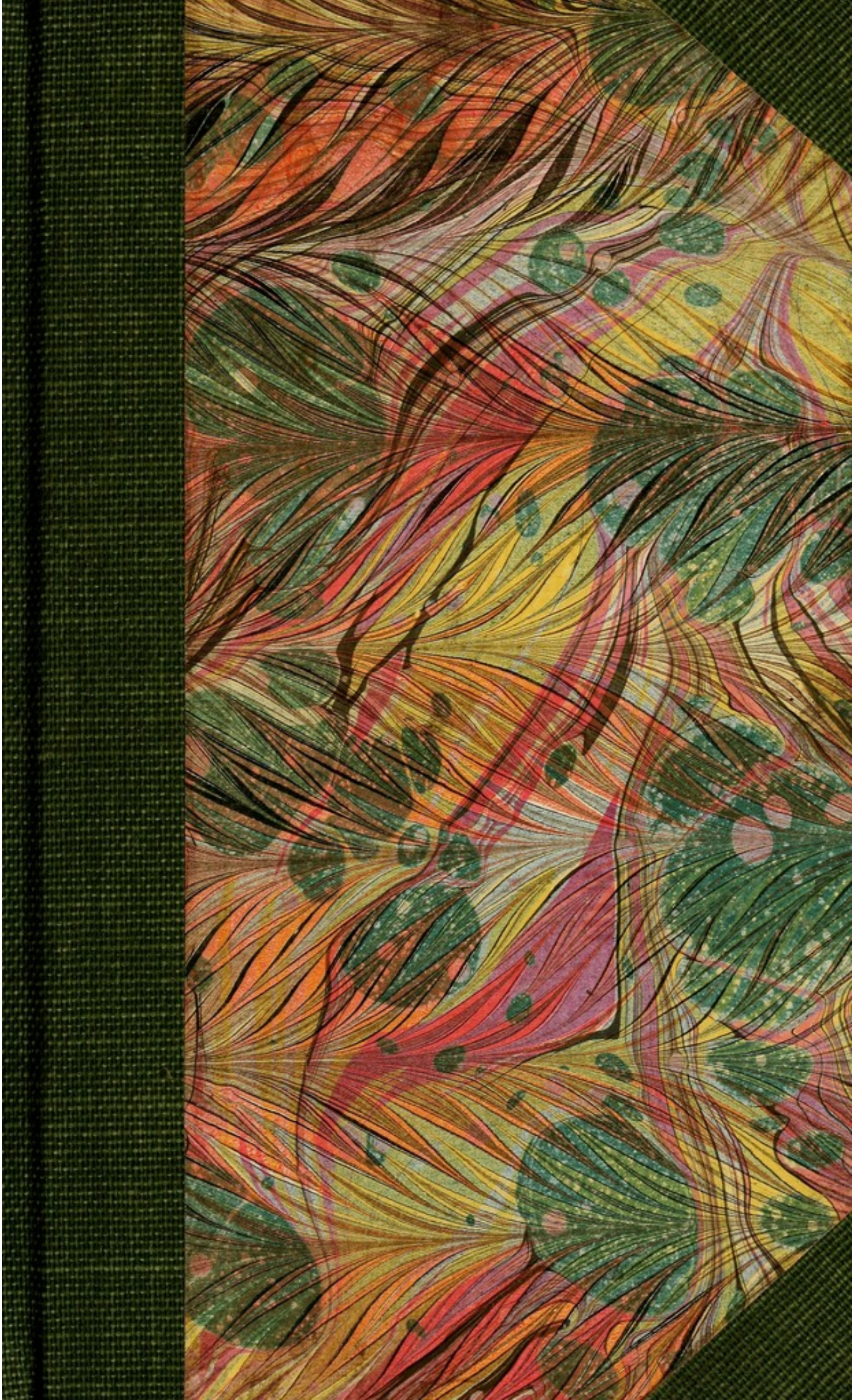
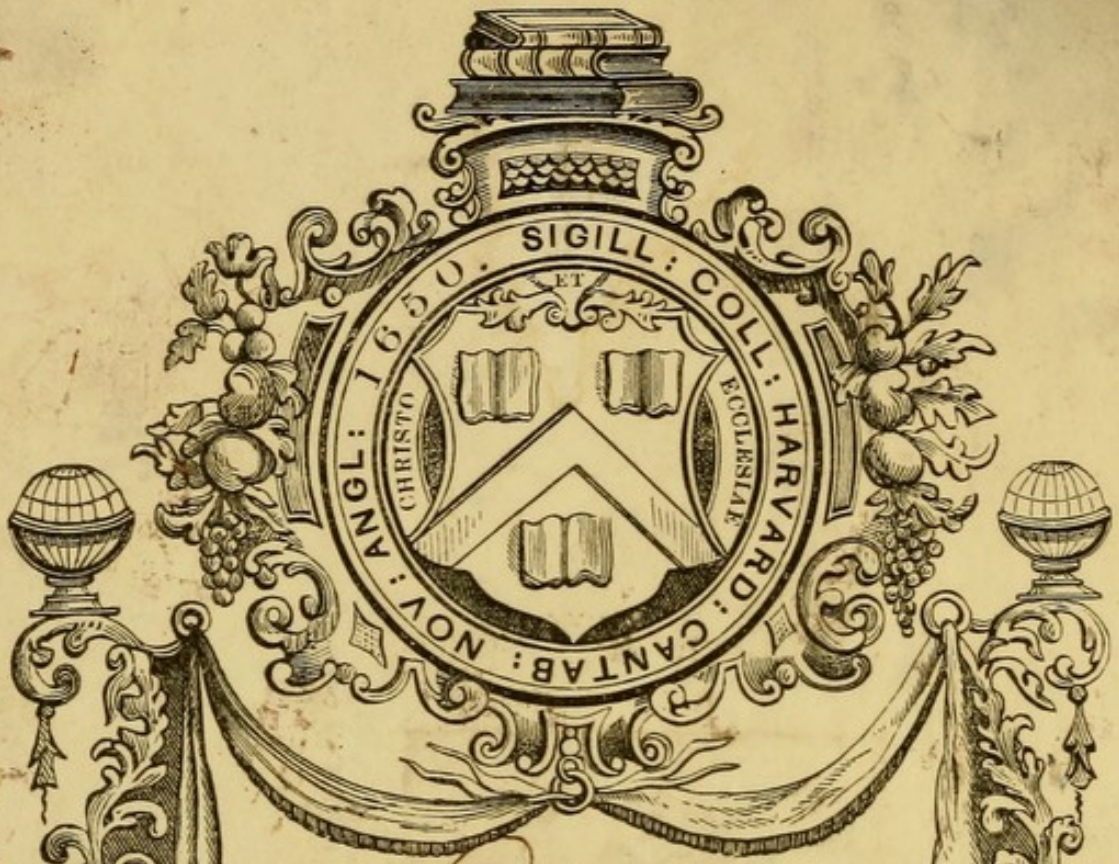
Practical observations on health and long life / by E. Epps.





PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS

ON

HEALTH AND LONG LIFE,

BY

Mrs
E. EPPS.

"Scire vere est scire per causas."

PIPER, STEPHENSON, AND SPENCE,
23, Paternoster Row.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY EDWARD AVERY MITCHENER,
GT. RUSSELL STREET.

CHAPTERS.

PREFACE.

BESIDES the matters strictly medical, which should engage a large portion of the serious thought of every one endowed with *sense*, other points closely connected therewith demand no small share of thought also, as matters without attention to which, medicine cannot have its due effect, and will, in many cases, be altogether useless. True, they are points which, in one way or other, have been for a long period before the mind, and it may be considered that, in relation to them, as in relation to many other subjects, nothing remains to be said which it concerns man to know. But good and useful things cannot be said too often, more especially if they are said at right times, and in the right manner; it is desirable that they be continually sounded in the ears, and dwelt upon till they become a part of the very being; so that man cannot act but in accordance with the doctrines which they support.

The contents of this small volume may be found useful as directing attention, in the simplest manner, to certain truths, and thus as being likely to lead the mind yet further on in the study of many important subjects connected with health, which, more especially at an early period of life, cannot too seriously occupy it.

It is much to be desired that all such matters be regarded as moral and even as religious duties,

and that in this manner the scripture recommendation be carried out, "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Assuredly this can be the case only in conformity with His requirements,—requirements made known through what is called *nature*, or the laws established for the regulation of man's life and conduct, and the want of conformity to which has made and kept him the imperfect being he must, at present, be considered.

That man should live with a view to the enjoyment of life, with a view to the full term of life, and with a view to life beyond the present, because otherwise he is not living as his nature fits him to live, and cannot be happy, are propositions which constitute the subject of all subjects.

A circumstance apparently trifling may sometimes arrest attention, when one more considerable might not have that effect: a little book has frequently become such an agent: and the writer of these pages offers no apology for having nothing particularly new to present. The dictates of an earnest, truth-loving heart must so appeal to others as to waken a degree of interest likely to have beneficial results, and must thus, although probably in a degree infinitesimally attenuated, contribute to the sum of great and notable good conferred on the brotherhood of man.

London, 1855.

CHAPTER FIRST.

INTRODUCTORY.

The clinging to life, a primary instinct in man, is, like every one of his instincts, of great importance to his happiness. The wish to prolong an existence, given, very evidently, with a view to purposes of much utility, and of enjoyment beyond that of the mere animal, should not be considered as beneath the dignity of human nature to acknowledge. On the contrary, it may be regarded as that, which, among other distinctive features, tends to the elevation of the species, and as, therefore, *good*.

It is difficult to imagine the case of an individual wishing the term of his existence shortened: and, when conceived of, it must be so conceived of as attended with circumstances of extreme misery, of insanity, of depravity, or of fanaticism. But, under whatever circumstances occurring, it may be positively affirmed that such a state experienced is a departure from a state of health.

Clinging to life does not necessarily imply horror

at the thought of death; and very much of the horror, so generally felt on the contemplation of this change, is to be attributed to the circumstance, that, from the widely extended development of disease in the human family, and from the fact that many of the habits and conventions of society are detrimental to health, and perilous to life, a premature death is, by most persons, considered as far from improbable. Could there be a certainty of not quitting the present scene of action until worn out with age, and gradually having become indifferent to all that interests and charms, it is certain that the prospect of death would present no terror. This remark must be understood as applying to the mere *act* of dying, irrespective of any state beyond the present: and it is well ascertained that those possessed of the best hopes with respect to that which is *beyond*, are, in many cases, not without fear of death itself. It is true that *an accident* may at any time cause the premature destruction of life; but accidents form exceptional cases, and these are not here under consideration.

The state which should be aimed at, and which both philosophy and christianity indicate, is that of loving and preserving the life of which we have

been rendered so pleasingly conscious; and being ready, at the fitting time, to pass over its boundaries.

In order to attain to such a state, man's physical condition must undergo considerable change,—a change which appears so distant that it is sometimes viewed, by the present generation, as hopeless of attainment, but which, very clearly, can never be attained unless it is hoped for, and unless man, hoping for it, work steadily on, towards its realization.

Closely connected with the tenacity of life is the wish to *enjoy* life, or to be happy: this is, in fact, the great end and aim of all. How deep sunken soever man may be in poverty and in misery, hope of life connected with enjoyment—with the ability to be happy here, even in cases where there is no regard to anything beyond, is the grand solace and stimulus.

This instinct also is *good:* "to enjoy is to obey," is to carry out part of the intention of the Creator; and forms the foundation of all that is noblest and best in the present position of the human being. When an individual loses this instinct, or when it becomes diseased, he loses *motive;* his spirit

sinks: he is not able to fulfil his duties as a member of society, or towards his Creator, who is best served when the creature properly fills up that part, which, as one of the human family, has been allotted to him. Those in whom this instinct is active, and *wisely* active, are recognised as approaching nearest to the perfection of human nature, and most resembling the divine.

To every individual, then, it is a question of great importance how life can be best and longest enjoyed; and so far from being a question to cause shame, it is one to be kept prominently forward. Frequently it must have been remarked that when an object has been ardently desired, that object has been sooner or later attained: for, activity of mind in any one direction is generally rewarded by realization of the object towards which that activity has been directed. Abundant encouragement this in a wise course of labour, and deeply interesting with respect to the point here considered.

Under this view of the subject it becomes evident that man's health and longevity are placed by his Creator to a great extent in his own hands; and while "Unto God the Lord, belong the issues

from death," it depends very much on man himself as to how far the thread of life shall be extended, and what the amount of pleasure and security with which it shall be held.

But it is equally evident that all the proceedings of Deity are characterized by order and harmony: there is no appeal from the laws which he has established: ignorance is no available plea, nor will the keeping of *some* of the requirements be found to exempt man from the necessity of attending to others. In this sense, as in the Biblical sense, "Whoesoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all," that is to say, he must pay the penalty, in suffering and in danger.

The laws regulating the human organism, or the physical laws, are no less stringent than are the *moral* laws. It is vain that the young say, they "did not think;" they were told, indeed, that a "free life" must bring its punishment in a premature old age; but they "did not think about it." They drank, or yielded to other follies whereby they broke the laws; they had their *pleasure:* but the punishment, of one kind or other, as surely came as though they *had* thought. The

fanatical consider that the walls of a Church or of a Chapel will be protection for them against both physical and domestic suffering: "No harm can come of it," they say, "for it is holy ground." But such is not found to be the case; whether they acknowledge it or not, they suffer from the breaking of any physical or moral Law: of this, both in or out of the medical world, ample testimony can be borne.

In order to repair the mischief already done by the infringement of law, man must direct his energies so as, first, to ascertain what are those laws by which his course is to be regulated, and, secondly, how best, in the present state of his being and of society, he can carry out the design of the lawgiver.

Every one's experience furnishes a proof to him that much may be done, both morally and physically, to elevate the human being, and so far to strengthen it and to restore tone to its functions, as to realize somewhat of that "new creature" of which mention is so often made, that "Image of God," in which man was created, and of which he yet evidently, although obscurely, bears the impress.

CHAPTER SECOND.

The Search for Truth.

In his endeavour to become acquainted with the laws by which he is to be guided, man discovers how far he has proceeded on the wrong road, how numerous are the evils of the *past* from which he is suffering, and how much there is to be done in order to his gaining, or to his preserving a moderate degree of health and happiness. He has been infringing the laws from ignorance, but he, nevertheless, pays the penalty; nor is there help to be found for him except from the exercise of his reason—from his earnest application of truth to his own case.

Truths obtained and stored away form *experiences:* experiences must be gained in order to the right understanding of what are the *Laws of God,* or of nature. As every man may be a collecter of truth, every man's experiences are to be respected, and deemed worthy of consideration, since the Creator makes use of no other means whereby to reveal his laws than through the channel of the

human mind. It will be obvious that the wise man's conduct must be marked by an aptitude for investigation, by a standing on the watch for truths—for the experiences of other people, especially of those people who have laboured to make their experiences available for the benefit of mankind by reducing such experiences to *system*.

Reason, which gives man dominion over all things, enables him to take every experience to its right position for forming part of a whole code to guide him in the government of his life: if he make not use of this power, then experiences or truths may become worse than useless to him.

For instance, take the experience that hemlock cures cancer. An individual, perfectly ignorant of medicine, and who had lived all his life in a country village, had, from some channel, gained the knowledge that the weed *hemlock* possesses this remarkable quality: a bad case of cancer presented itself to his notice; he availed himself of his knowledge in order to give relief to a sufferer, and was successful. The grateful patient spread his fame abroad, and the individual became known as possessing a skill in the cure of cancer. Others afflicted with that dreadful disease came to him,

and the idea obtained that he cured all the cases which came before him. He did *not* cure all: perhaps he *cured* the one only: to some he did serious injury: but the one he *did cure*, and that one cure was sufficient to give him the reputation of "*Cancer Doctor.*" But why did he not cure all? Very likely he asked that question of himself: and in all probability he could not answer it. The hemlock was and *is* very valuable *when specific to the state.* In the case of the sufferer of whom mention has been made, it was specific, and a cure was, consequently, effected: in the other cases it was not specific; and fifty more cases might have come before the individual in question, to not one of which hemlock would have been specific. But in the one case a truth had been *rightly* applied—not *wisely* because ignorantly: but *as it happened rightly.* Applying experiences *wisely* can come only of knowledge, and is what men call *science.*

An individual discovered that certain substances worked up together in certain proportions, make a pill which suits his own constitution extremely well. He is a strong man, and can receive what benefit is to be received from the compound, without suffering from those properties which to some

would be perilous. There are others in a condition similar to his own, and these thank him for his pill, making every effort, with himself, to give it notoriety. Others, again, who have been induced to avail themselves of the remedy, obtain indeed the one object which they had sought; but they obtain it at a sacrifice as immense as life is long, and as the absence of suffering and disease is sweet. Still greater and greater becomes the requirement for the fatal compound; loss of power assumes a more marked form every week, till at length the work is completed: diseased and injured conditions are confirmed; and no remedy can avail to restore what once with the aid of *science* might have been restored. Thus again is an experience—a *truth* rendered the means of evil, indirectly of death, because *wisdom* has not guided its application.

To turn from medicine to the diet-table: a common illustration occurs in the instance of beer, wine, &c. Beer, especially, has the reputation, and rightly so when it is *good*, of being "*very nourishing*," and how can what is *very nourishing* do harm to any one? it is asked. Impossible! Only when a man is dying, or thinks himself so;

or when, from some peculiar state, his stomach rejects the beverage, can he give up his beer. The truth—the experience that good beer is nourishing, is thus, in many instances, made use of to the injury of the individual trusting in it: it is made use of without *wisdom*, and perhaps even life is sacrificed to it. How many an individual requiring particular care on this point, viz.: of abstinence from what is, par excellence, *stimulus*—a property to a considerable extent combined with the nourishing properties in beer, has fallen a victim to this misapplication of truth! How many are at the present moment throwing away the chances of recovery from some diseased condition which renders life to a considerable extent a misery to them, through this same want of wisdom!

Such instances as the above, render clear to the mind of any thinking person, the great importance of studying the laws regulating health, and of inquiring into what has been done by other thinking and *acting* persons in order to the wise application of experiences: they render clear that health and long life depend to a great extent on the degree of attention given to these important matters, more particularly in cases where the human machine is

so far disordered as to require wise and judicious treatment: and they render clear that disease and death are sometimes rather *courted*, than warded off.

CHAPTER THIRD.

The Study of Mind.

It will have been inferred from the foregoing chapter, that man must look for truths of all kinds as proceeding through the channel of the human mind. This is the mode of communication established by the Creator: and unless man acknowledge such mode he is unjust to both God and man. It may be said—"Every body knows *that:*" truths are not written upon the sky; they are not to be found in any extraordinary and supernatural way." Every body *may* know, may assent to the fact, on the question being placed before him, even as all men assent to the truth that they, en masse, are *sinners:* but people often act as if they *did not know*, and miss much of the happiness of life—consequently of life itself, because they will not recognise the fact. Often, in the fear of giving

man more than his due, and of not sufficiently honouring God, they subscribe to untruth, and darken their mental horizon with the clouds of sophism. They act as though fearful of facing the light, and cover up their heads from it like timid and silly children, rather than boldly and earnestly examine all things, lest peradventure somewhat of vital importance should escape, and a gift of the Most High should be thus held back from the ignorant and suffering.

It is not usual to make too scrupulous inquiry into things long established: people very rarely ask how they came to be established, whence they originated, how it fared with them when they first laid claim to notice, and whether it can be proved that they descended to man in any mode out of the common course of things. It seems to be forgotten how men exclaimed concerning them, "What absurdity!" "What folly!" "Why should *he* know better than I?" and similar expressions interesting *as experiences*. People seldom enquire so far as this: but they themselves adopt the very course which when they *do* hear of as applied to what is now established, appears to them like madness, and meets with pity and disapprobation.

Such a course as this, assumes a serious form when applied to matters connected with health: it is very serious when applied to what are called *remedial means*, or modes of meeting those physical wants which disease has caused to present an aspect of such frightful importance as we daily find it to present. One illustration, from among many, of this evil, occurs in the case of *Homœopathy*.

An individual possessing not alone that earnest love of truth which marks the philosophic mind, but moreover, that keen eye in the search for it, and those peculiar capabilities for patient investigation, and for scientific arrangement, without which truths are not rendered universally beneficial to mankind, sees a grand law of nature, which he believes to be universal. He does not rest till he has, by a long course of experiments, carried out at much personal risk, fully established his discovery as *truth*, and placed it among the many noble discoveries which bless humanity.

The discovery made by this individual was an old truth, for all truths are old: but it became new as a step in science; and, in becoming so, it met with the usual degree of abuse from those who say "they like the good old ways;" they "want no

changes;" and who, forgetting that help for man must come *through the appointed medium*—the human mind, ask "Who is *he* that he should teach *us?*"

But those who recognise the channel of communication are disposed to conclude that what a mind like Hahnemann's had to communicate, what such a mind could deem worthy of investigation, must demand the attention and examination of all reasonable beings. Men who recognize the channel of communication are the men through whose means truth gradually spreads, assuming at length a position in the world, which cannot be gainsaid.

The study of mind, then, of human character in connexion with truths of all kinds, is highly to be desired as a means of happiness. Without it there is the liability to perpetual blunders and disappointments, which form so many sources of irritation, and so many drawbacks to health. Such study is important in relation to the daily intercourse and transactions of man with man. The fewer sources of irritation acting on the human mind and body the better chance is there of health and long life: and, as a rule, those live longest, who avoid a greater number of such sources, as

those best can do who know what man is—what they themselves are. Many have mourned the loss of health and happiness, because they had formed a wrong estimate of character, or rather had formed no estimate at all of it, but, in some of the most important matters connected with life, were guided by mere impulse. Without a knowledge of truths connected with human character, people are not fair judges of that which is presented before them; and may sit complaining of the wickedness of man, when, perhaps, were the truth known, they would be contented with blaming themselves, and correcting their own errors—a course much tending to health. It is common for one not possessed of knowledge of his own character to plunge himself and perhaps a large family into life long misery, and then to complain of the world, of society, of every thing around him: "all looks jaundiced to the jaundiced eye," and to him thus jaundiced every thing seems adverse: for him there is no happiness: medicine cannot help him: he is his own victim. Such an individual is a type of a large body.

If not tutored in this study of *mind,* man is not capable of distinguishing between what will pro-

mote health—physical and moral, and what will act upon him deleteriously: thus ignorant, is he exposed to innumerable evils which might be avoided, and opens the doors to the agents of death.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

Medicine.

In order to living happily and long, the views formed with regard to *medical treatment* are of considerable importance. This is a subject which, like all other subjects connected with man's well-being, should not be left, as people are apt to leave important subjects, until a bed of sickness unfits them for mental exertion, and renders them, perhaps, indifferent as to what plans should be adopted with reference to their diseased condition. Every question of this kind should be grappled with in the period of mental vigour; and, on the subject of remedial means, truth should be sought most ardently, since, on such means, in all probability, will depend the favourable or unfavourable issue of

that affliction, to remove which its assistance is resorted to.

The Creator has evidently appointed means suited to every necessity of his creatures—remedies for every diseased state of which fallen humanity is heir. These remedies are so many truths to be revealed by human agency: and in medicine, as in other matters, truths are but slowly arrived at. Many truths, however, *have been* arrived at; truths variously affecting the happiness of man, and universally acknowledged—to reject them would be considered extreme folly. Nor will any one, it is presumed, venture to assert that in *medicine* alone nothing remains to be discovered: that, with respect to the alleviation and the cure of bodily suffering, nothing more is to be hoped from science—from the human mind in relation to man's physical evils and their remedies. Yet, how many there are, who, while acknowledging what has been done, and what still remains to do, refuse to make use of that lesson which the past is intended to teach, arguing as though the Laws of God, as regards medicine, had been exhausted, and all future efforts should be discouraged! These are not the lovers of truth for its own sake: they love their

own wills and prejudices the rather, and will not even so much as look at that which will give them the trouble to think out of the usual course, or which may in any degree compromise them in the eyes of another.

Such a course of proceeding as this will not do for those who are earnest about happiness and length of days: *they* wisely considering that while time is being wasted on the consideration of whether *this* is orthodox, whether *that* will give offence; and on similar idle speculations, hundreds are gaining those advantages which ever reward the simple-minded truth-seeker.

With respect to those great truths which Hahnemann has placed on so scientific a basis that the thought occurs in connexion with them "none can, after strict examination of the subject, avoid the recognition of them *as truths*, and as, therefore, necessarily tending to happiness, and closely connected with long life," so many have reaped the benefits of his arduous and unremitting labours, both in their own individual cases, and also in their families, that any testimony on the subject here, would be superfluous. It is taken for granted that Homœopathy now stands too

firmly to need the little support which could be given to it in this volume. But to any who may not have fully assured themselves, the advice may be given, as a matter important to health, that in considering the subject of *medicine*, they make themselves acquainted with what has been done by the disciples of Hahnemann, be they medical or non-medical; comparing the proceedings of these individuals with those of the old system practitioners.

Homœopathy presents science, order, fitness, without forms of destruction and of death. It economizes life, never trifles with it: it gives to nature every chance to carry on her operations, and directs her according as she makes demand for help, which she does by means of what are called *symptoms*. Homœopathy adopts *no means to exhaust* the system: the leech, the lancet, the blister, *et hoc genus omne*, distressing to the disordered condition of being, in which man is so frequently placed, it utterly repudiates: it allows of a nourishing though not of a *stimulating* diet; restricting only as reason dictates, viz.: in cases of fever, &c., or where the stomach *rejects* food, and clearly has not the power to digest it; in which case it cannot be other than injurious.

Having become convinced of the truth and beauty of such a mode of treatment, no rightly-thinking man will try to conform *it* to the old system practice: to do *so* is a serious mistake, and one fraught with evil. In a question of this kind there must be no compromise: it is like every other question in which truth is concerned, all considerations but the *one* must be sunk.

In every case of danger, of responsibility, *decision* is a quality of the utmost value: it should be considered a quality of essential importance in making choice of a medical attendant. The medical man is to be looked up to in some of the most important crises of life: he, next to God, is to be confided in and relied upon. But how can such a state be inspired, towards one who lacks the great quality necessary to the production of this feeling of confidence? While his aid is required merely for a cold, a head ache, a tooth ache, or other malady to which man is frequently subject, but which gives him no uneasiness, because he has found that it passes away, leaving him apparently little the worse for the temporary visitation, all is well; the Doctor—albeit not greatly endowed with the highest qualifications of his art, is a pleasant and kind

friend, and that suffices. But how when the horrors of some frightful and malignant disease, and the terrors of imminent death are upon the patient? How then? Very different is the case. It would then become impossible to feel at ease under the guidance of a medical man, whose want of decision must betoken his imperfect knowledge of the subject professed by him—a subject which, at the time when his aid is sought, is, to those seeking that aid, *the* matter of chief importance.

Decision commands respect: it marks knowledge, experience, mastery of a subject. *That* man cannot command respect, cannot be supposed to be a man of decision who is found practising both Homœopathy and Allopathy. It is naturally enough concluded that he who thus seeks to accommodate himself to the *two* states of mind, has no real belief in either system of medicine; and certainly he cannot have acquainted himself with Homœopathy. His mode of proceeding in the matter is like a dabbling in two businesses, a plan which may be all very well as a speculation or an amusement, where money is to be thrown away; but which, when life is the stake, becomes a serious consideration. A medical man is not to be visited

as one visits the tailor or the dress-maker—to learn the fashions, and to be influenced by what is the whim of the day. He is sought, or should be sought, for his superior knowledge of medicine, for his experience in the various diseased conditions of the human being, and for his skill *in applying truth* for the alleviation of suffering. An individual who can profess to adopt two modes of treatment so opposite as are Homœopathy and Allopathy is, in all probability, deficient in one or all of these qualifications.

While on the subject of medicine it is well that mention be made of the extreme utility of the volumes designated *"Domestic Homœopathy."* These are works by aid of which, with that moderate study of *symptoms*, and of means indicated by those symptoms, which every individual possessed of common intellect, can thus direct, much evil to the individual and in the family circle, may be avoided. Considerable experience may, by means of these volumes, be gained, which would not otherwise be gained: for a habit will thus be acquired of observing symptoms in connexion with remedial means; and of watching those minute points in the development of disease, which

will induce attention to *beginnings,* and will very frequently lead to the prevention of more serious manifestations. The medical man will gain, in the parent or other friend of the patient, a more efficient co-adjutor; and thus his plans will not be frustrated, as, unfortunately, they too frequently are, from want of this very knowledge which the "*Domestic Homœopathy*" will be a means of imparting. Moreover he, himself, will be more highly valued and respected: for it is a fact in relation to all arts, that those practising them are valued in proportion as the beauty and worth of what they practice are understood. The medical man, therefore, if thinking rightly, will encourage the acquirement of this species of useful knowledge, and will endeavour to facilitate it, remembering the great amount of happiness he may thus indirectly produce, and that happiness, founded upon knowledge, must necessarily tend to length of days.*

* The following is a list of some of the principal of the volumes referred to :—

British.

Dr. Curie's "Domestic Homœopathy."

Dr. Epps' "Domestic Homœopathy."

Mr. Newman's "Homœopathic Family Assistant."

CHAPTER FIFTH.

Diet.

Every one has been told—almost from infancy that "experience is the best teacher," and although, in early days, this maxim may have been laughed

at, as somewhat old-fashioned and meaningless, it contains a truth which time renders more and more manifest.

Experience might lead all men aright on the subject of *diet*, if experience were coupled with *knowledge:* but man without knowledge—unacquainted with *causes*, fails to work out adequate good from experience, as also his mere knowledge without experience is frequently a dead letter to him. Those who lack either the one or the other, and who must, consequently, depend on other people's resources, are very likely to err; for rarely will one man's experience be an unerring guide to another person although it may be useful.

Diet has been pronounced, by some, to be "every thing." It *is* a very important thing, although *but one thing*. An individual may be most careful in dieting himself, who is adopting some other course with respect to himself, quite contrary to what is reasonable and beneficial: or who is omitting to do what is of essential importance in his care and guardianship of himself. Thus may he fail in his great object, while on the one point of *diet* he is extremely rigid.

Diet, however, although not "every thing," not

of itself sufficient to restore the disordered organs to their healthful activities, is a matter, which should occupy the serious attention of all, and especially of those requiring medical treatment, or suffering from chronic diseased conditions. There can, in fact, be little doubt but, were due attention given to this subject, and were its regulations fully carried out, a great mass of disease in the human family might be avoided: and even the amount of vice in our world might be lessened.

One of the greatest difficulties which medical men encounter, in treating their patients, is in regard to this point of diet: people "*cannot*" give up this, that, or the other, and in many cases, *will not*, and *do not*. Consequently it happens, however, that they are not cured of their disease: they feed and foster it; and vainly does the Doctor labour to restore healthy action. They clog up the delicate machinery which he is labouring to clear and set right: often, not only is he, by the patient's means, defeated in his object, but death is the result. And this merely for the sake of a trifling indulgence of appetite—a pleasure but of a few minutes duration! this kind of sacrifice at the shrine of the low appetites—*low*, when active against common sense

and reason—is alas! but too common. The record of facts illustrative of the injury, in disease, caused by deviations from the rules which should regulate the diet of the sick, is of frightful extent; so much so that selection becomes difficult, interesting as its result might be. One case related by Dr. Epps, occurs as striking. It is that of a child with water in the head—a case which was so favourably progressing (the child had recovered its senses after three days insensibility) as to induce good hope of recovery. But just at the precise time when it required the greatest care and watchfulness—the most determined and self denying judgment on the part of those surrounding it, a kindly-meaning relative, delighted to see it better, and unable to restrain the wish to produce a minute's gratification, gave it a sponge cake (!) which so disordered its whole system as to bring on an alarming relapse—very shortly terminating in death.

Those who have lived many years in the world must have gained somewhat from experience, as respects diet: but many possessed of both experience and the knowledge which should be of essential use to them, lack a quality without which, as relates to the point under consideration, those acquirements

are comparatively useless. That quality is *moral courage;* and it is a quality of great use in relation to diet. To the majority of persons, the effort to be *firm* as regards eating and drinking seems almost impossible; so much is this felt, that the individual who *can* be so is looked upon as something almost unnatural—such a *rara avis* is he: a kind of odium attaches to him, because his higher capability of carrying out what he thinks right is not understood. The mass of people, not studying the differences in human character, take offence at what clashes with their own ideas, and will believe in nothing which is not like themselves. "The man loves to be peculiar," they say, "he tries to differ from other people," "he his conceited," or "he is obstinate," or "he wishes to be thought a saint." Any thing but the right thing is supposed; or if not always *supposed,* is affirmed. His conduct in this matter is, very possibly, a tacit reproach to them—they take it as a personal affront, and thus an antagonistic feeling is immediately aroused: every effort is made to induce the struggling one to yield; and, unless he be really a man of courage, the rude attacks made upon him will cause him to break through the rules which his better sense has laid down. The conse-

quence of such departure from his rule of conduct in this respect is that he perhaps becomes the prey of confirmed disease, and encounters a premature death; while the man, possessed of the courage essential to the maintenance of a conduct deemed singular, retains health, and has the chance of living out his term of life. But men are not all so gifted as to pursue this course: some cannot even confess to their weakness, but, even when knowing better will rather be *false* than simply acknowledge "I do what I know is wrong, because I am not able to resist the temptation which is put before me:" and many will fall back on some miserable subterfuge—some mean attempt at *justifying* folly or impropriety, rather than make honourable confession.

The Homœopathic diet table is so liberal, that, even the healthly would be more likely to preserve health, and to attain long life, by adhering to its recommendations. There is an old saying, which may be remembered in connexion with this subject; "*Let those Laugh who win*:" for they who, by attention to certain simple rules, win health, or preserve it, can well afford to be ridiculed, and can laugh in their turn, with an excellent grace. Game, good beef and mutton, most fish, milk, eggs,

cocoa, fresh vegetables, ripe fine fruits, in fact all that is *nourishing*, without presenting undue and feverish *stimulus*, are not a fare on which to pine away: and if wines, beers, spirits, coffee, tea, spices, unripe fruits, flesh not come to its perfection such as that of calves and chickens—pork, goose, salmon, and other things, confessedly eaten by most healthy people at their peril, are to be given up, there is a profitable exchange made. The stomach which, by the free use of some of these articles, has lost what is called its *tone*, regains that tone; it is not over-taxed by having presented to it matters requiring a healthy state—a strong digestive power, in order to their becoming directed to their various uses in the system (by that means alone prevented from injuring it). It thus gradually recovers from its languid, or worse than languid condition, and can again perform with ease those functions, without the healthy performance of which life becomes a burden, and its term will in all probability be shortened. If the strong coffee and tea are given up—those favorite and most cheering beverages, which it might have been thought at one time never *could* be given up except with life itself—the *trembling*, the *sinking*, the *fainting*, and numerous other symptoms indicative of disease, are found

to disappear. If wine, beer, spirits, &c., are renounced, a strength and vigour are at hand which will not prove delusive, and which will supersede any fancied necessity for those famed, and, by some beloved potions. It is well known that those who *drink,* as it is called, *eat less*—a very striking fact in point. The over stimulated organs destined to effect the appropriation of those foods without which the various deposits requisite to the maintenance of healthy existence cannot be formed, have lost in power, and are too languid to perform their offices. *Stimulus* stands in the place of nourishment, and injury to the system is inevitable.

People enjoying average health take many articles of diet fearlessly, which, nevertheless they observe "do not agree" with them. In a day or two the inconvenience occasioned—the sign of *disagreement,* has passed away, and is forgotten: but, an injury has been inflicted upon the stomach or upon some other organ—small, indeed, at first, but which continual repetition increases: disease thus cherished works on insidiously, developing itself at some future day, to the surprise of every one, as well as of the individual himself, and when it is, perhaps, too late to arrest its progress.

A subterfuge very commonly made use of, and of great danger to the sick, may here be noticed: that, viz.: of *moderation.* "Let your moderation be known unto all men" is a beautiful maxim, but the moderation of the healthy and that of the sick are very different things. The moderation of the sick is to be applied only to those articles of food which are suited to their state. From articles which are injurious they must abstain altogether—thus not only placing themselves beyond the reach of harm, but, moreover, avoiding the temptation so commonly yielded to, of partaking too largely of what—taken at all—is taken at their peril. The "*moderation*" doctrine is one often productive of immense mischief even to the healthy, but on the sick it should never be allowed to act.

The argument so continually urged in support of excess of one kind or other, that *such an one* could adopt a certain course, and nevertheless "he attained a fine old age," or "had excellent health," &c., is no argument at all. In a matter of this kind every one can make trial for himself, and thus can convince himself, (that he acknowledge it is another thing), whether attention to diet be or be not important. "Iron constitutions" are possessed

by very few individuals: and to one who has lived *healthily* and long, having indulged in *excess*, or having been reckless respecting the digestive apparatus, one thousand might be brought forward as instances on the opposite side of the question, instances, that is to say, of those in whom a healthful and a long life have been coupled with abstinence, and with careful habits. As for instances of the injury and the fatality ensuing on an opposite course, they are innumerable. Medical men could publish so many volumes tending to establish this point, that "the world should not contain" them.

Unfortunately for the honour of the profession, there is too often, on the part of the medical attendant, a pandering to the whims and the prejudices of the patient. A patient should by all means avoid challenging such conduct on his part—a conduct not to be respected, and by which both medical man and patient must suffer. The rather must the former be respected when he exhibits a firm but kind and judicious opposition to the wishes of the sick person, for it is an opposition which must be exhibited at some risk, and which only the sense of right, and a firm belief in truth,

could enable him to present and to maintain. The patient has *his* duties, as well as the medical man *his;* and one duty of a patient is not to challenge, in the medical attendant, a swerving from that course of treatment which he conscientiously believes to be right.

In illness, no state is to be more guarded against than is that of *craving for food* or for drinks—especially for such as are known to be deleterious in their action on the healthy, and which are poisonous to those suffering from disease. Their mere presence in the system, at such a time, is to be feared; that is, even supposing them to be articles which, under more favourable circumstances, might safely be taken: their presence interferes with the action of the medicines prescribed, and no person possessed of sound mind, would, after applying to a medical man for that help which it was believed to be in his power to give, adopt that very course which must frustrate his endeavours, and lessen the chances of cure.

There are some individuals who, when under medical treatment, speak as though the Doctor were merely carrying out certain peculiar whims with respect to them, to which they, forsooth, had

no notion of submitting, not they indeed! They will do what they choose, and not be controlled by any one! Such is to be inferred, though it may not be said in as many words. The question naturally arises *why* they applied to the Doctor, and what was the aim they proposed to themselves in such application to his skill.

This state of mind in patients has been, no doubt, induced to a great extent by the want of science in the medical practitioners, and by the wretched system—now to a great extent exploded by the more enlightened even of the old system practitioners, of drenching with strong and disgusting medicines. If one part of the treatment could be set aside with impunity, if the medicines which were to give life and health, might remain untouched, and yet life and health be restored—why not other license taken? In this manner, it is likely much of the want of conscientiousness in patients may be accounted for.

Certain it is, however, that conscientiousness on the part of the patient is not only a quality which it becomes him to exhibit, but is essential to his deriving the advantages which he seeks. No honest minded person would attempt to deceive the

medical attendant by imbibing, unknown to him, such powerful stimulants as tea, coffee, wine, &c., while taking the medicines prescribed by him. He would scorn such a course, as a point of moral conduct between man and man; but, moreover, he will bear in mind that the blame attached to the results likely to ensue upon such conduct—viz.: protracted suffering, or in many cases death, would not, it is probable, fall on the patient; any cause rather than the right cause would perhaps be thought of, and the Doctor would very frequently be held responsible for what he has done his utmost to ward off.

Patients and nurses remembering that, for the sick, food must be *nutritive* and not *stimulating;* and that even nutriment itself must be, in some disordered states of the system, very judiciously administered, will be less likely to err on this subject, and will, at least, not be the means of directly interfering with the action of the medicines used. To appropriate nutriment into the system a power—a healthy tone is required. In diseased conditions this power is sometimes almost extinct, and always is considerably lessened: thus it is impossible that the same quantity of foods can be

assimilated: they are not required, the stomach cannot away with them; and all which cannot be appropriated becomes—to say the least—an inconvenience, a source of irritation, a fresh obstacle in the course of cure.

It has been said that the foods and drinks for the sick must not be *stimulating*. Stimulus is that which *excites*, which causes violent action of the heart, of the brain, or of any other part of the organism. As such it is to be carefully avoided, violent action being perilous even to those in moderate health: to the diseased it may be as the death struggle, and at best must leave behind it a weakened condition, an increase of the unfavourable symptoms, which is not to be mistaken, the invariable consequent of an invariable antecedent.

The fear of starving the sick, and the practices thence proceeding are, it is to be hoped, fast disappearing—driven back by the increased intelligence of the age. It is a fear which need never occur to either the patients or their friends: the greatest danger to be apprehended is that from *eating*. Comparisons must not be drawn between the condition of the sick, and that of the healthy—there is no analogy between their conditions. As one remarks, whose

judgment on this subject may well be relied on; "*Starvation* is a term not to be applied to the sick: it has reference to absence of food in connexion with a person in good health, but has no reference to one in a state of disease. *Abstinence* is the proper phrase applicable to the latter."

When persons are very ill there is no need of much thought as to *what they shall eat:* it must be a matter of serious consideration to prevent their taking any thing beyond a little well made and *fresh* toast and water; and, when the stomach can bear more than this, to be careful that nothing but what is light, and easily digested enter it. Whatever is given should be of the *very best* quality, and prepared in the very best manner. It is cruel and highly injurious not to pay the greatest attention to cleanliness in cooking for the sick. Great is the difference of feeling produced between seeing a clean pure bason of gruel, or of milk and bread, and seeing the same articles with portions of black, or of grease, or of any thing which ought not to be there, floating on the surface of the food or the drink. Such a revulsion will perhaps be brought about on becoming aware of these latter unfitnesses, or of the slightest flavour of burning or of

smoke, that not only is the preparation not touched, but nausea or some other bad state is produced, doing mischief to the poor invalid, who, if a complaining person, is so much the more disliked after every such event, and, if not such, suffers in silence, and thus is not likely to have the offence avoided for the future.

Cocoa is one of the most excellent articles of food for the delicate, except where, as occasionally happens, it is not liked. It presents a great portion of nourishment, without stimulus; and, as it can be prepared in various ways, affords great variety: but it is most essential that it be *well* made, and unfortunately it is very commonly ill made. Some very sensible persons will make it in cups, pouring upon it milk or water *not boiling at the moment of so pouring it;* and satisfy themselves with the circumstance that it *has* boiled. Such a preparation is bad for the healthy as well as for the sick, the fecula being thus received into the stomach in an uncooked state, which, it will be acknowledged, must be injurious, and which causes that sickly nauseous flavour that sets many persons altogether against the beverage.

There is no advantage whatever in the milk or water *having* boiled, if it *does not boil at the precise*

moment of pouring it on the cocoa: and it is consequently advisable, when circumstances do not favour the having it *properly* made in cups, that it be always placed in a saucepan and boiled for a minute or two, *not longer.*

The finest flavour to be procured for nib cocoa, and by which less of the oily matter offends, is by *pouring boiling water* upon the nibs (which should be somewhat broken) as is done in the case of coffee. Let it stand thus for about half an hour, and be carefully poured off, and a fine aroma is gained, equal to that of tea or coffee. Every thing of the kind should be taken *fresh* made, not left standing from morning till night, or all night. This may save trouble, but has no other advantage. As for allowing any beverage or edible to stand *in a saucepan* beyond the time necessary for the preparation of the same, the practice is much to be condemned. Fine earthenware jugs or jars are best fitted for such purpose.

It cannot be too much impressed on the mind, that for an invalid every article of food should be, as has already been stated, *of the best quality.* Invalids are sometimes thought fastidious because they reject certain foods or drinks; when in all pro-

bability it is *nature* which rejects. Ill made bread (as home-made bread very commonly is) or bread not made of the best flour, is injurious to every stomach not quite strong, and is enough of itself to cause a serious relapse, to say the least, in the case of an invalid. Instead of complaining of the bad articles sold by shopkeepers, the bad bread, sugar, &c., let people go to *the best market, pay the best price,* dealing with honourable tradesmen, and they will, as a rule, have no need to complain of the bad food sold by them. While their economy is to be carried out by encouraging *cheap foods merely because they are cheap,* no wonder if health suffers, no wonder so many poor children contract diseases of all kinds, which no one can account for.

Homœopathists ought to understand this subject better than other persons can; because their attention, whether they be medical or non-medical, is, by the study of Homœopathy, directed to what are called *trifles:* and ill does it become them to treat any such trifle as beneath serious consideration. They who know that a room may become so pervaded by the odoriferous particles from a flower, as to cause fainting, or other serious affection in a patient, will not say it is a trifle to make a cup of good cocoa, or a bason of clean and pure beef tea.

CHAPTER SIXTH.

A Word about Nurses and a Sick Room.

In the present state of the human being it is impossible to consider the manifestations of life in connexion with happiness and longevity, without having the subject of *departure from health* most vividly and prominently brought before the mind. This latter subject is dwelt upon still longer, and more particularly, in order to say a few words about *nursing*, the importance of which assumed a striking form in the two preceding chapters.

A nurse very generally calls the patient *her* patient, and often it happens that she may well lay claim to the patient, as her ignorance, her conceit, and her determined opposition to the carrying out of certain points in the recommendations of the medical man, render the patient essentially *hers*.*

* Dr. Fergusson, who had great experience in the fevers of the West Indies, observes, that individuals suffering from the peculiar fever of the country, if attended by a good nurse and an inferior doctor, would in all probability recover; but with a bad nurse and a first-rate doctor they would assuredly die.

The race of nurses is, it is to be hoped, and there is, in fact, reason to believe, improving; although it is difficult indeed to find an individual in this particular calling, who, at least, will not *thwart* an enlightened course of treatment. Very rarely, whether in a hired nurse, or in one from the family circle, will an individual be found, suited both in feeling and in sense, to take the *command* in a sick room: yet without such aid as is thus afforded, the mischief is often incalculable, and the chances of recovery are considerably lessened.

It has been stated that Homœopathy requires attention to *trifles:* this is one important recommendation of the system. Thought and philosophy might have always inculcated the great value, in a sick room, of a direction of the mind to minute points: but the mere inculcation of such a doctrine, without the *habit* given of carrying it out, is not sufficient. In every thing of consequence to be accomplished, the *habit* is essential. Homœopathy gives the habit of close observation with respect to minute manifestations; and the mind having acquired such a habit will of necessity exercise it on other points besides those strictly speaking *medical.* Such a mind will know the immense importance

of trifles—so miscalled—in the daily course of conduct towards a sick person; and, if endowed by nature with but the average degree of sense, the Homœopath will be more likely than any other person, to guard against many injurious agencies which would not attract the common eye. Deeply convinced of the fact that a very small cause may act beneficially or injuriously, such an individual will be ever on the watch that none but beneficial agencies, or as few as possible of the contrary nature, may act on the patient. True, there is the ignorance of others, not so trained, to strive against, but even *that* source of injury—a very fertile source, undoubtedly, may to a great extent be met, by judgment and care.

A nurse, if fit for her post, should have *authority:* if not a hired nurse she naturally takes it. Her judgment, her decision must, next to the medical man's, be definite. One of her duties is to check the selfishness, as well as the thoughtlessness and the ignorance, of friends and acquaintances. She must do this at the risk of being misunderstood, and blamed. Her immediate reward will be found in her consciousness of right; the reward from without will eventually follow.

The mental and emotional drawbacks to a patient's recovery are very many, and are precisely those which have not generally excited sufficient attention. Unguarded communications made, for instance, will destroy a week's, a month's, or perhaps a longer period's work on the road to health: and excitement of any kind, pleasurable as well as painful, may, in certain states, remove very far off the probabilities of recovery. The visit of an indifferent person, or of one whose voice is loud, whose manner is intrusive, or who, from any circumstance, brings before the patient's mind associations—painful or otherwise—of too exciting a nature, should be avoided. A real concern for the sick person might keep away every friend until it should be ascertained that the visit could be borne with safety. These visits are, for the most part, either a matter of form, or else are made from a mistaken sense of duty; people not going of *choice* to a sick room, unless *nearly* allied, by affection or by relationship, to the sick; and there can be, therefore, no real need for scruple on the part of the nurse, in refusing admittance to them. Cases do indeed occur, of offence being taken by persons on finding themselves thus refused. They cannot

understand why they, forsooth! could possibly do harm. The patient must be dying before they could be convinced of that; and even then, perhaps, it might not be easy for them to become so. Could they see their friend *"just for one minute,"* it would be "so delightful!" To themselves possibly: and in that one minute—generally extended to an hour, there is no saying what mischief may have been done to the *friend.* Sometimes the visit is one of *business,* but this can do no harm since it is *their* business! they have merely *one* question to ask, or one little piece of advice to seek; and it is of so much importance! Inquire into the matter, and it will be discovered that this important matter could very well have been arranged without the aid of the unfortunate invalid; or, in such an emergency, might have stood over. The visitor goes away, it may be, ignorant of the injury inflicted: but the nurse knows full well; the nurse marks the effects produced: she sees the feverish excitement—bordering perhaps on insanity, or the utter exhaustion, bearing him down almost to the grave, from which the favoured and beloved friend suffers in consequence of this one minute's comfortable arrangement! Nurses and medical men

know full well that many a patient has had his fate sealed by the circumstance of a succession of visitors having been allowed entrance.*

Nothing can be more cruel than to intrude housekeeping or business matters on an individual suffering from bodily or mental disease. The very effort to think sometimes gives distress; and the discovery made by the patient, after every such effort, that he "*cannot* think," is always most painful—in some cases quite overpowering. People feel it to be the saddest thing of all, when they cannot *think:* then, indeed, must they be wrecks—then indeed must there be danger to that part of themselves which they esteem as noblest and most valuable, when the power of continuous thought is no longer theirs! as much as possible should they be spared this pain; and the way to spare them is to keep all such matters

* A Physician of high standing makes the following record, "it is worthy of remark that it is not simply the talking of the visitor to the sick, or of the sick to the visitor, that is injurious: for the patient can talk much longer to her doctor, or to her kind and wise nurse, without any flush or any excitement, both of which, are produced by the intrusion of some relation who 'would never forgive herself if in passing through the town she did not see her sick relation.'"

from them as have been, heretofore, accustomed subjects of thought—very possibly the precise subjects, a too great attention to which has been the chief cause of their present condition. If the mind be thus distressed in illness, medical treatment can be but of little avail. It will be easy, when occupation is craved by the patient, or is deemed advisable for him, to find such as will not cause injury, and may even be a source of benefit.

The tendency there is to forget this very important part of watchfulness over the sick, is alone sufficient to render advisable a removal from home associations as soon as possible: and when the patient can be safely removed is precisely the time he is likely to have business matters intruded upon him; for few would be so barbarous as to intrude them when he is writhing in agony, or apparently drawing his last breath. When he seems to be improving it is argued that he may be safely referred to: and there is such a temptation, while he remains at home, to run up to him in any emergency, and to say it will only amuse him a little! all this kind of reasoning is erroneous: in proportion as the business is one compelling *thought*, anxiety, the feeling of responsibility, is it so much

the more to be carefully held back from the sick person. The occupation of a medical man, for instance, should be entirely avoided by him when he is sick. His duty is at all times of the most trying nature; and tormenting to an extreme degree must it be when his own health is suffering. He is, however, more likely than any other man to be exposed to this species of torture. On a dying bed some have been allowed to see their patients: it was perhaps a dying bed to them *because* they were so allowed.*

While the greatest attention should be paid to this point, viz: of communications made to sick people, great care should also be exercised as to remarks made *before* them. It is astonishing how unguarded people very often are in this respect, viz: in talking *before* the sick as though they were deaf, or not able to comprehend their meaning. It is even common enough to speak of their probable death before them, than which nothing can be more improper. It is easy enough to say that persons under these circumstances ought to be so

* The death of the late lamented Dr. Curie may be attributed to such a cause.

far prepared for death that no such communication should affect them: but let it be remembered that even when there is the christian hope of a happy state of existence beyond the present, the individual is still *mortal,* and as mortal, subject to the affections and to the mental infirmities of human nature, In some cases, *death might be caused* by the overhearing of such a communication: and, to say the least, the remaining energy would be damped; and hope of the reactionary power being effective towards health must then be almost taken away. If the healthy would try and imagine themselves in a similar position, they would possibly be able better to understand the subject.

With respect to communications of this nature made by medical men to their patients, it is well known how seldom, and with what care they make them; so well are they aware of the truth of that saying "while there is life there is hope," and so well are they aware that while there is life there should be hope in the patient's mind also, that it is a rare thing for a medical man to become the means of extinguishing *all* hope.

It may be observed as a piece of advice to the healthy, that visits to the sick, more particularly in

certain conditions of the latter, are made at the peril of the visitors; and that these are not called upon to expose themselves to such peril as a mere matter of convention. Where something is to be done—where there is the feeling of duty, and where the activities which duty imposes are present, that peril is much lessened—perhaps in some cases removed; so great, under such circumstances, does activity of body and mind counteract the evil agency. But to all there is danger: the doctor himself is not always proof against the influence. A sick room is impregnated with poisonous effluvia, which to inhale is always more or less perilous: but to visitors, who are suddenly introduced to it—it may be from the open pure air, it is more especially so.

From such an unwise exposure to a poisoned atmosphere arise many of the fevers and other bad illnesses which are frequent: for true it is that all disease is contagious to certain persons, and in a certain degree. He is wisest therefore, who exposes himself as little as possible to a condition of things in all probability dangerous to him.

A source of much evil to the sick exists in the endeavour made by friends to induce them to change

their medical man. It is an endeavour which should not be made without considerable judgment and care. There is generally a great attachment felt to a medical man who has been long in attendance on a family: he is a personal friend and confidant: he cannot be dismissed without an effort made which might be of consequence even to those in better health; and which it is cruel, either by over persuasion, or by frightening them as to consequences, to compel the sick to make. The endeavour on the part of friends is often made by the over zealous, with but little ground in truth and reason for taking so important a step: and perhaps, by their importunities they are doing more harm than could be overbalanced by the good which any fresh Doctor might be able to effect.

As a patient should not be subjected to this kind of persecution, neither should he be tormented about trying remedies other than those prescribed by his Doctor: while to induce him to take *opiates* because he is in great pain, or cannot sleep, is to incur the liability of doing him serious harm. It is true his pain may be *lulled,* but it is at the expense of what little restorative power remains in him—at the expense perhaps of reason. Friends

say, "As he *cannot* live, why not give him relief?" But even supposing it might with certainty be predicated he *cannot* live, how could it be ascertained that, although benumbed, his brain does not suffer? and why becloud his last moments, or, cause delirium, and horrors beyond imagination—beyond the power of depicting? He himself would prefer the pain to this. It cannot, however, be ascertained how long he may yet linger: he may rally: and if so, how will he thank his friends that they have not, by the administration of medicines acting powerfully on the brain, prevented his enjoyment of what of life yet remains for him.

In fact, no source of annoyance to an invalid should be persevered in; and the one just named being, from its peculiar nature, less likely than many to be considered under that point of view,—viz.: as an annoyance—should be carefully guarded against by nurses and friends. It would be preferable the patient should remain under the treatment of a medical man of inferior skill, rather than thus suffer.

A nurse should not *oppose* the sick person, that is to say, should as little as possible seem to op-

pose: for opposition is a cause of irritation. The opposition which must practically be offered, must be offered without assuming an offensive form; and never must "whims" and "fancies" be laughed at: they should not even be alluded to; but should pass with no more notice than is absolutely necessary. There can be little doubt that, in cases where the brain is affected, the recovery is very frequently prevented, or considerably retarded, by the want of that knowledge of the human mind, and of that wisdom in guiding it aright, so essential in the treatment of all cases of insanity. The insane should be listened to with kindness and respect; but thought should be, as soon as possible, directed from the one subject, by a skilful change of the conversation.

Nurses will sometimes, partly from the wish to amuse, which is good, but which must be guided by judgment, relate such accounts to poor sufferers, as are enough to harrow up the feelings of the strong-nerved. Or, perhaps with mere harmless chat will keep up such a lengthened flow of sound as a strong person would be inclined to check. But the patient does not check it, perhaps; the patient may be influenced by the fear of offend-

ing; or may be too weak and ill to beg for silence.

Such things, and many others equally simple and "trifling" the nurse must make her daily study: her task will become easier in proportion as she bears in mind that she acts under the direction of the medical attendant—supposing always that the latter be a wise and skilful man;— and in proportion as she can banish old prejudices from occupying too prominent a place in her plan of action; such, for instance, as the prejudice against the admittance of *air* by open windows or doors, and the prejudice against *water*. It is very clear that she must be a woman of judgment and decision: since, if not so gifted, although she may have observed that certain circumstances, in the daily events of the sick room, have caused an augmentation of bad symptoms, she will fail to read rightly the lesson thus taught, and will transgress or allow of transgression on the very next occasion.

A matter of great importance in relation to Homœopathic practice is *faithfulness* in administering the medicines, as also with regard to some other points, such as cleanliness of any vessels used for the medicines, purity of the water, if water be re-

quired, the careful exclusion of light, and of bad smells from the medicines, and the not giving them too shortly after taking food.*

These various "trifles" are worthy of being treasured up.

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

Cleanliness.

Cleanliness has been described as "next to Godliness," a phrase showing a very correct estimate formed of it, regarded both philosophically and physically: for a dirty habit, like every other departure from the laws of nature, is evil in both these points of view, and tends, consequently, to the degeneration of moral character, as well as to the curtailing of man's term of life. Vicious habits, it is well known, are almost invariably attended

* All scents should be carefully excluded from the sick room: even scented flowers in certain cases must not be an exception, and never should they remain for any length of time in the room, since they sometimes act powerfully on the system.

by dirty habits, as a coincidence: and, that dirty habits very frequently lead to vicious ones, may be inferred from the circumstance that the former make the individual contracting them lose *self-respect.* When an individual loses self-respect he becomes reckless of consequences, and will more readily yield to evil impulses. Under this aspect "Godliness" and cleanliness may well be regarded as closely connected.

From innumerable pores over the whole surface of the human body exudes, at every moment of life, a very subtle, perspirable, sticky matter, which, when not removed by soap and water, will necessarily form a kind of incrustation that must clog up the pores—those natural outlets, the free action by means of which is essential to health, and to the enjoyment of life. The pores form, as it were, the safety valves of the human machinery; and the passage through their means cannot be obstructed without danger thereto. When their action is interfered with, that which should escape is thrown back, and acts injuriously: many important processes are, necessarily, in some measure arrested; health suffers; and frequently the mind also shows tokens of infirmity.

Dirt is a fertile soil for those animalculæ which are generators of so many diseased conditions of the human being: whether it be on the body, on the dress, in the dwelling house, or elsewhere, it frequently teems with forms of life which, especially in some conditions of man, are enemies to his health and even to his very existence. The malignant Cholera, which is, by some of the medical faculty, considered to be caused by countless myriads of invisible floating animalculæ, is ever most virulent and fatal where dirt is most rife. The same may be said of fevers and other bad conditions. The very smell of a dirty house or room gives unquestionable evidence that a poisonous agency is present, and plainly enough tells of danger; while the smell of a cleaned room is salubrious and refreshing. Dusters, and abundance of soap and water, are most valuable anti-cholera and anti-fever remedies.

Every thing should be excluded from the chamber of an invalid which is likely to harbour *dust*, more particularly because the sweeping and dusting of the rooms occupied by the sick is attended with inconvenience to them, and the fewer things there are in the room the sooner can dust and dirt be removed. Carpets completely covering the

room are not desirable, but, in place of these, light slips of carpet, which can be easily taken out, beat, and again put down, are very preferable. Such substances are but receptacles of poisonous matter, and consequently the oftener they are shaken, and exposed to the air, the better. The same objection applies to draperies about a bedstead. It would be wise to remove draperies of all kinds, except just so much as may be essential to protect the patient from draughts of wind, from noise, &c.

Objections with regard to the sick, are also objections in relation to the healthful. A sleeping room presents always, more or less, a poisoned atmosphere. Windows opened about an inch at the top, will in great measure counteract this state: but it is, moreover, desirable that every thing likely to harbour the offensive effluvia, or to obstruct the passage of air, should as much as possible be dispensed with. Dressing rooms attached to bed rooms are also to be desired, so that no water, &c., be kept in the sleeping room: the evaporation continually taking place from liquid surfaces being frequently a deleterious agency.

A very bad practice prevails of keeping foul linen about houses for a considerable time. This

is a practice against which too much cannot be said. There can be little doubt that, in summer more particularly, disease is engendered by it. Soiled linen should be removed and washed as soon as possible: to keep it about a house longer than a week, whether it be that of the healthy or of the sick, is pernicious. In disease, the linen should be removed as frequently as the patient can bear the exertion attendant on changing it, and should be washed immediately.

Money expended on the painting and whitewashing of houses interiorily, is always to be considered as *well* spent; since it has the two-fold advantage, viz.: of, first, in itself conducing to health by removing impurities, and altering the state of the atmosphere: and, secondly, of tending to cleanliness in servants—in fact, in all. Well would it be did the state of society favour the possession, by mistresses of households in general, of resources sufficiently ample to allow of some *regular* and *frequent* outlay on their houses, for sanitory purposes, more especially on kitchens, pantries, servants' bed rooms, &c., for all persons, and not the least uneducated, respect rooms in proportion as they look clean and in nice order. Moreover, a house under

such circumstances is easily *kept* clean, and does a servant credit; while one with dirty walls, delapidated floors, and other similar unhealthy conditions, work as hard as she may she can never make to look clean. When this impossibility is felt, a servant will often grow negligent from a feeling of discouragement—almost of despair. This is a fact which may be taken advantage of for the benefit of all parties concerned. Generally it will be observed that the habits of persons improve with improving circumstances; except in cases where these habits have become confirmed, and are what is called hopeless.

An argument in favor of cleanliness, powerful even to the selfish, may be found in the circumstance that dirty individuals become extremely offensive to others. Dirty attendants on the sick are sometimes—if these be themselves clean and sensitive, a source of much discomfort, and thus of evil. Some invalids have been extremely annoyed and disgusted by the smell of *dirty feet* in a servant, with whose frequent services, nevertheless, they could not dispense. The feet require particular care: and it has been too much the habit to neglect them, in performing the daily ablutions.

There are many who speak of *washing their feet*, as though the process were far from a daily habit, and even with a sort of fear that it may be a dangerous thing to do, and can on no account be as easily effected as washing the hands.

In fact, until attention is directed to this subject, it is not imagined how few persons, comparatively, make thorough cleanliness of their own persons a duty, as they appear to make good clothing, and other matters of less real importance, duties. Unquestionably those dressing in good taste are likely to be clean; and those accustomed to luxuries generally, will, in all probability, have had cleanly habits forced upon them at an early period: but the general case is otherwise. This is, perhaps, more to be regretted in relation to old age than to any other period of life; old age being beset with many infirmities needing sympathy and forbearance. Sad it is when the natural instinct to love and cherish the aged is checked or destroyed by unpleasant, dirty habits—habits usually accompanied by unamiable mental manifestations. Some allowance must be made for the inactivity, or the inability for all extra exertion, which cannot but be incident to age—at least in most cases; and,

by the way, one excellent effect of cleanly habits is that they tend to preserve an active state of body down to advanced age—thus to preserve life. The dirty generally become listless and inactive, and are not likely to be less so at a period of life when there is commonly, and very properly, no need for that inactivity in business matters which was formerly perhaps imperative. That the infirmities of old age do not necessarily compel the discontinuance of cleanly habits, is sufficiently well known. There are, happily, numerous instances of aged persons remarkable for such habits: and whose care of their persons is beautiful to look upon, and highly instructive.

With respect to individuals intrusted with the care of children, this subject cannot be too seriously considered. Cleanliness is life to the child. Many of the diseases so severely trying to children, and which often cost them life itself, are induced in the first place by dirt, by the want of that constant care which the mother's hands—when they are blest with the attentions of that best and tenderest of friends, are ever ready to bestow upon them. Generally speaking it is not desirable that a very young person should be the sole attendant

upon children; since the young, however full of promise, and kindly by nature, have neither sufficient knowledge, nor sufficient thought for the proper fulfilment of duties so important. Present impulses are likely, too frequently, to overpower the higher sense, and experiences have not yet been made. What a heart-rending sight it is to see a young child dragged along with violence by the tender little arm, or pulled up with a jerk such as one would apply to some inanimate object! A whole life's misery is perhaps to be dated from that moment's ignorant and rough conduct. So with respect to cleanliness: the young attendant must be watched over—she must act subject to the continual wise control of the more experienced; or she will in all probability err on many important points, and not least as respects order, regularity, and thorough cleanliness: a whole life's after care and anxiety may not suffice to undo the mischief she has done.

The advantages of cleanliness with regard to the foods and drinks offered to the sick, have already been noticed, in treating of some of the duties of the nurse; its importance to the healthy must be sufficiently obvious. Dirty saucepans are poison-

ous: kettles not kept rinced out have a sediment about them—a deposit from the water, which it is highly injurious to drink: and every form of dirt is either in itself poisonous, or else is, as before stated, the store house for destructive fungi. Most water should undergo the process of filtering before it is received into the stomach, being as it is, very frequently, full of noxious material. Water can scarcely be too abundantly used, but it should be used as pure as possible. Articles of food generally should be washed, as a first process; for they are exposed to many bad influences, often they pass through the hands of the dirty and the diseased; through atmospheres which no one would willingly breathe, and yet are they very commonly partaken of without being subjected to the purifying effect of water. This should never be the case.

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

Religion.

As every point affecting the happiness of man, affects also, in some measure, the term of his life,

religion, being a point most powerfully affecting his happiness, is a fit subject for consideration in these pages.

Man should not belie any part of his nature; he must take nature as he finds it, and work it out as near to its perfection as possible. He must acknowledge and make the subject of deep consideration his religious tendencies, as well as all other tendencies, and must as earnestly seek to have them, as all others, guided rightly.

The religious teaching received is of great importance: it may very seriously affect an individual in ill health. Much harm has sometimes been done by preachers who terrify, or who distress the feelings. Their mode may be suited in certain cases, in others it cannot be borne, and may drive to madness or despair: at least it will dispose the mind to gloom, and will interfere with the cure of the patient. Those invalids who are able to attend preaching need be on their guard with respect to this matter. Indeed it is questionable whether they should attend preaching at all, if by so doing they are likely to be exposed to too much fatigue, to cold, to damp, to overpowering heat, &c.

There are preachers who depict life in such

gloomy colours, that the minds even of healthy persons become exceedingly oppressed thereby, and frequently an individual is rendered less able to fulfil with pleasure his various duties. People are so variously constituted, and have been so variously situated in life, that what may be health-giving to some will inflict injury on others. Cowper, the pure and good, was bowed down to the earth by those same means which to his friend John Newton were bracing and wholesome: and these two men are types of many thousands. It is with respect to mental states as to bodily diseases, special mental conditions require special mental remedies. All need religious food—need that medicine which Christ made known to the world; but the *mode of administration* will be varied according to the medium through which it proceeds. The invalid should be taught by gentle means; should be encouraged, comforted, overcome by the sweetness and the beauty of Christianity. In case of his craving such a course, he may be supplied with sound argument, and thus have somewhat to dwell upon, which may occupy the mind pleasantly and usefully without distress; for frequently it occurs that, in diseased conditions, the individual is more

disposed than he may have been in health to contemplate his own state in relation to his maker, and to dwell on futurity. Advantage may be taken of this mental phase, either to render him unhappy—perhaps to lead him eventually into a state of reckless scepticism, or to confer on him a new means of inexhaustible happiness.

To go forth, as it were on a crusade against the sick, is a mistake, and, moreover, is somewhat absurd. Conversion in the true sense of the word is, as a matter of attainment at such a time, a very questionable matter. In too many instances, the manifestations of an overwrought brain have been mistaken for conversion, and hence the disappointment experienced when, on the recovery of the individual from sickness, the signs of a converted state were not apparent, and the supposed convert returned "like the dog to his vomit." This false zeal for conversions, has made even young children its victims; and many who should have known better have been led to attach an importance, not warranted by truth and nature, to the state of excitement thus brought about. The healthy condition is that most suited for *all* serious considerations; and religion—the most serious—should not

be neglected under circumstances so favourable as those which health commonly presents. Those who think the subject to be one worthy of deep consideration, must study it with an earnestness which is ill suited to a state of sickness: and though it is true that there are minds which appear to be very easily satisfied on such matters, there must always be a certain degree of thought, anxiety, and excitement connected with the investigation, rendering it highly advisable that such investigation be not left until the evil day comes, when thought is burdensome.

Religion, when exercising its proper influence, is the great beautifier of character, is that which can double every enjoyment, which can make even stern duty a happiness, can be in sickness as "a light shining in a dark place," and can afford a solace and comfort higher than those afforded by any other source. It can gild the solitary chamber with the golden beams from another state of existence, opening up a glorious vista, by gazing through which the *present* shrinks into insignificance; while a vigour and freshness are imparted favourable to recovery.* Under such an aspect it

* Dr. Foote, who had great experience in the treatment of

may well be considered as capable of increasing the sum of happiness, and giving a greater probability of long life.

But, moreover, the more the Christian system is studied, the more will conviction strike any unbiassed mind so studying it, that it comprehends every element of happiness suited to the state of sickness as well as to that of health; and that all its precepts are those which to contemplate and to aim at fulfilling, must necessarily elevate to some similarity to the divine character. This is beautifully expressed by one: "Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory." Thus, independently of its origin, it becomes a matter of the highest philosophy that Christianity be studied, and that those advantages be derived which are attached thereto.

It is well not to be deceived by the large talk of

Cholera in India, states that he has seen two patients labouring under that disease, the one without, the other with a well grounded hope for the future. The latter was perhaps more seriously ill, but recovered; while the former sank. Dr. Foote, although not then himself a receiver of the Christian faith, thus bore testimony to the advantage derived from the religious views entertained by the patient.

those, who strive to make it appear a weakness that such matters should cause the slightest concern; and that they, for their parts have no such weakness. This kind of talk certainly marks weakness; and if individuals making use of it are closely observed, the conviction will be arrived at that they are neither happy, nor endowed with that fine intellect and moral sense of which they vaunt themselves. It will be found that they are, usually, persons of very immature minds—perhaps young, and in all probability not having taken the trouble to assure themselves concerning the real merits of the case: for the study of that stupendous literature which is connected with this subject, and to which some of the noblest intellects have contributed, demands great earnestness of purpose, and a mental constitution superior to that of the mass of people.

This "weakness," this particular part of human nature, which prompts the inquiry after something beyond the present, which conceives of a Creator, and of an immortality for that portion of himself which man ever regards as noblest and best, is that, the non-cultivation of which may hereafter cause the bitterest regret, and the wise direction

of which, under the favourable circumstances of health, is a benefit not to be denied by any being endowed with the power of thought.

CHAPTER NINTH.

Temper.

Every one knows some one person, or perhaps more than one person afflicted with ill temper, and will be ready to exclaim,—"It is an affliction as severe as any with which human nature is visited." There is a deep conviction that individuals so afflicted are coming short of the average share of happiness, that they are wasting great part of life in a state somewhat resembling insanity, and that their health is suffering. This latter is very frequently the case. It is a fact that various physical inconveniences are the result of so unfortunate a condition: stomach affections, heart affections, liver affections, often arise from ill temper long indulged in. The brain, also, suffers considerably; and the countenance exhibits signs of the internal

disorder. In time, the lines of the face undergo a very marked alteration, caused by the perpetual expression of a sharp disagreeable state of the mind having so long acted upon it: beauty becomes changed almost to deformity, and in many cases the term of life is shortened.

Addison, in one of the numbers of his *Spectator*, promises to inform the fair sex how they may become beautiful. Delaying the communication for several weeks, he is harrassed by letters from correspondents begging for the recipe. That recipe, it may readily be supposed, is *good temper*. He shows that the plainest face may be rendered attractive by such a mental state: he shows that every action of the mind in the way of good temper produces a physical effect on the muscles of the face, which gradually moulds them into beautiful roundness. The opposite takes place when ill temper preponderates. That action long continued induces peakedness and angularity of feature.

It may be said, and with truth, that ill temper, like many other of man's infirmities, is hereditary. This, however, should not now be considered sufficient excuse for its unpleasant manifestation

towards others, since most hereditary states can be, by proper care and discipline, brought under control,—some of them almost eradicated; and it is not to be supposed that ill temper is the only one of such states not to be so controlled, not to be reduced to any sort of subjection; but that those afflicted with it are to remain its hopeless victims. This supposition looks too much like being glad of an excuse for the free indulgence of a fault, or like the feeling of not choosing to take the necessary trouble in order to lessen or to cure it. True, it is hard work to effect even a partial cure of such an infirmity, after the age of maturity has been arrived at, and when, as a consequence, every such infirmity or habit may be supposed to have taken firm hold: but it is never too late to effect some alteration in this respect.

Many an ill temper, if carefully watched over in childhood, might be arrested, and future suffering from it prevented. At that period it should be attended to with as much seriousness as any other malignant condition affecting life; for, much suffering in after life is traceable to the circumstance that in childhood there was no one at hand to say the fitting thing, and to *enforce* obedience. If

people are not taught what is due to others, the consequences to themselves will in all probability assume a frightful aspect: for the victims of such a state are continually producing what is thrown back upon themselves in ugly colours and distorted forms, which in their turn create antagonism. Thus is a perpetual excitement of the lower feelings kept up: happiness is driven further and further back; disappointment brings sullenness and depression! The ungoverned and selfish children have grown up into tyrannical and unhappy men and women.

Man is, however, gifted with a power higher than the tendency to what is selfish and unjust—a power which has never been fruitlessly exercised. At a more advanced period of life there is this advantage, viz.: he is then better able to do *for himself* what, at an earlier period he has failed to do; or what, at a still tenderer age, others neglected helping him to do. He has now gained useful experiences, has seen some unpleasant reflections of himself in other people, and has found that hitherto he has not been adopting the right means by which to obtain the objects nearest to him. Perhaps he finds, moreover, his physical

health injured, and feels life to be waning before the time when such a state might be expected. He is determined to make good use of his experiences; and now a week's determination effects more than, in earlier life, might have been effected in a year.

That sourness or irritation which is the *result* of ill health is a passing thing: when the physical condition becomes improved, the irritation is no longer observable. In this case, moreover, the individual speaks of his infirmity with regret, and does not seek to excuse it on any but the right ground. On the contrary, habitual ill temper is a perpetual tyrant; it makes of its victim a slave at length so abject, that he appears to use no effort in order to rid himself of its domination.

The ill tempered man sees life through an unhealthy medium; whichever way he looks are discomfort, disorder, disappointment; every one of which states act upon him to his injury. How frequently do a man and his wife so irritate each other by bad temper, that life, while endured together, becomes a state of perfect misery, and if apart, grief, possibly, completes what ill temper commenced, and a premature death is the result.

A young girl—it may be—grows up with the same bad habit unchecked: she produces her own atmosphere of wretchedness, she herself cherishes what saps up her very life: and people wonder that the flower droops in so untimely a manner. The elements of happiness in that nature were not cherished, consequently they did not thrive; and man cannot live in anything like a healthy state without happiness, *for happiness is food.*

Nothing is more common than to hear the ill tempered excuse their unlovely manifestations of character on the plea of *sensibility!* as though that sensibility which is centered in *self* were of any value—were not, on the contrary, a defect and a curse. Such persons will, themselves, wince at every touch: they cannot bear a word spoken, as they think, in reproof, which applies to *them* forsooth! they must not even be joked with, albeit in the most guarded manner: and yet they can inflict the most severe wounds on others, evidently without a scruple, and frequently with decided pleasure. In fact they can scarcely open their mouths without stinging. These individuals, although endowed largely with that spurious article which passes current for sensibility, have no particle of the real

thing. True sensibility will spare another, at the sacrifice of self; and this is the only sensibility which will effect any good either for humanity or for the individual. Egotism and love of approbation—the true sources of the spurious sensibility, must, when dominant, create what deteriorates, and what may destroy even life itself. Let not bad tempers be excused on any plea of this kind.

The advantages of good temper, to the sick, are very striking: with it, many inconveniences, numerous sources of irritation best known to those who have suffered, are passed lightly by, and not allowed to act distructively: a degree of happiness reigns which makes the sad hours less sad to those who surround the invalid. Such state of mind has a great effect in assisting recovery. Without it, there is perpetual warfare, and both medical treatment and kind nursing lose very much of their effect; while that pleasure in attending upon the sick, which should always rule, is considerably diminished, perhaps altogether destroyed, and the buoyant hope—mighty to bear up every heart, is crushed, rendering action less fervent and efficient.

In fact, every effort made towards the attainment of good temper is so much healthful action

gained, and renders the probability of physical decay more distant. This may be taken as a physiological truth; and should, from motives of self preservation alone, lead to serious consideration of the subject.

CHAPTER TENTH.

Work.

That man should earn his bread "by the sweat of his brow," is a divine arrangement of the greatest benefit: and one to which the world is largely indebted. Without the necessity for labour, perhaps few minds, if any, would have been aroused to healthful activity, and, great as is the amount of bodily disease now, it must then have been much greater. At a very early period of existence *work* is evidently essential to happiness. Then, indeed, a small portion at a time suffices; and *variety* is of great importance: work must, nevertheless, form a

part of that variety. Judiciously managed with a view to variety, children may do much more work than without judgment in the arrangement of their daily routine could with safety be demanded of them. All those who have had anything to do with children can testify to the fact that they grow weary of play, and will frequently ask for occupation: while holidays will go off with far more happiness to the children themselves, as well as to those who have charge of them, if *work* of some kind be mingled with amusement. Activity there must be if health is present.

The Germans, in some of their schools for very young children, have an excellent mode of occupying both the body and the mind, in combination with recreation. Mere infants are taught, or *induced*, as an amusement, to form some very beautiful little articles, each one according to his individual taste and skill, help being given only when asked. Thus does the natural bent become early developed; thus, as it were in sport, may be indicated to the parents what capabilities can be brought into activity for the future advantage of the child, so that he may work out of his nature

what it is fitted to realize, both in happiness and in health; and, equally important, habits of industry will be formed with the first dawning of the mind. This latter point has been entirely overlooked with regard to young children. In order that weariness and consequent disgust may never be connected, in the mind of the child, with these interesting labours, healthful games, in which, at the same time, instruction for the infant is not forgotten, are interspersed at frequent intervals. In these games the children run and jump, and sing and laugh abundantly, so that every muscle has its activity, and happy social feelings are to the full extent cultivated.*

With respect to the young, no less than in relation to the more mature being, health depends in a great measure on happiness, and on what is intimately associated with happiness—proper occupation: but in the more mature being the fact becomes more and more evident every year, that

* An attempt is being made to establish schools of this kind in London; and one may be seen in operation, on a small scale, at 32, Tavistock-place, Tavistock-square, any Tuesday morning from 10 to 12.

idleness is most injurious to both the physical and the mental constitution. One writes,—

> "Satan finds some mischief still,
> For idle hands to do."

And certain it is that mischief of one kind or other must be the result of powers unemployed. It may be observed with respect to most of those unfortunate persons, who have never "succeeded in life," that they have not been people who liked *work*. They have let good fortune pass by while they have sat with folded hands complaining that the world "does not understand" them; and brooding over fancied and real bodily infirmities—real, too often, as a result of unhappy minds and unoccupied hands.

The physical evils arising from want of a fixed purpose in life—of *work*, are numerous: every organ of the human being may, from such a cause, become disordered—the entire economy disturbed. So that the maxim, "know thy work, and do it," is of high importance in relation to health and long life. With respect to sick persons, it is a great secret that they be as far as possible occupied, provided their state allows of it, and provided that the occupation be such as to interest without exciting:

for occupation will tend to make them forget *self*—a great point gained, sometimes—and, by diverting them from sources of irritation and gloom, will do much towards cure. Often will the judicious Doctor, who well knows both the sluggish nature of the patient, and the craving of that patient's physical system for bodily activity, give him something to do—perhaps for *himself*, for possibly it is more likely to be performed for the *Doctor* than for any one else. Physical combined with some degree of mental activity, will, it is seen by his Doctor, be of more benefit to him, as occupying part of his time, than the entire time spent in walking. Exercise in a garden, where some little mental effort will be called forth, is often most beneficial.

One great advantage in the Hydropathic system of treatment, consists in the *employment*,—the constant activity rendered imperative. Patients wonder they can be so happy, as all are when fully under treatment. There is not an idle hour in the whole day, and any little spare time is rendered doubly sweet by the active occupation, which forms the regular routine. The appetite is generally excellent, and the sleep is sound,—a circumstance generally so characteristic of the sleep of those who labour.

Medical men frequently send patients out of town partly with the object in view that they shall obtain exercise and occupation in little matters which they are too listless to engage in while at home, and under the influence of habits contracted in sickness: for some sick people fall into so sluggish a state that they cannot be moved to occupy themselves in any way. This inertness in certain states of disease, and in certain *stages* of disease, is far from desirable: when at all able to occupy themselves, patients should not be without occupations, for these will tend to make them forget *self*, and will thus exclude some of those sources of anxiety with respect to themselves which are likely to act upon them injuriously. Many of the afflicted have found true pleasure in pursuit of such matters as can be pursued without danger. Frequently, change of air, with the additional circumstance of change of scene, rouses them to some degree of beneficial activity; and their cure, which has seemed to baffle medical aid, is now easily effected. And here it may be observed, that everything should be done to render a sojourn of this kind agreeable to the invalid. It is a very unwise thing for persons leaving their homes to obtain change and fresh air, to omit

taking with them as many means of occupation and amusement as possible; for there can be little doubt that such omission is a frequent cause of that feeling of monotony, and that oppression of the spirits which, in so many cases, stand in the way of cure. The *in door*, as well as the out door life should be made attractive: otherwise wet days become to some persons insupportable; they long to be back again, and can with difficulty be induced to stay long enough to derive any sufficient advantage.

In relation to *work*—to the fact that the proper exercise of any power will develop that power healthily, a striking illustration occurs in the arms of workmen who require to use those members more particularly; of washerwomen, housemaids, and others. The same remark applies to the lower animals: and some who have made study of this point in connexion with health, consider that the legs and the wings of domestic fowls, as being the parts which are regularly exercised, are far better for digestion than the breast: and that, moreover, the practice of shutting up animals to fatten does not produce a food so favourable for the stomach as is that offered in the barn door

fowl, &c. The fact is strikingly illustrative of the advantage of *work:* and, furthermore, as an illustration of the same, it may be observed that occupied persons are always happy—happy *in their work,* and happier far than others when the hour of recreation comes: for labour gives a zest to recreation which renders *it* also tenfold more delightful, and more health giving in *its* turn. The very sight of recreation partaken of by the industrious is beautiful and stimulating; and those who so find it, naturally connect it, in their own minds, with *labour,* as they naturally connect the contrary state—that of listlessness, of non-enjoyment, with a lazy dispositional tendency, or with the want of regular employment. Ask some of the operatives who strike for wages, and remain out of employment, if they are not miserable, not merely from want, but also from the disuse of their peculiar physical activities.

As a rule, vice, disease, and laziness are closely connected; from the highly philosophic reason that when the system is not excited with the healthful and gentle stimulus of usual employment, its faded appetites require the stronger stimulus which vice, that is unusual and unnatural excitement, affords.

The mind and the hands fully occupied constitute the condition most favourable for long life: but occupation will fail, in some measure, to produce its destined benefit if it be not tempered with that which is to be considered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER ELEVENTH.

Play.

This demand of nature, although less dignified than the one noticed in the foregoing chapter, is one which merits serious thought, as affecting health. It may be called *play* in contradistinction to *work*.

Were this demand universally recognized as a law of nature, and as such provided for, the respect for labour would be rather increased than lessened. At present, from the circumstance that a large portion of the community are not so situated as to gain a legitimate amount of *healthful play*, there exists, in the minds of many, an unwise and unnatural feeling against work *as such*. Abuses

connected with work have been seen; over work, both willing and compulsory is, it must be acknowledged, too frequent; and the evil effects thence resulting are most painfully impressed upon the mind. Man has been compelled to connect the term *work* with avarice, with oppression, with numerous abuses: a proper portion of time has not, in too many instances, been found for play—for that amount of recreation and change, desirable for the healthful development, and continuous healthful action of every mind; by some minds particularly craved, and in all cases essential with a view to physical health.

Change of occupation has, in some cases, the same salutary effect as has *recreation* in the stricter sense of the word: others, again, require complete relaxation, cessation from *labour*. This is more particularly the case of children and young persons, who generally dislike the restraint and rule imposed by labour, and whose physical construction is not yet in a fitting state to render labour, for any length of time, advisable—to whom, in fact, when so imposed, it is likely to be injurious. While some degree of such restraint and rule is of great value to them, too much will invariably

produce evil consequences; as witness curved spine frequently produced by maintaining one position for a length of time, either at the piano-forte, in drawing, in needle work, &c., or by a too close pursuit of any one of the various studies which form part of polite education. Important evidence on this subject is given in Mr. G. N. Epps's work on Spinal Curvature.*

Recreation tends to correct that hard and gloomy state which the too severe application to business, when unrelieved by change, is likely to engender, and which it is highly desirable, with reference to old age more especially, should not become a habit. In a business point of view, habits of cheerfulness are of the utmost value, as indeed they are in every other point of view. No one likes to treat with the gloomy: gloom is recognised as a diseased condition: those who have made signal success in their business affairs have been characterized by the opposite state—a state which to attain and to keep up demands due recreation.

There is, moreover, great danger that, without proper change and recreation, a certain fixedness of

* Spinal Curvature, its Theory: its Cure. By. G. N. Epps, Esq., Surgeon to Harrison's Spinal Institution, &c. &c.

ideas will be contracted: a man will see every thing through his particular medium, and will be unable to divest his mind of the colouring thus given to things. This will impart to his character a severity, a rigidity neither healthful nor lovely; in the same manner as the close confinement, and other physical inconveniences, will in all probability disturb some of the organs of life, unless recreation, as one important sanatory measure, prevent.

With respect to individuals in delicate health, and predisposed, from hereditary causes, to certain states indicating the presence of disease, recreation, especially in the form of thorough change and exercise, is essential to life, and to even a moderate amount of what is called health. To expect that amount of health without it, is to expect a physical impossibility. Without it, the liver or other part which appears possessed of very feeble power even when the proper stimulus—exercise, is afforded, becomes perfectly inactive: other organs, consequently, are overtaxed, in order to keep the machine going on at all; and thus all is in disorder, ending most undoubtedly in confirmed disease, very probably in death.

On some persons recreation has to be forced as

a duty, so much are they disposed to keep on in the usual daily routine, or so indisposed are they for making effort of any kind. When the effort *is* made, the result is agreeable to them; soon they experience the benefit of change either of air, of position, of pursuit, or whatever it may be; and make good resolutions for their future proceedings.

Recreation to be really such, must change entirely the course of thought: must present what arrests and charms, what suspends for a time all other considerations. When it can no longer do so, it is no longer recreation: hence the benefit of *change*, which must, if possible, be studied no less with regard to recreation than to occupation. Generally speaking it is healthful that man be brought in contact with his fellows: too frequently, however, in matters of business, the contact with them makes an impression which, although useful in some points of view, does not increase the loves and sympathies, but, the rather, tends to crush and to damp them. In recreation, the most agreeable impressions are made: human nature appears under an aspect at least not offensive; and pleasant images and sympathies are strung together in remembrance, which will correct many hard thoughts

and unkind suspicions; and will help to give a foretaste of something much nobler and holier yet to be worked out.

As a matter of physical health, change of scene and of air may be most beneficially combined with recreation. Nature seems to have dictated this: and those who live in London have abundant means of gratifying the dictate, by visiting those charming spots, so many of which are round about the great metropolis, and which form delightful sources of change, and means of health. The beautiful undulations of ground, the rich verdure, the noble river, and other characteristics of these districts, offer great variety, and present sufficient change—even of air, to act very beneficially.

Invalids for whom change of air is sought, would often act wisely if, when this can be effected, they were to travel from place to place, at certain intervals, rather than to remain for a lengthened period in the same spot. The stimulus in reference to both body and mind becomes lessened, or in some cases loses its effect altogether, from a lengthened exposure to it. The feeling of monotony is ever to be avoided, and a lovely spot may become monotonous and oppressive after a time: this is bad,

and will retard or possibly arrest further progress. Nor is perfect *solitude* to be, in all cases, recommended: wise friends and medical advisers will exercise judgment on this point as well as on other points. In certain states of disease, change and recreation are more to be desired than they would be were the individuals in full health; since it frequently occurs that those who, when in health, possess what is called *good spirits*, labour under considerable oppression when health becomes at all disturbed. Some degree of excitement is necessary almost to the existence, assuredly to the *happy* existence of certain individuals; and those who would exclude them from it, lack that true philosophy which recognizes the infinite variety in nature, and the deep meaning of such variety. In their judgments of character they make *themselves* the standards—a mode of judging which invariably misleads.

Among those agreeable recreations which promote health more particularly, may be mentioned *dancing:* but some of those persons who make their own prejudices the standard of judgment will argue concerning this mode of exercise, that there can be no necessity for it, since due exercise for

the muscles can be obtained in *walking*. Now, on the mere question of *exercise*, walking does not equal dancing: but, besides this reason in favour of the occasional adoption of and preference for the latter exercise, there is not, to the young, or to any persons fond of the exercise, the same interest taken, there is not the same pleasurable excitement —an excitement which, when not excessive, is beneficial—in walking, as in dancing. Walking is delightful; and there can be no doubt were it regularly adopted as part of the duty of the day, a great improvement would be seen in the general health. But *dancing* is more particularly connected with the "merry heart, which doeth good like a medicine," with happy social evenings, with cheerful friends and schoolfellows, in fact with many of those charming spots in memory which all persons treasure up, more or less, in after life, as gems, however much their views of men and things may become modified with time. It is to be compared with music, and with those innocent games and festive pleasures with which walking, however desirable and sometimes to be enjoyed, bears no affinity. Its use in the social circle is beneficial at any age when it can be borne: and

even those who cannot join in it may take pleasure in contemplating it, bringing before them, as it is capable of doing, what is health-giving for the future, as well as happiness-producing for the present.

With those who argue against *use* from abuse, little could be said here, where the question is *health*. Unfortunately, man will sometimes mar whatever is good and holy, and tending to his real advantage—to his moral or to his physical health. Nevertheless on a question of this kind truth is to be maintained, and the matter of use and abuse must be left to be settled elsewhere.

CHAPTER TWELFTH.

Concluding Remarks.

It is very certain that he who would live out his full amount of life must, as far as possible, make the locality in which he takes up his abode a point of consideration: and if circumstances compel his

partial residence in a spot not salubrious, he must endeavour to obviate the injurious agencies which exert their influence over him. Doubtless there are spots to be found, even in England itself, suited to most constitutional states; and the wise will avail themselves of such whenever opportunity favours their so doing: persons in conditions of disease should do so at almost any sacrifice. It is true that the climate of England presents many variations trying to the weakly; but even the effects of these variations might be rendered much less dangerous if met with wisdom. For instance: the thin shoes, so commonly worn by women, are almost proverbial; and although every one will acknowledge that "the feet ought to be kept dry," "nothing is more dangerous than to expose the feet to wet," &c., yet those, more especially amongst the young, who attend to this particular, are unfortunately quite in the minority. But it is a point which, in England, and in other countries where frequent rains and damp occur, is of the utmost importance. Pulmonary consumption has so long been an English disease, that numbers of human beings in this country grow up with a predisposition to it: yet people may, notwithstanding

such predisposition, live to a good old age, if they have knowledge, and are wise; and if the young are instructed in the laws and the requirements of nature.

In a climate such as that of England, to bare the chest, as so many young gentlemen and ladies do, is to seek death; and exposure to night air may bring to a premature close many a valuable life, which might have blessed the family circle through a long course of years. Intemperance, it is well known, may render fatal a climate which might otherwise be braved; this has been strikingly illustrated with respect to many English who have gone to Sierra Leone, and to similar unhealthy spots, where dangerous fevers, and other diseases are encountered: and who have there perished.

Still, England is not, on the whole, an unhealthy place: and numerous are the localities in it highly salubrious; although it is granted that, to some constitutions, and especially in certain conditions of disease, Madeira and other parts are to be preferred. There is much in *a name:* and frequently people discover that the name has deceived them. The fine climate of Paris is to certain persons insufferable on account of its *dryness:*

they have returned to some of the beautiful spots in the neighbourhood of London to find health. Moisture is essential to many—*moisture,* not *damp:* and there is a wide difference between the two conditions. The refreshment and vigour imparted by rain fresh falling or fallen are wonderful, and seem to be, sometimes, life-giving. All people talk or write of *showers* as beautiful and poetic; and this, in great measure, because they are salubrious, for what is recognized as beautiful must be founded on truth, and on benefit of some kind received. Rain is, however, to many persons attended with danger; and reasonable care and precautions are necessary in order to guard against its effects.

To most people there is no danger in walking out during rain: indeed it is desirable to be accustomed to all weather. The danger is to be found in a want of sense exhibited as to *dress,* and as to standing or sitting about in the rain, when the condition of *damp* will arise, and evil consequences will probably ensue. With the proper degree of attention paid to these matters, it would, in the greater number of cases, be of much more advantage to walk out in the rain, than to sit at

home without this kind of change, and without exercise.

The condition of *damp*, on the contrary brings before the mind a picture altogether painful. This impression is also founded upon truth. Damp is, more commonly, stagnant poisonous moisture, not the moisture of freshness and health. Moisture lying long gives rise to unhealthy vapour; and, aided by heats, engenders innumerable forms of minute life, which act destructively on the human being, as indeed on inanimate nature also. Microscopic observations have established that these minute fungi or poisonous mushroom forms are continually rising from stagnant watery surfaces. Such fungi entering the lungs, or acting on other organs, when these are in a certain condition favourable for their reception, implant themselves there, and consumption or other disease is developed. Something of this kind is seen on articles exposed to the agency of damp. In many rooms—more especially in the country, articles left unused are found to be covered with a mould composed of these fungi. The fungus growth renders itself apparent because in these cases it has fixed itself on bodies, the surface of which is hard, such as lea-

ther, &c.; but it must not be supposed that because on certain other bodies it does not render itself apparent, therefore the fungi do not affect them. There is sometimes the more danger of injury, for that they do *not* rest on the surface.

The very smell of a damp room announces that a destructive agency is present: there is a sense of *stifling* felt, of impossibility to exist under the oppressive circumstances; and windows and doors are hastily thrown open, so that some of the foul vapour may escape. Compare this with the feeling on entering a freshly cleaned room, and the contrast is very striking, as illustrating the difference between damp, and clean healthy moisture. To sleep in a damp room is an act of insanity which, it is to be hoped, no one would of choice perform after having once had his attention drawn to the subject, after having marked how different is his waking up in the morning from what should characterise the waking of the healthy in comparatively pure air; and after having become convinced that the effects perceived are caused by exposure to stagnant vapours.

By good drainage, and by every other possible precaution, this state of things must be obviated,

if health and happiness in country life are to be gained. One of the greatest blessings with a view to enjoying such life, and town life also, is *fire*. In country cottages it is seldom safe to be without fires, in the evening, and when people are sitting within doors: and generally speaking it would be wiser to economise in beer and similar articles which can safely be dispensed with, than in *fuel*, the free use of which is of so much importance to health and comfort. On the coldest day in winter, and when the table "groans" under the weight of foods and drinks which tempt people to do violence to their natures, there is sometimes a miserable handful of fire in the grate, not only insufficient to cause a genial warmth throughout the room, but the appearance of which is little in accordance with the festive occasion. A well piled up, blazing fire would do more towards the general happiness and merriment than all the rich viands and choice wines which are so lavishly proffered. Fire is a wonderful purifier, and, in this climate, cannot for any length of time during the year be safely dispensed with.

In no place, however salubrious, will man be secure of his full amount of health unless he be

wise and reasonable: but if he be so, and not affected with any disease requiring peculiar air, London itself is not unhealthy. It has, in fact, many advantages in point of health, considering its size, its dense population, and the bad habits of the people. Besides its excellent soil, it is in most places well drained; the streets transversing in all directions cause fine currents of air; moreover, the great influx of people and of vehicles keeps up a perpetually violent motion of the atmosphere, which presents an obvious advantage. The immense mass of fires tends to destroy very much impurity from exhalations which are at every moment generated. Above all, *the river* is a grand source of health, (notwithstanding the evils connected with it) from the strong current which twice in twenty-four hours, by means of the tides, passes through the very heart of the city. Should those great sanitory measures be carried into effect with regard to it, which have so long been before the public mind as desiderata, the Thames will be still more signally a blessing to the population of London, and some serious evils now connected with it, will disappear. When it is considered that the water of the Thames is imbibed by, and incorpo-

rated into the system of so many thousands of persons daily, and that it is impregnated with all the filth, the impurity, and the putrescence of so immense a city, the great importance of these measures will impress itself on every mind. There can be no doubt that, at certain periods, fevers, and even Cholera are generated by the noxious exhalations arising from the banks of the river, and that fewer of such visitations will be observed when the purification of the Thames is effected.

From observations already made, it will be clearly obvious that elevated ground is, generally speaking, most favourable for health, that valleys, however beautiful, will probably be marked by circumstances not thus favourable: and that gravel, as is invariably held to be the case, is healthful, because the wet does not rest upon it to form damp, but infiltrates through it, leaving a dry surface, and, moreover, a pure, clear surface. High table land, even although it should not be gravelly, is usually healthful from its mere elevation; for the fogs of hilly regions, that is to say, on *the table land,* are not of that injurious nature to the human being as are those of valleys: they are pure va-

pour, while those of the valley are always more or less noxious.

But whether in town or in the country, that requirement of nature which has reference to man as a social being, must be fulfilled, or he is not happy: it is never well that he isolate himself; he was made for his fellows. Unfortunately, the natural love of society has been abused, and "a man fond of society" is a phrase which, owing to such abuse, presents the picture of a character not much to be respected. Immediately on hearing it, the mind couples it with the idea of society *abused* and rendered a vehicle of evil; dwells painfully on conventions and vices which, having crept in, have marred the beauty and the good.

A very difficult thing it is, sometimes, to take that wise and happy middle course, which is health giving to mind and body: it is difficult because bad habits are more current in the world than good ones, and many bad habits are attractive as pandering to vanity, to laziness, or to other weaknesses of nature.

There is difficulty also to be found in the infinite varieties which the human being presents: some can

bear and can even thrive upon what to others is highly injurious. There are invalids who can endure the solitude of a retired village in the country; and when they can do so in the pure air it is well for them: but to others, the depression felt in solitude is sufficient to counteract much, if not all, of the good derived from the change of air, which is, in itself so favourable a circumstance.

There seems to be an antipathy, in civilized man, even to taking his *meals* alone: when he does so he feels himself to be in an inferior condition—a feeling which has its rise in truth. When food is so taken it is likely to be dispatched too hurriedly to favour the healthy digestive process; it is taken with less enjoyment, and without due attention paid either to *time*, to *quantity*, or, in some cases, even to *quality*. In all probability there will also be a failing in order and *regularity*, and these are essential for the healthful action of the various functions of life.

There is not a disease, but what invalids and nervous persons may, in solitude, fancy themselves the victims of it: and they will be likely so to foster their erroneous ideas, as to bring themselves into the very condition on which imagination

dwells, or into one equally to be feared. One case among many cases, may be mentioned, of an individual having enjoyed excellent health, as a rule, but who, from leading a solitary life, and from want of proper exercise of the mind, is always, in fancy, labouring under some disease; and who never hears one described—be it cancer, dropsy, any thing ever so frightful, but she fancies she has had to struggle with something of the kind.

How common also is it to hear an invalid friend say: "When you come I am better;" and to notice that, in society, pains and other inconveniences judged almost insupportable, become scarcely realities at all; so much does social intercourse divert the thought from self. Every time self is banished a step is gained, and *cure* will in such cases, more probably be effected: for, very certainly, the more the thought of disease can be forgotten, except so much as just care and attention require, the better every way. The forgetting it places it under circumstances favourable for cure. To those persons especially, therefore, who are disposed to dwell much on *self*—and diseased conditions renders this to a certain extent imperative on all, society of a

suitable kind, and as far as it can safely be borne, is to be cultivated.

Society such as has been indicated, imposes duties and occupations which are highly conducive to health, and to beauty of character: it makes continual demands upon the kindly and unselfish feelings: it asks sacrifices; and there is no moral health and beauty without sacrifices. People shut up within themselves sacrifice perhaps little or nothing; and the sick, sometimes, from centering their own and other people's thoughts perpetually on themselves, forget too much that any duty of the kind is theirs; such a tone of mind is not always readily shaken off when an improved state of health supervenes; but society comes in with its various requirements to correct what solitude and and other circumstances have rendered defective.

It is to be observed that children who, from fear on the part of parents, of contact with evil, in regard to their children, have not been allowed to mingle in the society of others of their own age, are, generally, far from being more amiable, more intelligent, and more healthy than other children. They will have, in all probability, contracted conceits and selfishnesses of various kinds, inimical to

health and even to life. In many cases they become sickly, "old before their time"—a thing much to be feared every way. Society should be cultivated for them, not from the mere wish to afford them an afternoons' amusement now and then, but as a corrector of many evils, and as one important means of building up the future character. The very best education very young children can have is that which the society of young children affords: they are better without books, except when they themselves demand books; and the books for them should merely illustrate what they see—those things in which they are so far interested as to ask for information concerning them. Inanimate nature, and animals will present a rich fund for their instruction: but they must have *man*, too, or the moral part of their natures—the part most connected with happiness, will not be drawn forth. Nor will it be sufficient to have their parents, their servants, &c.: persons of their own ages are necessary in order to teach them what is due to others, and to fit them for future struggle and for future happiness.

Moreover, exercise of body and mind being, for the first few years of life, the grand point to con-

sider, every thing should be done to promote it; and there is no means of properly promoting it so effectual as by cultivating society; for children love society: seldom will they play alone; but, in company with others there is an endless variety of active amusement, needing only the judicious but unobtrusive eye of older persons ever at hand. Apropos of *exercise:* there can be little doubt but many a curved spine, many bandy legs and other unhealthy conditions, might be dated from the cramped position to which young children are subjected for hours together in the mother's or the nurse's arms, instead of being taught to roll about on the floor,—the safest and best exercise for this period of life.

The practice of giving stimulants to young children cannot be too much condemned: animal food should be, for the first three or four years of life, entirely avoided; and for a much longer period should be but sparingly taken. No source exists more fertile of evil to the human race than that of extremely juvenile men and women. Meat brings about such a condition of things, by offering a stimulus too powerful for so tender a period of life. The human plant is, by its use, forced on to pre-

mature development, and, in many instances to premature decay. According to some nurses, however, meat cannot be administered too early: and, consistently with this opinion, they cultivate the love of it, by the disgusting and unhealthy practice of chewing it, and then putting into the infants' mouth. The instances known of children most successfully brought up, for some few years, without animal food, are highly satisfactory.

Among the important matters to be borne in mind with regard to health, must not be omitted *the sleeping of children with adults*. Few persons are perfectly healthful, even among those who are considered to be so: and, supposing them to be healthful, their condition is not one suited for rendering this practice desirable: while at no age is it safe to sleep with those affected by disease. Many have been the instances of disease contracted or rather *developed* by this practice: and perhaps in consumption as much as in any state is such a consequence highly probable.

Man, whether morally or physically viewed, takes so much of the character of surrounding circumstances, that no circumstance is beneath his notice when health is the subject of consideration:

and let it be remembered that the grandest results of science and of philosophy have had their origin in the observation of trifling matters. In many senses of the phrase it is *the little child* who enters into the Kingdom of Heaven.

THE END.

Edward A. Mitchener, Printer, Gt. Russell Street.