Do the chopping in an open place where you can work unobstructed by any object, either close by or overhead. The ax may catch in the object and rebound. When finished with the work, put the ax where a child cannot reach it. Inasmuch as the ax is a very useful tool in case of fire, store it in the same place within easy reach of adults.

Keep in mind that accidents on the farm may be serious and that medical aid is not within easy reach. In the event that you



(Courtesy Greater New York Safety Council)

Poor "yardkeeping" causes home accidents.

do the work alone and get injured, it may take some time before your cries for help are heard and answered. Safety on the farm, therefore, means eternal vigilance and caution in the fullest sense of the words.

### **Keep Them Out of Mischief**

Farm children not only encounter the same hazards in the home as city children, but they also face additional dangers which arise on the farm from machinery, tools and animals. Boys and girls on the farm have their chores to do rather early in life. They need to become safety-conscious in a larger measure than their city cousins of the same age.

Things to beware of: Don't allow young children to climb or ride on tractors, fenders, haywagons and the like. Make them stay safely on the ground and away from harm. Keep them away also from the mowing machine, the grain binder or cutting machine. Don't allow them to fool with the hay hoisting ropes or pulleys. Fully 90 per cent of the accidents with farm children result from inattention and carelessness on the part of adults. Hold this in mind.

Since children below school age need to be kept occupied in order to be safe, a letter written by a farm woman to the editor of a farm journal is quoted here as an example how this may best be done:

"Back in the years of the recent depression I made a plan for the children we hoped to have some day, whereby they might find happiness in spite of disrupted plans and hard times they might encounter. We have the children now and the plan works fine.

"It dawned on me that joy comes from understanding of the outdoors, from good books, and from inexpensive hobbies. These were the things that kept my husband and me dreaming and hoping in time of great trouble. Now that war has come and gone, and we see material values fail, we are sure that our idea is right.

"Children who know only the pleasure of shows, ice cream,

auto riding and all such, find themselves lonely, restless and at a loss to know what to do. Our little youngsters are busy watching each new variety of bird that comes to our farm. They are learning to identify flowers. They have a reading table where books are ready for them to delve into at anytime. They have a scrapbook of Christmas cards, and I am helping them to collect other kinds of cards. They are learning music appreciation by radio.

“Each farm family may have a different way of working out hobbies. We think it is never too late to start, for our children are now only four and a half and two years of age. They are very ordinary little ones, but when they came running this morning, shouting, ‘See the new birds! What are they, Mommie? They are yellow like grapefruit peelings,’ I was sure I had already started to help their eyes to see.”

These children surely are on the road to safety, having learned at a very early age to use their eyes.

### **Fatigue and Accidents**

“If I hadn’t been so doggone tired this accident wouldn’t have happened to me,” cried the farmer whose hand was caught in the harvesting machine and badly mangled. It had to be amputated at the elbow. The farmer’s usefulness had become very limited thereby, although he was but forty years of age.

During the months when the farmer must plant and harvest his crops his days are very full. He begins to work when it is still dark and he may be still working when the shadows of night have fallen. This, naturally, adds to the risks of his job.

You must, therefore, be more safety-conscious than most other workers. Take no unnecessary risks, and avoid overtiring yourself.

“That’s easier said than done,” you argue. “I’ve got to do all the work myself. Hired help is very hard to get these days.”

This is true enough. Yet, in view of the urgent need of conserving your health and strength, you have to avoid overtiring yourself. Do not exceed your fatigue limit.



"Tell me how I can work and rest at the same time and I'll agree with you," you retort.

The answer is: By relaxing from time to time just where you stand and work. You probably haven't kept track of the advances made in industrial plants in regard to rest pauses for workers to enable them to do more and better work. These workers stop as soon as they feel tense or tired, or at a given time. In some plants the work is organized so workers pause for a few minutes every half hour for freshening up. In other plants they stop once every hour for five to ten minutes to relax.

"What d'ya mean by relaxing on the farm?" you ask.

Walk a few steps away from your work and attend to a trifling task, or go to the brook for a cool drink. The principal thing is to change to something else for a few minutes and you will thus relax the tension you are under. The tension may be in the muscles of your arms or legs, or in the shoulders. Find out what relaxes your tensions best, whether walking a short distance, or taking a cool drink, or lying down on your back for a while. Remember that doing the same thing over and over again causes your tension and fatigue. You can relieve it by relaxing and changing your pace. An excess of anything is tiring and harmful.

### FARM SAFETY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Are your stairs and steps strongly built and kept in good repair?
2. Are ladder openings and stairways handrailed?
3. Are all floors solid and smooth? Rugs safely anchored? Linoleum without breaks or cracks that may cause a fall?
4. Do you store gasoline outdoors, or in a special building, some distance from the house? And do you use bright-colored containers to avoid making mistakes?
5. Are all electric circuits equipped with the proper amperage of fuses?
6. Are hammer and axe heads secure and the handles smooth, without cracks?

7. Have you “a place for everything and everything in its place” for tools not in use?
8. Do you keep children away from machinery, tenders and tractors?
9. Do you try to keep out of the sun as much as possible, and do you relax now and then?
10. Do you avoid open spaces and lone trees in a thunderstorm?
11. Have you an efficient fire-fighting apparatus, ready for use at any time?
12. Do you know anything about first aid? Have you a first aid kit?

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## Take Time by the Forelock on the Farm

**Y**OU need to face the fact squarely that in case of an accident you yourself have to be prepared to meet that emergency as efficiently as is humanly possible. Get together with your farm neighbors and work out a program. A dozen or more farm families can readily organize an accident-prevention project in their own communities, meeting from time to time to study the specific hazards of each member.

How a group of farm people solved the problem of first aid in case of accident is quoted here as printed in the *Farm Journal and Farmer's Wife*, August, 1944:

“CALL THE AMBULANCE!

“Until two years ago our community was totally unprepared for accidents requiring more than ordinary care.

“The nearest hospital was 16 miles away and had no ambulance. A wreck, a fire, a near-drowning meant calling an ambulance from the city, at a cost of \$25 to \$35 per trip. Even then we sometimes couldn't get the outfit, for it was owned by the undertaker, and he might be at a funeral.

“We solved all that with a volunteer First Aid and Ambulance Service. Our local doctor organized the unit, enrolling 24 men and women in First Aid classes, which he taught one night a week. A preliminary course was followed by advanced

instruction. Many practice drills were held, first in the classroom, then in the field. Fortunately our unit included two registered nurses and a practical nurse.

"We made our own ambulance. We remodelled an old Kissel car, repaired and repainted it, and equipped it with spotlights, road lantern, siren, fog lights, heater and essential first aid items. The cost was only about \$500, thanks to much donated labor.

"There is a vast difference between loading a seriously stricken patient onto the back seat of a car and bouncing off at top speed to the hospital, and putting him in a well-equipped ambulance under the care of trained attendants. In just two years this ambulance has conveyed 50 serious cases.

"Upkeep and running expenses total \$150 to \$200 per year. We raise it from contributions (the service itself is free) and from various entertainments.

"We have a well-equipped first aid station in the schoolhouse. If the doctor cannot be reached, emergency calls are referred to the postmistress, a member of the unit. For instance, when a railroad wreck happened a few miles from our village not long ago, a phone call started our ambulance, the doctor, and a registered nurse to the scene promptly.

"Your nearest Red Cross Chapter will give you suggestions for starting up a first aid program like ours. Your physician can plan what the ambulance should contain and what attendants it needs. This plan has been a great thing for us. Why don't you try it?"

—GORDON GREENWOOD SAMPSON.

Yes, by all means try it. Every layman should learn enough about human anatomy to be able to stop bleeding following an accident. You should know where the six pressure points are, and know it for sure. An incident may arise where this lack of knowledge on your part will sacrifice a life which you might have been able to save had you taken the needed first aid

training. You should also know how to apply a tourniquet without doing more harm than good, and how to give artificial respiration by the Prone Pressure method. Printed instructions are very useful, but they cannot take the place of practical first aid training under a competent instructor.

### **What Can Be Done?**

“The majority of farm accidents and fires can be prevented if every farm family will put into effect this simple three-point safety program,” stated the United States Department of Agriculture.

1. Learn to recognize and hunt out the accidents and fire hazards on the farm and in the farm home.
2. Correct or remove those hazards that you can.
3. Learn to live and work safely with those hazards that cannot be immediately corrected or removed.

Many farm women who help out with the chores around the farm are subject to accidents which need not have happened. To prevent your hair from catching in the machinery, wear a tight net or kerchief, as is done in industrial plants where women are employed. Long coats or dresses which can be stepped upon must be avoided if you work on a farm machine. The power take-off can catch your clothes and wind them up before you know what has happened. Wear utility garments, such as slack suits, or tight-fitting short clothing during working hours. Worn heels, too, can cause you to come to harm.

Prevention should also be the watchword in the care of children. Never allow your youngster to ride around with farm machines. A bump in the road can hurl him off right under the wheels or into the revolving parts.

Many a disastrous fire in the farm home can be traced back to the mother working outdoors in the yard or barn. She may have put her children to bed before going to the barn to milk the cows. Suddenly something goes wrong.

Not long ago a farm mother started the kitchen fire for

breakfast and then went to help with the chores. The stove was overheated and started a rip-roaring blaze. This woman's four children burned to death in their beds.

If you must help with the chores, don't start the fire until you are through, even though it may set the breakfast back somewhat. You might start the fire early enough, however, so that the drafts can be closed before you leave the kitchen. It is much wiser, though, not to leave the children alone in the house, for disaster comes like a thief in the night.

### **Be Prepared to Cope with a Fire**

Aside from the needed equipment—extinguishers, hose, ladders, pails, axes, and so forth—there must also be a sufficient water supply. Where the supply is not greater than 500 gallons per hour, a storage of at least 1,000 gallons of water is essential. Where the storage is 600 gallons per hour, the water storage should be of at least 1,200 to 1,500 gallons capacity. Always keep the storage tanks or reservoirs full. Where there is no natural supply of water available, it is necessary to provide additional storage of water. Consult with your nearest fire department; they will advise you how to provide an underground tank.

A farm fire-protection unit in your community is of the greatest importance. There should be a complete program for fire prevention and protection among your neighbors. A farm home or a farm building catches fire every fifteen minutes during the day in the United States; hence, the imperative need of being ready for all eventualities.

Here is a story which tells how such a program was worked out by some Idaho farmers. It is quoted here exactly as it was printed in the *Farm Journal and Farmer's Wife*, May, 1944.

"THEY'RE READY FOR FIRE

"BY WALTER J. HUNT

"FIRE!

"When this warning speeds over rural telephone wires in

Nez Perce county, Idaho, precinct members of the volunteer crew drop what they are doing and take the most direct route to the trouble area.

“By the time they arrive the local warden, or his deputy, is there with a truck carrying the precinct’s compact, easily handled, effective flame-fighting kit.

“Nez Perce county’s fire control volunteers tackle anything from an ominous stubble blaze, a grain fire, burning grass, a woodlot ignited by lightning or by a careless camper, to the dwelling, barn, or machine shed that is going up in smoke.

“For two years Nez Perce county has been organized on a precinct basis. In 1942, there were 80 such fires, in 1943, somewhat fewer. All have been put out before major loss occurred. There are 10 precincts, each headed by a warden centrally located, who has a deputy and several crew members.

#### “TEETH IN THE SYSTEM

“While it is a volunteer farmer organization, the plan has teeth in it, because state officials, acting through the local sheriff, appoint each warden and his deputy, vesting in these worthies the authority of law. Therefore, when the call to action pulsates over the rural wires there is ‘no foolin’.’ Wardens have the right to commandeer the services of others, too, if the fire is serious and extra help is required.

“The county has 11 fire kits—one for each precinct, kept at the wardens’ farm, and a spare left in custody of the sheriff. The county paid for them—\$100 apiece, a total of \$1,100.

“These kits are small but mighty and, properly used, they do a big job. Each kit contains three five-gallon portable pumps. The tank swings across a man’s back with shoulder straps to hold it, and he moves into the fire area manipulating a hand pump. He can squirt a stream 100 feet with this rig, or, better still, when the heat isn’t too intense, he can attack close up with a fine spray which chokes rather than floods the flame. When the spray is used, five gallons go a long way.

## "THE NEZ PERCE KIT

"The Nez Perce kit contains also two 15-gallon drums for extra water supply, an assortment of spades, shovels, an ax, and a 10-gallon metal hopper filled with water-soaked burlap or cotton sacks. You can beat down flames with wet sacks and then finish them off with a spray.

"The whole kit fits snugly into an open-top box anyone can make—12 inches deep, four feet wide and eight feet long. A sturdy caster is secured under each corner, and the box is placed on a platform made of fence posts and ordinary lumber. Platform height coincides with the bed of an ordinary farm motor truck.

"When an alarm is sounded, the warden backs up his truck, rolls the kit off the platform and is on his way. This program not only puts out the fires; it tends to make the community fire-prevention-conscious, too."

This surely is an excellent community fire-prevention program, even though it can handle only fires of limited extent. A stream or a pond located within a short distance, if it is dependable, would simplify the problem of additional water supply in case of a widespread conflagration.

## SUGGESTED READING

GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS, U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

*Fire Fighting on Farms*, 1946, 54 p. il. Misc. Publication 612, 15c.

*Fire Safeguards on the Farm*, Farmer's Bulletin, No. 1643.

*Lightning Protection*, Farmer's Bulletin, No. 1512.

*Safe Use and Storage of Gasoline and Kerosene on the Farm*, 1678.

*Roof Covering of Farm Buildings and Their Repair*, 1751.

*Watch Your Step*, MP, 481.

*Going to the Farm Front*, AWI, 44.



## OTHER PUBLICATIONS

*Safeguarding the Farm Against Fire*, National Board of Underwriters, 85 John St., New York City.

*Stop Carelessness—Prevent Accidents*, International Harvester Co., 180 North Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill.

*Preventing Accidents in the Home and on the Farm*, American Red Cross, Washington, D. C.

*Fatigue—What to Do About That Tired Feeling*, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, New York.

## BOOKS

McCarthy, John J., *The Science of Fire Fighting*, New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1944.

Mezerick, A. G., *Care and Repair of Buildings and Equipment*, New York: Harper & Brothers.

Whitman, Roger B., *First Aid for the Ailing House*, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1938.

U. S. Department of Agriculture, *Small Town Manual for Community Action*.

## First Aid

**F**IRST aid," as it is defined in the American Red Cross *First-Aid Textbook*, "is the immediate, temporary treatment given in case of accident or sudden illness before the services of a physician can be secured. In some cases this immediate action saves a life. In all cases, proper first-aid measures reduce suffering and place the patient in the physician's hands in a better condition to receive treatment. The duty of the first aider ends where the physician's begins, and there should be no clash of interest between the physician and the first aider."

Nearly one-half of all accidents and accidental injuries occur in the home. The need, therefore, of being prepared for emergencies appears imperative. If you have taken a first-aid course and know something of first-aid treatment, you will spring into action at once when an accident occurs. But, if you have no previous knowledge of such technique, you may want to know, "What shall I do?" and "How shall I do it?"

The instructions that follow here will give you the needed information to take charge in an emergency.

1. If you have been on the spot when an accident happened which injured someone close to you or a passer-by, and you know its cause, ascertain at once how seriously the victim is hurt. It may be advisable to remove the clothing from the injured person to get a clear view of the injuries sustained.

Look for wounds, burns, broken bones, stoppage of breathing, or signs of shock. Severe bleeding, stoppage of breathing and poisoning require immediate action to prevent death.

2. Do not move the victim unless this is absolutely necessary. If he has to be moved, use the greatest care and, if possible, get another person to assist you. By forcing the victim to sit up, moreover, you may do more harm than good. He should not be removed to another place until the nature of his injury is known. Meanwhile keep him comfortable and warm.

3. Don't get excited. Remain calm and composed. Follow the instructions given here for various kinds of injuries and send for a doctor without delay.

### **What to Do in Case of Shock**

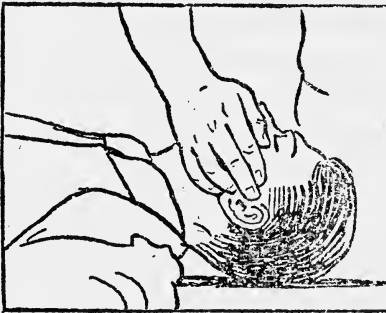
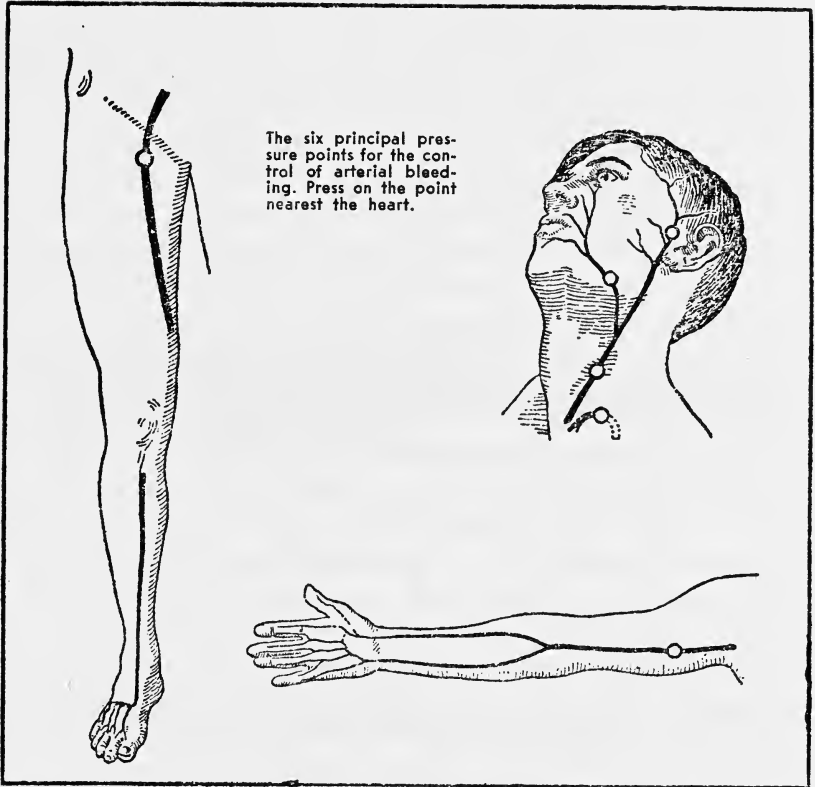
In most cases of serious accident or injury the victim goes into shock. What can you do to lessen its effects? It requires immediate action. You notice that the victim is mentally and physically depressed, that he takes no interest whatsoever in his surroundings. He may even be unconscious or partly conscious. His face is pale, grayish or somewhat blue. His hands are cold, the pulse rapid and not easy to find; his breathing comes weakly.

*First Aid.* There are three things that you can do to lessen the severity of shock:

1. Keep the victim warm. Cover him with blankets and hot water bottles. If such are not readily at hand, use hot bricks at his feet; but be careful that you do not burn him.

2. Lay the victim flat on his back, head on the same level. Make sure that he has nothing in his mouth that he might inadvertently swallow. This includes false teeth, chewing gum, tobacco. They may slide into his throat and choke him.

3. If the victim is conscious, you may give him aromatic spirits of ammonia (1 teaspoonful in a glass of water), hot coffee or hot tea. If he is unconscious, do not give him any liquid by mouth. He cannot swallow and it may choke him. The doctor will prescribe the necessary treatment.



Bleeding of the head above the eyes. Press just in front of the ear.



(Courtesy Metropolitan Life Insurance Co.)

Bleeding of the cheek below the eyes. Press in the notch on the side of the jawbone which is 1 inch to 1½ inches in front of the angle of the jaw.

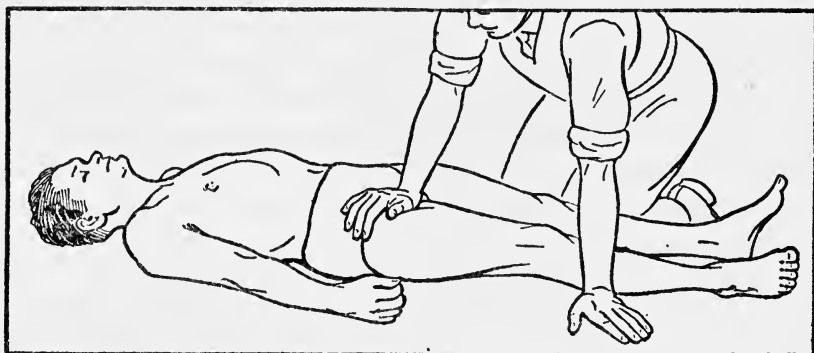


Bleeding from the neck or throat. Place your thumb against the back of the victim's neck and your fingers in the depression at the side of the windpipe (not over it), with one finger above the wound and one finger below it. Press the fingers and thumb toward each other.

Bleeding from the lower two thirds of the arm, and hand. Place your fingers half-way between armpit and elbow, on the inside of the arm, and press fingers and thumb toward each other with the arm bone between. (If the arm is fat, place your underneath it.)



Bleeding from the shoulder, armpit, and upper part of arm. Place your thumb or fingers in the hollow behind the victim's collarbone, and press against the upper surface of the first rib.



Bleeding from the thigh, leg, or foot. Place the heel of your hand just below the victim's groin at the point indicated, and press downward.

### How to Treat Wounds

When you are confronted with the problem of dressing a more or less serious wound without previous experience in first aid, remember that the immediate thing to do is to check bleeding. Your second thought should be to prevent infection. Any break in the skin or mucous membrane may be considered a wound.

Perhaps, you own a First-Aid Textbook. In that case you will have learned that blood spurting from a wound means that an artery has been severed. To stop bleeding from this source press your hand or your fingers at one of the six pressure points (see illustrations) where the artery crosses a bone.

If the bleeding is slow and steady, which means that it comes from a vein, place a sterile piece of gauze on the wound and press with your finger near the edge of the wound. In case the pressure bandage does not control the bleeding, use hand pressure directly on the bandage over the wound. This should soon stop the bleeding. In case the wound is on the arm or on the leg, lifting the wounded limb also helps to control bleeding.

### Kinds of Wounds

1. *Abrasions.* If the skin is rubbed, scraped or burned off by falls or burns, a wound is the result. It may not be serious, but there is always the danger of infection.

2. *Incised Wounds.* These are due to cuts with knives, razors, sharp tools, broken glass or china, as well as to the jagged edge of tin cans. These wounds bleed freely.

3. *Lacerated (torn) Wounds.* Such wounds are caused by blunt instruments, machinery of all kinds, falls against masonry or other angular surface which make irregular tears in the flesh. These wounds do not bleed freely, but the danger of infection is often present, because dirt or dust may have been introduced into the wound.

4. *Punctured Wounds and Stabs.* Any pointed or sharp-

edged tool, nail, or a bullet causes this kind of a wound. There is little blood flowing. This kind of a wound, though, is hard to clean and a doctor should be summoned immediately, so that lockjaw or infection does not result.

Be sure to examine the object which caused the wound to ascertain whether a fragment of it has not broken off in the wound.

### **How to Treat Light Wounds**

Open your medicine cabinet and take out the package containing sterile gauze and bandage which you have been advised to store for just such an emergency. By no means put absorbent cotton into the wound to stop bleeding as it will stick and prove troublesome when trying to remove it. Do not touch the wound with your hand, but use an antiseptic as soon as you can secure one. In case the clothing is in the way, remove as much of it as hinders your examination of the wound. As a makeshift bandage, in place of sterile gauze, in case you have not provided for it, you may use a clean handkerchief, preferably linen, scorched with a hot iron.

Iodine should not be used on the wound until the bleeding has stopped. Nor should you put adhesive tape on directly after iodine has been applied. If blood clots have formed, be sure not to disturb them. Mild tincture of iodine, when applied to the wound after the blood has stopped flowing, should also be used well around it and then be allowed to dry.

### **Infected Wounds**

A small wound neglected, may become infected in a day or two. Suddenly it begins to pain and to throb, the surrounding flesh is inflamed and red. Have a physician treat it, but if you cannot reach one within a few hours, use applications of hot salt solution. Three tablespoonfuls of ordinary salt is to be added to boiled water into which the infected finger or hand must be dipped, the water as hot as it can be stood. You may

also use a compress of several thicknesses of gauze or a towel wrung out of the hot salt solution, changing the dressing as often as possible to keep it hot.

### **Using the Tourniquet**

Apply a tourniquet only if the bleeding cannot be checked otherwise; for improperly used it can do more harm than good. A tourniquet put on too tight, without being changed, can cause gangrene.

The most readily available tourniquet is usually a stick or branch, a strap or a pad. Carefully observe the following instructions:

1. Twist the bandage only enough to stop bleeding.
2. Loosen the tourniquet every half hour, but don't remove it entirely until the bleeding has stopped.
3. Don't heap heavy blankets or clothing on the tourniquet. Leave it uncovered or very lightly covered.
4. Call up a doctor at once and explain to him what you have done to the patient to make him comfortable and to check bleeding.

### **Punctured Wounds**

For a wound caused by a sharp-edged tool, ice pick, nail, scissors, pitchfork, fish-hook or the like, you should endeavor to get a doctor on the scene as quickly as possible. These kind of wounds are dangerous because they go deep and are hard to reach. Germs may lodge in such a wound and cause infection. They need to be efficiently cleaned by a doctor.

The same applies to wounds caused by firecrackers and blank pistols. Lockjaw may result, for dirt is not infrequently driven into the wound. Explain to the doctor whom you call what has happened to the victim, so that he may provide himself with an anti-tetanus vaccine to be applied in case of need.

### **Snake Bite**

Not every snake bite is from a poisonous snake. The fangs



of non-poisonous snakes do not leave any fang punctures. The poisonous snake, however, does show fang punctures outside the teeth row.

Immediate action is necessary in every case of poisonous snake bite. The symptoms vary a good deal, according to the amount of poison injected and the type of snake. The bite of a poisonous snake is quickly followed by severe pain and, within a short time, by swelling of the flesh. Send in an alarm to the nearest doctor.

### **First-Aid Treatment**

Have the victim lie down and remain quiet. Tear any strip of cotton goods from a garment and use it to tie a constricting bandage above the bite, just tight enough to make the victim's veins "stand out." You may also use a necktie or a large handkerchief as bandage, if nothing else is at hand. Loosen the bandage every 15 minutes.

With a sharp penknife or other knife or a razor blade which has been passed through a flame, make two crosscuts in the shape of an "X" across the bite, one-half inch long and as deep as the punctures made by the fang. Let the blood run freely.

Then suck out the poison and spit it out, or use a suction device, such as is contained in first-aid kits. No one, however, who has an open sore on the lips or in the mouth should attempt to suck out the poison by mouth. Continue suction for half an hour, or until the doctor arrives. He may apply a serum known as antivenin, which is to counteract the effect of the snake poison.

No stimulant, such as coffee or tea, whiskey or brandy may be given the victim, as this will cause the poison to be carried through the body.

### **Animal Bites—Dogs, Cats, and Others**

There is much danger from dog bites. Immediately confine the dog if he has bitten a member of your family group and notify the local health authorities. The dog has to be watched

for two weeks for any signs of rabies developing. If he stays well after that, then the danger to the victim is reduced to preventing infection to the wound. In case the dog develops rabies and has to be shot, the victim will have to undergo Pasteur treatment. A thorough cauterization of the wound with *fuming Nitric acid* applied by the attending physician will probably be the immediate treatment.

Other domestic or wild animals, too, may spread rabies through bites; for instance, cats, cows, horses, swine, squirrels or coyotes. To prevent rabies after an animal bite the wound has to be washed to remove the saliva. Hold it under a running tap. Dry it with clean and sterile gauze; apply tincture of iodine, let it dry and bandage as you do other wounds. Then notify your doctor and ask for further advice. Head and neck wounds are the most dangerous to humans.

### **Foreign Bodies in the Eye**

Warn the victim not to rub the eye if a cinder, particle of dirt or any other foreign body has lodged in it, even though it causes much distress. Such a particle may lodge in the skin under the lid, or be imbedded in the outer tissues of the eye-ball.

To remove the foreign body, grasp the lashes of the upper lid and pull out and down over the lower lid and then release. This will give the tears a better chance to wash out the foreign particle. Should this treatment not be effective, flush the eye with clean water. A foreign body located under the lid may be easily removed with a cotton applicator, clean tissue, or edge of clean handkerchief. If, however, it is imbedded in the cornea, great care must be exercised not to injure the delicate tissues. The safest thing to do in such a case is to refer the patient to a doctor.

More serious still is the case when the eye has been wounded by a splinter of glass, metal or wood, or by a particle blown into it by air rifle or other force. Get medical aid at once.

Chemical burns, such as those due to lime, lye, acids, or other

chemicals, should be quickly treated by flushing the affected part with clean water. Meanwhile notify your doctor of what has happened and ask him to call at once.

### **"Black Eye"**

A blow or a collision with a heavy object may result in the appearance of a "black eye," a so-called "shiner." Cold applications on the eye may be used from time to time for twenty-four to thirty-six hours. After that use warm compresses. The following prescription will also prove helpful:

1. Anoint the skin around the eye with lanolin.
2. Apply hot compresses of Epsom salts (1 tablespoon to 1 pint of water) every ten minutes.
3. Apply cool compresses of sodium bicarbonate (1 teaspoonful to 1 pint of water) every five minutes.
4. Eyewash with an eyecup.

### **Foreign Body in Nose or Ear**

A young child playing with small objects, may poke them into his nose or ear so far that it may be difficult to extract them by ordinary means. To remove a pea bean, marble or coin from the nose, encourage the youngster to blow his nose. If the object is lodged in the ear, try to syringe it out. If either is not successful you will have to get a doctor to attend to it.

### **Foreign Body Swallowed**

Do not give a laxative if a sharp article like a pin, hairpin, piece of broken glass or other pointed object has been swallowed by either child or adult. If it does not pass off by itself, it may have to be removed by surgical means. The physician will decide this.

### **Artificial Respiration**

Four kinds of accidents cause stoppage of breathing: drowning, asphyxiation by poisonous gases, electric shock and smothering (choking). Breathing can be restored artificially by

alternately compressing the lungs and releasing the pressure, thus causing the air to flow out and in. The Prone Pressure Method is recognized as the most efficient and safest method. If you have taken a first-aid course you will be familiar with the proceedings. If not, keep a first-aid textbook or pamphlet on hand for all eventualities.

A *Standard Technique* of applying prone pressure was approved in 1927 by the following organizations: Americab Gas Association; American Red Cross; American Telephone and Telegraph Company; Bethlehem Steel Corporation; National Electric Light Association; National Safety Council; Bureau of Surgery, Navy Department; Office of the Surgeon General, War Department; U. S. Bureau of Mines; U. S. Bureau of Standards; and U. S. Public Health Service.

While artificial respiration is given, a physician should be called to take charge of the case.

1. Lay the victim on his belly, one arm extended directly overhead, the other arm bent at elbow and with the face turned outward and resting on arm or forearm, so that the nose and mouth are free for breathing.

2. Kneel, straddling the patient's thighs with your knees placed at such a distance from the hip bones as will allow you to assume the position shown in the illustration. Place the palms of the hands on the small of the back with fingers resting on the ribs, the little finger just touching the lowest rib, with the thumb and fingers in a natural position, and the tips of the fingers just out of sight.

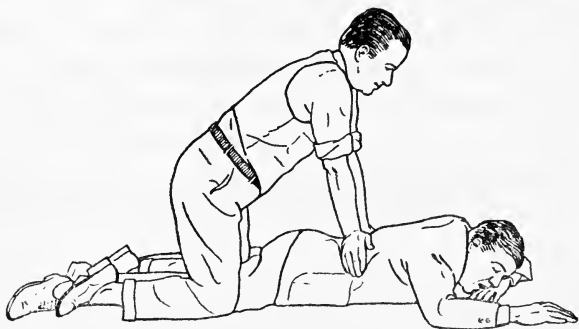
3. With arms held straight, swing forward slowly, so that the weight of your body is gradually brought to bear upon the patient. The shoulder should be directly over the heel of the hand at the end of the forward swing. Do not bend your elbows. This operation should take about 2 seconds.

4. Now immediately swing backward, so as to remove the pressure completely.

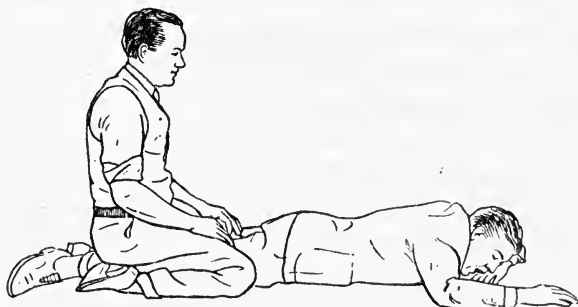
5. After 2 seconds, swing forward again. Thus repeat deliberately 12 to 15 times a minute the double movement of com-



Position I



Position II



Position III

*(Courtesy Metropolitan Life Insurance Co.)*

The prone pressure method of artificial respiration.

pression and release, a complete respiration in 4 to 5 seconds.

6. Continue artificial respiration without interruption until natural breathing is restored, if necessary 4 hours or longer, or until a physician declares that the patient is dead.

7. As soon as this artificial respiration has been started and while it is being continued, an assistant should loosen any tight clothing about the patient's neck, chest, or waist. *Keep the patient warm.* Do not give any liquids whatsoever by mouth until the patient is fully conscious, since he is unable to swallow.

8. To avoid strain on the heart when the patient revives, he should be kept lying down and not allowed to stand or sit up. If the doctor has not arrived by the time the patient has revived, he should be given some stimulant, such as one teaspoonful of aromatic spirits of ammonia in a small glass of water, or a hot drink of coffee or tea. Again, the patient should be kept warm.

9. Resuscitation should be carried on at the nearest possible point to where the patient has received his injuries. He should not be moved from this point until he is breathing normally of his own volition and then moved only in a lying position. Should it be necessary, owing to extreme weather conditions, or for other reasons, to move the patient before he is breathing normally, resuscitation should be carried on during the time that he is being moved.

10. A brief return to natural respiration is not a certain indication for stopping resuscitation. Not infrequently, the patient, after a temporary recovery of respiration, stops breathing again. The patient must be watched and if natural breathing stops, artificial respiration should be resumed at once.

11. In carrying out resuscitation it may be necessary to change the operator. This change must be made without losing the rhythm of respiration. By this procedure no confusion results at the time of change of operator and a regular rhythm is kept up.

### Fractures and Dislocations

A fracture, or a broken bone, when there is no break in the skin, is a simple fracture. When there is a wound extending from the fracture to the surface of the skin, the injury is a compound fracture. Take particular care in giving first aid to such a victim, for improper handling can do much harm and increase the danger of shock.

In dislocations one of the bones is forced out of its proper place in a joint and does not return to position. The appearance of the joint differs from the sound one on the other side. There is pain and swelling.

When in doubt whether the injury is a fracture or a dislocation, treat it as a fracture. Send for a doctor without delay. Keep the victim lying down and warm to prevent shock. If there is bleeding, cover the wound with a sterile gauze dressing. In case it is necessary to move the victim, you will have to make a splint for the injured limb to prevent the broken ends from moving about and causing more injury.

### Splints

1. They must be rigid enough to prevent movement of bones at site of fracture.
2. They should be long enough to fix the joint above and below the fracture.
3. They should be as wide as, or wider than, the limb for which they are intended.
4. The surface of the splint should be padded to fill the hollows and protect bony points.
5. Splints should be firmly applied and held in place by bandages but should not interfere with the circulation.

### Bandages

The most useful of bandages in first-aid work is the triangular bandage. You can use unbleached muslin or tear an old

sheet to the size of the bandage, which is about 36 inches long on the short side and 51 inches on the diagonal. This triangle can also be used as a sling or as a tourniquet.

For smaller wounds the roller bandage obtainable at every drug store will do. The gauze roller bandage is the best of these as it is elastic and fits the part to be bandaged more easily.

### **Sprains, Strains and Bruises**

In sprains the bones are thrown out of place similarly as in a dislocation, but they spring back into place by themselves. Sprains are caused by twisting or violent stretching of a joint, such as turning an ankle.

#### **First Aid**

Make the patient lie down and raise the injured joint with a sofa cushion or two, so that it will get less blood. Apply cold compresses or ice packs for several hours. Then bandage fairly tight to prevent motion. Loosen the bandage if the swelling increases.

#### **Strains**

In a strain the muscles are injured and not the ligaments as is the case in a sprain. To relieve the pain put the injured limb to rest. Use a hot water bottle or an electric pad to treat the injury. In some cases light massage (rubbing the limb upward toward the body) is helpful. If that does not help, consult a physician.

#### **Bruises**

A bruise is an injury caused by a fall or blow. There is no wound, the skin is not broken, but the tissues under the skin are injured, resulting in the breaking of a small blood vessel, which causes black and blue marks outside. Wring out a compress in cold water and apply to the bruise.



**Poison Ivy, Oak, and Sumac**

Learn to recognize these three plants on first sight and beware of coming in contact with any of them. If, nevertheless, you have been exposed to one or the other, wash with soap and water to prevent poisoning. Some people are more allergic to these plants and should be particularly careful in avoiding exposure.

*Treatment.* (1) Make a paste by heating soap with a little water until it is about the consistency of lard. Apply thickly over the exposed parts. (2) Soak a compress in cold baking soda or Epsom salts. Keep the compress wet. (3) Calamine lotion. Ask the druggist to add phenol or a 5% solution of ferric chloride, apply it with a cotton sponge and allow it to dry on the skin. In case the skin becomes discolored, remove the stains with lemon juice.

**FIRST-AID QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. How would you define first aid?
2. What would you do first in case you have to render first aid to an injured person?
3. What emergency treatment would you apply?
4. Would you make the patient sit up?
5. How would you keep the patient warm?
6. If the patient is conscious what stimulants would you give him?
7. Would you give any stimulants to an unconscious person?
8. What would you do to stop bleeding?
9. Do you know where the six pressure points are?
10. How would you treat a wound after it has stopped bleeding?
11. What is artificial respiration?
12. Do you know how to apply the Prone Pressure Method?

**SUGGESTED READING**

Armstrong, Donald B. and Hallock, Grace T., *What to do Until the Doctor Comes*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1944, \$1.00.

*American Red Cross First-Aid Textbook*, The Blakiston Company, Philadelphia, 60 cents.

American Red Cross Textbook on *Red Cross Home Nursing*, The Blakiston Company, Philadelphia.

The American National Red Cross, *Preventing Accidents in Our Homes and on Our Farms*, Washington, D. C. (free pamphlet).

Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, New York, *First Aid*, (free pamphlet).

United States Public Health Service, Washington, D. C., *Until the Doctor Comes*, Government Printing Office, 15 cents.

Norlin, Elinor E. and Donaldson Bessie M., *Everyday Nursing for the Everyday Home*, Macmillan Company, New York, 1943.

## Education for Safe Living

### The Sad Story of Rosalyn

*To Be Read to the Child Who Likes to Play with Matches*

**I**T ALMOST makes me cry to tell  
What foolish Rosalyn befell.  
Mamma and Dad went out one day  
And left her all alone to play;

Now, on the table close at hand  
A box of matches chanced to stand;  
And kind Mamma and Dad had told her  
That, if she touched them, they would scold her.  
But Rosalyn said: 'Oh, what a pity!  
For, when they burn, it is so pretty;  
They crackle so, and spit, and flame;  
Mamma, too, often does the same.'

The pussy-cats heard this,  
And they began to hiss,  
And stretch their claws  
And raise their paws;  
'Me-ow,' they said, 'me-ow, me-o,  
You'll burn to death, if you do so.'

But Rosalyn would not take advice;  
She lit a match—it was no nice!  
It crackled so, it burned so clear.  
Because Mamma could not see her,  
She jumped for joy and ran about  
And was too pleased to put it out.

The pussy-cats saw this,  
And said: 'Oh, naughty, naughty Miss!  
And stretched their claws  
And raised their paws;  
'Tis very, very wrong you know, ...  
You will be burnt, if you do so, ...  
Me-ow, me-o, me-ow, meow.'

And then! Oh, what a dreadful thing!  
The fire has caught her apron string!  
Her apron burns, her arms, her hair!  
She burns all over, everywhere!  
Then how the pussy-cats did mew;  
What else, poor pussies, could they do?  
They screamed for help—'twas all in vain!  
So then, they said: 'We'll scream again;  
Make haste, make haste! me-ow, me-o,  
She'll burn to death; we told her so.'

So she was burnt with all her clothes,  
And arms, and hands, and eyes and nose;  
'Til she had nothing more to lose  
Except her little scarlet shoes;  
And nothing else but these were found  
Among her ashes on the ground.

And when the good cats sat beside  
The smoking ashes, how they cried!

'Me-ow, me-o, me-ow, me-o,  
What will Mamma and Daddy do?'  
Their tears ran down their cheeks so fast,  
They made a little pond at last.

*(With apologies to Dr. Heinrich Hoffman.)*

### **Told by a Tongue of Flame\***

*(A Fire Prevention Fantasy)*

Sitting alone last night before the hearth, I had a dream; and a very extraordinary dream it was! I dreamed—yes!—I dreamed that the Fire, crackling there on its two enormous andirons, talked to me.

It was late and, tired of reading, I had laid down my book, tossed a fresh log and curled up in my chair, prepared to surrender myself to those stray thoughts that sometimes come in the lengthening hours. How long I sat dreaming I don't know, but presently, as though from a very great distance, I heard a voice. It was saying something that sounded like "Thank you," but so faint was it, so whisper-like, that I thought I must have imagined it.

Then it came again; this time a trifle louder. Still believing that I fancied rather than heard a voice, since no one else was in the room, I said nothing. A third time the words came and now they were distinct, unmistakable. They seemed to issue from the depths of the fireplace, but that, I knew, was absurd; no one could possibly be hidden in there, big as it was, for the heat would have been unbearable. However, I could see no harm in replying, so I inquired: "Thank you? Thank you for what?"

"For that juicy log you just gave me. It kept me alive." It was the same voice and I knew then that it must be the Fire speaking!

\* Copyrighted and published by The National Board of Fire Underwriters, 85 John Street, New York.

(This little story can be read aloud to children in 10 minutes.)

"You're quite welcome," I replied in as matter-of-fact a tone as I could command; "I'm sure I didn't want you to die."

"Didn't you?" There was a pause. Afterwards the Fire continued: "But sometimes, you know, men do want me to die."

"But that's only when you're doing harm and now you're doing good—much good."

The Fire sighed audibly; then in an outburst of passion: "But I do want to be good always. For numberless centuries, now, I've wished to do only good to men, but, but . . ." The words trailed off and I couldn't catch the rest.

After an interval I asked: "If you want so much to do only good, why don't you? I'm sure the world would be a much safer and happier place to live in."

The Fire's next remarks startled me again. "Have you ever heard," it asked, "of a man named Stevenson—Robert Louis Stevenson?"

"The author?" I said.

"Yes," it said, "the author. Well, this man Stevenson wrote a story called 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,' remember? It seemed they were both the same man, only he had two sides of personality, one very good, very helpful to mankind, the other very bad, doing nothing but evil."

"Yes," I declared, "everybody knows the story."

"Alas!" cried the Fire. "I'm like the man in that story, and yet it is really not my fault! You"—the Fire spluttered and flared up ominously—"you and all your fellow-men, for countless thousands of years, have made me so."

Of course, I was taken aback. I couldn't just then, find words; besides, I reasoned quickly, it was, after all, nothing more than the plain truth that the Fire had hurled at me.

"Please don't be angry," pleaded the Fire, subsiding; "I didn't mean to be rude, only . . . only I feel it so deeply, and I want you and all men to know it. It's hard sometimes for me to bear the blame for all the crimes that *you* have committed in my name!"

This was a little too much for me, and I protested my innocence; whereupon the Fire went on:

"No, you're not to blame, perhaps; not you, personally. I am speaking of many of your fellows, those alive today and those that lived generations ago, when the world, though younger, was neither better nor worse . . . Suppose you give me that stout log in the basket over there to keep me going and I'll tell you a little story."

"All right," said I and rose to do as it had bidden. Then I resumed my chair and waited.

"Of course," began the Fire, "I was old long ago before men such as you had come to dwell on the earth. In fact, I played a large part in bringing this very world into being. In the beginning I was nearly all there was.

"Ages dragged by, and I began to die out, slowly, slowly, but certainly, and then the hard rock and earth cooled, and oceans formed out of the dropping steam, and there was air. Life could be supported, finally, and life came—plants and tiny primitive moving things.

"Inside the earth, however, I continued to burn fiercely—and to this very day—and bursting through a crust of earth, occasionally, I would ignite this plant life, presently grown into vast forests. Sometimes, too, the great incandescent sun would set me going in the dry thickets.

"Yet more ages passed, and one day—I shall never forget it—as I was burning my way through some dense undergrowth, I came fully upon a creature who looked not unlike you. He was as much astonished as I, and in fact he took to his heels at once, uttering terrified cries. However, he was inquisitive, and every now and then, as he ran, he glanced over his shoulder to look, wide-eyed at me.

"Soon I saw him slow up, turn, and retrace his steps to an old tree stump that I was licking. For a long time he stood gazing down at me, studying me intently. Suddenly he seized his flint hatchet, chopped out a piece of the trunk and putting it—and me—into a large seashell which he had found at his feet, carried

me to a kind of hut of reeds and deposited me on the dirt floor where I continued to smoulder dully.

"There were other occupants. One was a woman—as I had come to know—and there were also some little people, children, running about. All were afraid of me at first, and backed away into a far corner. But the man motioned to them to return and, their curiosity overcoming their fear, they began to edge up closer. It was cold outside and when they felt my warmth, they grunted with satisfaction. Presently the man went out and came back with two or three chunks of wood, which he gave me, at the same time fanning me into a flame.

"From that day forth I lived with them constantly, kept them warm and cooked their food. They grew used to me—and then the trouble started. When they first took me to their home, they kept me in the center of the floor, away from the walls of their dwelling, but one day, not realizing what they did, they allowed me to burn over too far, and in the fraction of a second I had started to climb up the sides of the hut. Fortunately, the man and his family rushed outside and saved themselves. Of their home, though, nothing was left; it was dry, and I just couldn't help devouring it to the last reed.

"Naturally, they were alarmed and very much saddened over the loss of their comfortable dwelling; and when they built again, you may be sure, they dug a little pit for me in the earth—since having grown used to me, they couldn't do without me—and there they kept me as long as they lived, while I served them faithfully and gave them no more trouble.

The Fire's voice grew a bit unsteady. So interested was I in its narrative that I had neglected to feed it; so now I heaped on more wood. In a short time the voice regained its strength, and the Fire took up its tale once more:

"Last night," the Fire resumed, "was, if I remember rightly, the millionth anniversary of that happening I have just related; and last night I was burning cheerily on the hearth of a friend of yours, a Mr. O. Howe Careless, and the . . ."

"What!" I broke in, "has Careless been burned out?"



"Yes," replied the Fire wearily, "their beautiful home was burned to the ground. But let me finish. I was, as I said, burning on his hearth, as I am burning now on yours. Mr. and Mrs. Careless, with their two children, sat before me; they were listening, I think, to the radio. Soon the maid called them to dinner, and they left me all alone and quite unguarded.

"Instead of dying out, as I thought I should, a wind came down the chimney behind me, setting me going briskly, and my burning embers began to pop out into the room. At length one, carrying a bit of me, dropped on a soft, fuzzy rug, and I began to burn there very quietly. Unnoticed, I continued to smoulder until another gust from the chimney fanned me into a flame. Hearing me crackle, the family rushed in and tried to kill me, but I was too strong for them and so they called the fire department. By that time, though, I had grown so big that about all the firemen could do—the family having escaped my clutches—was to save some old pieces of furniture. I consumed, I'm sorry to say, the whole house, except for the foundation and the chimney, which I couldn't get my teeth into, though I licked them black with my tongue."

"Oh, how unfortunate for poor Careless," I exclaimed.

"Unfortunate? What do you mean 'unfortunate?' Wherever I, Fire, am concerned, there is no such thing as fortune, good or bad, no such thing as luck. I do what I must do, what I can't help doing—when men afford me opportunity. A million years ago, by their neglect of me, they gave me no alternative but to turn on them. Last night, in that modern house, it was the same . . . I can't help myself; they leave so many ways of escape open to me.

"Oh! If men would only learn to guard me and keep me in the place where I belong! A million years of living have taught them much, but still they haven't learned this one simple thing—to handle me with care."

The Fire, I saw, was burning lower and lower and seemed on the verge of dying out. It was almost morning and so I decided to let it perish.

"Will it?" I ventured, "will it be so always? Will men never learn to employ you, Fire, as you should be employed, as you were meant to be employed?"

"Ah," sighed the Fire, as it gave one last flicker, "that is a question which only you and your fellows can answer."

### **No Safe Fireworks\***

*By Col. John Stilwell*

George Washington, gazing over the camp fires of Valley Forge, must have sorrowed over the loss of precious life that was the cost of America's struggle for freedom.

But what would George Washington think today if he could witness the death and destruction in which his country indulges annually to celebrate its independence?

To commemorate the Fourth of July, a date when freedom was won and bloodshed ended, we have built a memorial to death in a blaze of pinwheels and skyrockets, a bedlam of firecrackers and bombs.

More American lives have been lost from fireworks alone in celebrating our independence than were sacrificed to acquire it in the Revolutionary War.

The Revolutionary War cost 4,044 lives. During the 30 years from 1900 to 1930, fireworks killed 4,290 Americans. Six thousand were listed as injured in the Revolutionary War. Ninety-six thousand were injured by fireworks in the same 30-year period.

And these figures do not include many deaths which occurred long after the Fourth from injuries suffered on that day.

The fireworks toll has been dropping since 1930, thanks to a growing public reaction against celebrating the most significant event in our history with death and suffering. Yet there still are lives needlessly lost and thousands blinded, maimed or painfully burned.

Exact statistics in fireworks accidents are difficult to obtain.

\* *The Crippled Child*, Elyria, Ohio.

Except for deaths, no governmental agency requires reports on such mishaps. However, the problem is studied each year by the American Medical Association, and its records, compiled from hospital reports and newspaper accounts, are the best available.

The Association's study shows that there were 13 deaths in 1939 which were directly attributable to fireworks. This figure is five less than the 1938 toll. For the last three years, the chief causes of death have been mutilations received by men and boys from home-made explosives, and burns to little girls when their flimsy summer dresses were ignited by firecrackers or sparklers.

A decrease in all types of injuries was shown by the study and yet more than 5,300 persons suffered burns and lacerations last year, 19 lost vision in one or both eyes, 158 received other eye injuries, 41 lost a finger, hand or other member, and 37 were victims of internal injuries, fractures or other serious accidents.

Although fireworks deaths are decreasing as the result of greater recognition of the danger by individuals and government, and the more common use of tetanus antitoxin in injury cases, it is apparent from these figures that the problem is far from solved. To achieve the ultimate goal of a completely safe and sane Fourth, it is necessary to recognize one fact—that there is no such thing as *safe* fireworks!

Only a complete ban on all types of fireworks, vigorously enforced, can eliminate accidents.

Any restriction on the use of fireworks helps to reduce the hazard, but the only effective procedure is prohibition of sales over a state-wide area.

Municipal control has accomplished good results in many cases, but city enforcement officials usually are faced with the problem of hundreds of roadside stands, which spring up like mushrooms a few days before the Fourth, selling fireworks just outside the city limits and the scope of the ordinance.

**Julie Forgets\****(For grades 5-9)*

BY ERNESTINE AND FLORENCE HORVATH

(This play may be presented, without special permission, by any group interested in the advancement of safety, provided no admission charge is made. Credit should be given the National Safety Council. The play may not be reprinted or presented for profit, however, without special permission.)

## CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

*Julie*—a junior high school pupil. Ordinary attire.

*Peter*—a year younger. Julie's brother. Everyday clothing.

*George*—Peter's chum. Outdoor clothing.

*Mary, Gail, Muriel, Jane, Eileen*—members of Julie's class. Ordinary attire.

SCENE—A large room with two entrances; one, right, leading to an inner hallway with stairs; the other, left, leading to the entrance hallway and front door. A long table, with a telephone, rear. A chair, with a Mexican sombrero perched on top of it, beside the table. A hassock, front, right. A low couch, with cushions, front, left. On the couch, Mexican blankets or serapes, shawls, a basket of artificial fruit, several fans, etc.

## THE PLAY

*(Peter kneels in the middle of the floor, examining a small ladder, of the kitchen variety. His tool box, open, is beside him. Julie, on the couch, is looking over the things there. A shawl and two fans have spilled to the floor.)*

PETER: There, I guess this will be safe now. Better give the nails one more going over, though. *(Looks for hammer.)* Oh, Julie—dig out my hammer, will you? Those things fell on top.

JULIE *(absorbed)*: Oh—oh—sure, Peter. *(Picks up fan; hands it*

\* From SAFETY EDUCATION Magazine, October, 1944, National Safety Council, 20 North Wacker Drive, Chicago 6, Illinois.

to him without looking. Peter takes it in same manner; lifts it; notices error.)

PETER: Julie! The hammer I said!

JULIE (still absorbed): Oh—the—hammer. (Holds out another fan.)

PETER: Julie!

(Julie starts. Realizes her mistake.)

JULIE: I—I—

PETER: It's the rehearsal of that fiesta! You can't think of anything else! (Throws down fan.)

JULIE: I can, too! (Picks up shawl; finds hammer.) And—and here's your old hammer. (Gives it to him.)

PETER (overly polite): You're much, much too kind! (Taking it.) You've certainly given me a lot of help in fixing this ladder. (Hammering.) Suppose Mother had gotten a broken wrist (Hammer) or a sprained ankle (Hammer) or a hurt back (Hammer)—

JULIE (hands over ears): I have a headache!

PETER (stopping): We were supposed to help in fixing this ladder. You might have held it—or handed me the tools—or something!

JULIE: You did a good job all by yourself. And oh! Peter! Have you seen it? The real Mexican guitar, I mean. It's inlaid with mother-of-pearl—and oh! it's lovely! Muriel's father is letting us use it in the fiesta!

PETER: Where is it?

JULIE: Out there (Indicating, right) on the table beside the back stairs. Look at it.

(Peter goes, right. Looks off.)

PETER (awed): Say, that IS a beauty! (Eagerly.) Think Muriel's father would lend it to our club next month? We're having a cowboy show, and . . .

JULIE (indignantly): I should say not! You boys wouldn't be careful enough! It's valuable!

PETER (regretfully): Guess we'll have to use my old moth-eaten guitar, then.

JULIE: It must be a new kind of moth that eats guitars! By the way, Peter, aren't you going out? The rehearsal begins at three, and you promised—(*Telephone rings.*) That must be one of the girls now! (*Goes to phone.*)

(*During the following conversation, Peter goes off, right, taking ladder; returns instantly for tools; goes off again; sets up a rather loud hammering.*)

JULIE (*into phone*): Hello. Oh—is this Eileen? Yes, everyone's coming to my house at three. What's that? Oh—I didn't realize it was so late myself! (*Peter's hammering startles her.*) What did you say, Eileen? Yes—that's right. We're going to rehearse the songs and dances. I even wheedled Mother into going out, so we could have the place to ourselves. And Peter is going—(*Peter's hammering gets louder. Julie calls, off, to him: "Peter please stop pounding!" He appears at once in doorway, right, hands on hips, expression indignant. As she returns to her telephone conversation, a smile suddenly appears on his face. He hurries off, right. There is no hammering for the rest of Julie's talk.*)

JULIE (*into phone*): I'm sorry, Eileen. Yes, Peter was hammering. But he's going right out. And—oh, Eileen, it's lucky I'm in charge of properties! I persuaded Muriel to get her father to lend us his Mexican guitar. (*An impressive pause.*) That's it—the beautiful, valuable one! But we must be very, very careful of it! (*Doorbell rings.*) Someone's here already! Come right over, Eileen. Goodbye. (*Hurries off, left, to open door. Hammering is resumed, right. Re-enter Julie, left, followed by George.*)

GEORGE: Peter's due for football practice. Thought I'd stop by and call for him.

JULIE: Thank goodness. I was afraid he'd hammer right through rehearsal. (*As George looks blank.*) You know—the rehearsal of our fiesta.

GEORGE: Oh. *That's* what all this means. (*Indicating Mexican objects.*)

(Julie goes, right. George wanders to couch. Picks up and examines objects. Hammering again ceases.)

JULIE (after pause, re-entering with Peter): And it's later than I thought—and we couldn't have that din, anyway—and here's George, waiting for you.

PETER: Hi, George! Be with you in a few minutes—as soon as I finish my job. (Starts off.)

JULIE: Peter! (He turns.) What job? We need the place for rehearsal right now!

PETER (returning): You may or may not recall that you coaxed Mother into going out by promising to help me mend two things—the ladder and that loose step.

JULIE (helplessly): It's later than I thought. I—I'll help you mend the step tomorrow.

PETER: The step IS mended—

JULIE (happily): Oh, Peter!

PETER: —but my tools are all about on the floor—

JULIE (delightedly): Is that all? You're off for football practice, then! (Gets his cap from hall, left; puts it on backward; pushes him toward door.) I'll pick up those tools!

PETER (holding back): Wait, now—

GEORGE: Come on, Peter! She'll do it!

PETER (doubtfully): Putting away the tools is part of a safe job.

JULIE: I'll do it. I'll REALLY do it!

GEORGE: We could get in some *extra* practice!

PETER (yielding): Promise to do it right away—before you forget, Julie?

JULIE: Yes, yes—Y-E-S!

GEORGE: Let's go.

PETER: Come on! (They go.)

JULIE (sighing): Thank goodness! Now (Counting on fingers.) first the tools! (Starts, right. Stops.) It won't take a second to put the fruit for the fruit vendor over there. (Puts basket of fruit on hassock.) And this blanket goes with Don Pedro's hat. (Puts

*blanket with sombrero on chair, rear.*) Then there's the blanket for the story-teller. (*Returns to couch; places blanket or serape at very end.*) These are the shawls for Mary and me. Yes, everything is ready. Now—to pick up the tools. (*Starts, right. Doorbell rings. Looks at tools, off. Doorbell rings again.*) I'll do it after I let them in!

(*Goes, left. Voices. Re-enters with Mary, Gail, Muriel and Jane, all talking excitedly.*)

JULIE (*holding up hand*): Girls! (*All stop.*) Make yourselves at home, please. I'll be right with you. (*Starts to go.*)

MARY: Why, Julie! (*She turns, Mary points about.*) Where did you get all those things? Fans—shawls—serapes—fruit—

JULIE (*happily*): That's not all. Muriel, here, (*Taking her hand*) brought over her father's Mexican guitar this morning! It's on the table out there (*Indicating, right.*)

GAIL (*as others exclaim*): Don Pedro, who plays the guitar, would get acquainted with it. (*Strikes a pose; starts, right.*)

JULIE (*nervously*): Later on, Gail. We must be awfully careful. You know how much Muriel's dad thinks of it.

MURIEL: I should say he does!

GAIL: Don't worry. Nothing will happen to it. (*Returns.*)

JANE: Speaking of rehearsals—when do we begin?

JULIE: There was something I had to do—(*Doorbell rings.*) Oh, that's Eileen! (*Goes.*)

GAIL (*whispering*): Listen—everyone. Let's serenade Eileen! (*Stands pretending to play imaginary guitar. Others group about, singing "Juanita" or "La Paloma." Enter Julie and Eileen, surprised. Stand until song is ended.*)

EILEEN (*applauding*): Very good, *amigas!*

GAIL: It would have been better with the real guitar. I'll get—

JULIE: Don't get it yet, Gail!

GAIL: I've never seen you so worried about anything, Julie.

MURIEL: Maybe it's because Dad put *all* responsibility on her!

MARY: If we don't start the rehearsal we'll NEVER see it!

EILEEN: Correct! Julie—why, what's the matter?



JANE: Still worrying about the guitar?

JULIE (*embarrassed, as all laugh*): No—there was something else—I've forgotten—

EILEEN: *Forget* everything else!

GAIL: Don Pedro agrees. (*Puts on sombrero and serape.*)

EILEEN: Now—this is the market place. (*Indicating room.*) The story teller—that's Muriel—sits here (*Indicating front, left*) under a tree, spinning a story to a listener—that's Jane. The fruit vendor—that's myself—sits over here, selling bananas, apples, papayas, and oranges. (*Goes to hassock.*) Two girls walk along slowly. Mary and Julie, take your shawls and fans. (*They do so.*) There is a distant sound of music. Everyone looks up. Heels and toes begin to tap. And—

GAIL: And enter Don Pedro—singing and playing! As he stands, everyone gets up and dances—for it is the beginning of the fiesta!

EILEEN: Right! Now—take places, everyone! (*They do so.*)

GAIL: Where shall I enter? Oh—from there, of course (*Points right*)—with the guitar! (*Goes.*)

EILEEN: Remember, everyone—stop whatever you're doing and look up eagerly when you hear Don Pedro! (*All nod.*) Let's go!

(*Julie and Mary stroll forward slowly. Muriel gestures and moves lips. Eileen holds out fruit. Presently, voice of Don Pedro, Gail heard in first notes of any Mexican melody or folk tune. All look up, rapt, intent. There is a loud crash, followed by a cry from Gail.*)

JULIE (*after a moment*): W-what is it? (*Hurries, right. Others look at one another. A startled shriek from Julie. All scramble up.*)

JULIE (*moaning*): Oh—Gail!

GAIL (*half weeping*): Julie—it's broken!

GIRLS: She's broken a bone! Let's call a doctor! Let's help!

EILEEN (*stopping them*): Wait! Let Julie handle this!

(*Pause. Enter Julie. All rush to her.*)

ALL: Is it her arm? Is she badly hurt?

JULIE (*sitting down*): It isn't—it isn't—(*Sobs.*)

MARY: Look! (*All look, right. Enter Gail, unhurt.*)

ALL: Gail! You're not—

GAIL (*pointing back*): There's the damage!

JANE (*looking*): The guitar!

ALL: The guitar!

GAIL (*brushing herself off*): There were some things on the floor. I didn't see them. When I started to enter—(*Waves hands.*)

MURIEL: When Dad hears THIS! (*Shakes head. Julie sobs.*)

EILEEN: It wasn't *your* fault, Julie!

JULIE: It—was. I was—supposed to—pick up—those tools! It was *all* my fault! (*Sobs more loudly. Others exchange glances.*)

GAIL: Anyway, *I'm* glad only the guitar was hurt! (*Others nod.*)

MURIEL: Yes. But the sooner I tell Dad, the better *I'll* feel! I'll try—to make him understand, Julie. (*Hesitates; goes.*)

GAIL: Let's go with Muriel, everybody. Maybe—we can have the rehearsal at my house next time. (*All look at Julie. Go.*)

(*Pause. Julie sobs. Enter Peter, whistling. Stops.*)

PETER: Julie! What's wrong? Where's everybody?

JULIE: Oh, Peter! The tools—I left them—Gail fell—

PETER (*slowly*): I *wanted* to finish my job! Was Gail badly hurt?

JULIE (*drying eyes*): Thank goodness, no! But she might have been! And Peter! The guitar! It's smashed! (*Waves, right.*)

PETER: Smashed? (*Goes to look.*) Smashed is right! (*Shakes head.*)

JULIE: I'm so ashamed! (*Hangs head.*) The girls will never forgive me. They—won't even come here to rehearse any more.

PETER: Can you blame them?

JULIE (*remorsefully*): No. And Muriel's father—(*Sobs again.*)

PETER: Muriel's father? (*Stops.*) That was *MY* old guitar! (*Julie looks up.*) I hid the good one in my room while you were phoning.

JULIE (*looking up*): Peter! *YOUR* old guitar! But why—?

PETER: You hadn't helped me and—did no one notice my trick?

JULIE: No! Oh, Peter! You're wonderful! Your joke saved us!

PETER (*laughing*): The joke is on *me*! Let's rush over to Muriel—

JULIE (*excitedly*): Let's! (*Stops.*) But first—(*Points, right. Peter grins, nods.*) Now I have a little idea of what falls can do. It might have been Gail's arm or back that was broken! I'll never, *never* forget what falls can do—even if the girls forgive—this! I'll remember that falls break bones as well as guitars!

PETER: I'll keep the ruins to remind you! Now, let's go—

JULIE: The very second *after* we've finished our job! (*Both go, right.*)

CURTAIN



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