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Start at the Bottom: Your Feet

Let's start at the bottom. How about those feet of yours? Is there not something ludicrous about the discovery, made long ago by physicians, that tens of thousands of lives are dwarfed and twisted by nothing more than bad shoes and bad erect posture? Some years ago I spent much time studying a variety of problems in connection with women's and girls' shoes; and I was dumbfounded at the ignorance and stupidity both in the makers and in the wearers. For a while I thought that the female of the species labored under some special blight. But later my attention was called to the amazing record of the U. S. Army recruits.

Soldiers, of course, must be well shod; for they live on foot and carry burdens of considerable weight. But in what condition do they join the Army? Look at a sample summary. Out of 30,000 men inspected in one district, only 18,000 had good feet. All of the other 12,000 had defects ranging from mere corns and bunions up to deformations of the bones. Out of the same 30,000 only 5,400 had shoes of the correct size and shape. Nearly 7,000 were wear-

ing shoes half a size too small. More than 14,000 were wearing shoes a full size or more too small. And some 3,500 were wearing oversize shoes. Nearly 6,000 suffered from flat foot in a form serious enough to interfere with successful work.

On a still grander scale this picture has been drawn by the Surgeon General's Office, in its famous report on "Defects Found in Drafted Men." Every hospital and most clinics handling nervous breakdowns repeats the scene. More than half of all headaches and indigestions from which women suffer are either caused by or greatly aggravated by bad shoes. I have even heard fairly conservative physicians say that a considerable number of neurasthenias can be traced to the same source.