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THE THERMAL COMFORT;

OR,

POPULAR HINTS

FOR PRESERVATION AGAINST

COLDS, COUGHS, AND CONSUMPTION.

BY

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&c. &c. &c. &c.

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THE COMFORT;



POPULAR HINTS

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GOLD COIN AND COINAGE

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P R E F A C E.

THIS essay was written in St. Petersburg, and intended for insertion in some of the popular London periodicals ; but its publication was delayed till after my arrival in England. It has been suggested to me that it might prove useful if put into more general circulation, as its contents are addressed to the public, and not exclusively to the profession ; and I have been induced to reprint it from the *Lancet* of November 5th, 1842.

*No. 2, Porchester Place, Oxford Square,
November 20, 1842.*

THE FARM

THE FARM

This essay was written in the year 1840, and is
presented for insertion in some of the popular
periodicals, but the publisher was obliged to
refuse it on the ground that it was not
suitable for the purpose of the publication.
The author is not at all satisfied with the
result, and has not yet been able to
obtain a copy of the book from the
publisher.

THE FARM

THE FARM

THERMAL COMFORT, &c.

SEVERAL species of consumption have been recognised by pathologists. A certain number of these are hereditary, others are acquired; of which latter some may be attributed to accident, some to negligence. The hereditary is the most frequent, the most inveterate, and the least curable; but it may be often warded off, and often mitigated, by the same means that are preventive of aggravation.

With respect to the medical treatment of all the species I have nothing to offer; and I wish, only, by a few general hints, to diminish the exciting causes of this desolating malady throughout the British isles. The whole subject of the attempt will be included under the heads of CHAMBER WARMTH and PROTECTING RAIMENT. Let us hope that the experience derived through the accident of location in a northern latitude, may serve to impress upon the British public the advantages that are derivable from the precautionary

measures which may be employed against cold, and its various modes of producing bronchial disease. During a short sojourn in England, only two years ago, I was startled at the frequency of this complaint. In country practice I found that the proportion was nearly as great as in large towns, and on going the rounds with an old fellow-student with whom I spent a few days in Bedfordshire, I found that about every fifth case of disease was a consumptive one, either tuberculous, apostematous, or mucous. Here an interesting girl of eighteen; there a patient with an abundant expectoration from abscesses; and a third with lungs worn out by coughing, from neglected colds. The term *rhume negligé* is most common in France.

A late writer on the treatment of phthisis congratulates his patients upon the accession of catarrhs, as becoming the cause of a curative, or suspending, process. Of this I have known instances. The idea is not new, but those patients who need not such a species of cure are more worthy of congratulation. I wave all suggestions as to the methods of curing these complaints excepting that of preventing them, which is said to be the Hibernian method.

The late Dr. Young, in his philosophical work upon Consumption, has stated its duration to vary from six weeks to forty years. There is no exaggeration in this statement. Let us only inquire what has prolonged the disease thus almost indefinitely, I answer, WARMTH.

Lucus a non lucendo—icing the poles—I preach *warmth* to the inhabitants of the *temperate* zones. A few well-known facts put the sanatory operation of

warmth beyond doubt. It has been observed, that consumptive patients, confined even to their beds, and in an equable temperature, will detect, by their feelings, any variation in the thermometric scale, such as could not be recognised by a healthy person, living in the same room, or perhaps sleeping in the same bed. Its effects are an increase of cough, and of the difficulty of breathing.

Again; although many may find their graves abroad, who leave home for the restoration of health, yet many do recover if they migrate in time, and reach Madeira or the West Indies. They either allow the disease by such means to be arrested at once, or a small portion of the lungs only being lost, enough remains for the purposes of life. To what is this change to be attributed? To the removal of those exciting causes which, under other circumstances, would have kept up the irritation, viz., cold air, and cold currents.

The public have of late acquired some new and very consolatory ideas as to the nature of consumption. When attacked by this disease, they no longer despair, as formerly. They have hopes of permanent cure. If this fail, they know that their lives may be prolonged to an indefinite period, for they are now aware that the flame may be kept up by half a lung, or by two lobes out of three, or three out of five, and then they may catch a very severe cold, which will cure them radically. I do not deny the truth of all these positions. I would do everything to encourage the gasping patient in his belief of a cure, but I would admonish him, as I would the hitherto unattacked, but predisposed, individual, to *beware of cold*, and to *cherish*

warmth. An inflammation supervening in form of catarrh, may, by its adhesive processes, form a barrier between the sound and the diseased parts of the lungs, preventing, thus, the contamination of the former, and we have to thank Laennec for the discovery of that fact. But would any practical man wantonly expose a tuberculated lung, or an irritated mucous membrane, to atmospheric cold, with the hope of finding the operation remedial? Certainly not. I speak of practice. I confess my minimum thereof in this disease. I have met with cases of patients spitting blood and matter, who, by shutting themselves up in one room, as soon as the equinoctial gales began to blow, and remaining willing prisoners until the month of May, avoided all exciting causes, and so protracted their existence for years. I have sent equivocal cases to warm climates, where the patients have existed, in comparative comfort. And who has not met with such occurrences in his practice? What ghost need tell us of the consequence? But something more than a ghost is necessary to impress upon people's minds that exposure to drafts, negligence in clothing, and want of *thermal comfort* in chambers, do engender catarrhs, and that these tend to ripen dormant tubercles, to wear out mucous membranes, and to lay the foundation of many diseases of which flesh is made an heir.

Seeing, therefore, what the causes are which engender and hasten the progress of phthisis, seeing that that disease is, in a certain degree, to be palliated, and perhaps even cured, it becomes necessary to seek for those artificial means which may be under our control.

The basis of all these is *warmth*. The means of

procuring it sometimes are difficult, but in many cases practicable. The great desideratum, then, is to avoid the exciting causes, and where those cannot be averted to mitigate them, as much as possible.

It is proved by the bills of mortality that one-fifth of the population dies of consumption in the British isles, whereas the deaths in northern latitudes are infinitely fewer from that disease.

Whence this anomaly, that cold,—being, as we believe it to be, the great exciting cause of such maladies,—should have so little influence upon human life where it prevails in so great a degree? The secret is to be found in the fact that cold, in the northern realms, spends its fury upon vegetable life and inanimate matter, so that only certain species of plants can resist its influence.

That animal life would as soon perish is equally evident, but animal life is not exposed to it. The bear, covered by his non-conducting and impenetrable fur, covers himself up under warm leaves, the hare buries himself in the snow, the wolf finds holes, and the fox procures dens; and domestic animals, and those which are necessary to man, are provided with warm habitations. The *human species* is protected by the clothing which once protected the animal from the same influence. It is not correct to suppose that the Laplander and the Samoide are impervious to cold, or become accustomed to it. That is an error. They are more susceptible of cold than the inhabitants of more temperate zones; but they do not expose themselves to it. This circumstance surprises stran-

gers during their first winter's residence in Russia. They are astonished to find the natives enveloping themselves in warm clothing at the commencement of autumn, when their own moderately warm dress proves quite sufficient for *them*. What astonished them at the commencement, ceases to do so in time. As they sojourn longer in the climate they feel the cold less,—inasmuch, only, as they are better provided against it. They do not get accustomed to the *cold*, but to the *customs of the natives*, who never brave it but by dire necessity. It was not absolute cold which destroyed the French army. It was retreat, discomfiture, hunger, fatigue, discouragement, and total absence of every comfort. The soldiers of Gustavus Adolphus resisted the winter's cold in the thirty years' war, because they were warmly clad, and were victorious. The soldiers of Napoleon ultimately perished from cold itself, and hunger, because they were unprovided against them, and they had not the resisting stimulus of victory to guarantee them against the effects of physical wants. Let the soldier rob the sheep of his skin, fashion it into a pelisse, let him take as much from the bear as will make him a cap, to cover his head and ears, and the back of his neck, put double soles to his long boots, and line them with fur, and he will never perish from cold alone, between the Neva and the Niemen; for having done all this, he has accomplished no more than does every peasant who resists the cold—from no constitutional animal power, but from artificial protection against its influence. So armed, he may bivouack, night after night, with impunity, provided that he have

sufficient means of sustenance, and labours not under the influence of depressing moral causes.

Such is the peasant's external condition. Follow him into his dwelling, and see how that is constructed.

A log hut, made of entire trees, the corners dovetailed into each other, the spaces between the barks filled up with moss or oakum (calked), no breath of air can penetrate the room, for its boundaries present no crevices. His door shuts close, his window frames are double, two feet by three, the glass, or oiled paper, fixed in. In the corner of his room is a stove, whose chimney finds exit through the roof, no wide open space to allow of heat to descend, and cause a continual draft of air. His hut is insupportable to those who are unaccustomed to such indoor temperature. The flies, congregated in some corner, hang down like a swarm of bees, happy and buzzing in *the winter season*. He himself lies prostrate on his stove, which serves him for a bedstead. This man is a rare subject for consumption. Still, I repeat, it is not the man who resists the cold. It is the man's clothing, it is the provision he makes against the cold. Herein lies the proof: Remove him from his sphere of life, put him into livery, let him remain for hours behind a carriage in the winter season; let him imprudently traverse the court yards without his hat, and with no clothing beyond what he wears in the warm halls, and then what awaits him? Pleurisy, dropsy, slow death.

Ascending higher in the scale, how does the man in easy circumstances sustain the cold? By opposing to it its fell antagonist, *warmth*,—not himself; he knows better. You enter his chamber. "How warm your

rooms are, Ivan Ivanowitch." "Slava Boga Yospadin"—*Heat breaks no bones.** You dare not, as in England, enter his parlour with a great coat upon your back. That would be a woful offence,—a reflection upon him,—as much as to say, "You have economised your fuel; you have not heated your stoves." Such conduct would be an absolute misdemeanor. On quitting his rooms, he does not leave warmth behind him. He conveys it about with him, close confined, in a fur pelisse, whose non-conducting qualities will neither suffer animal heat to escape from within, nor cold to penetrate from without. These precautions are not regulated by whim or pleasure. They are peremptory. He watches the mercury in the thermometer, and he has clothing which defies every degree of cold.

But take the English resident, that the contrast between his habits in Russia and in England may be more complete. How does he clothe himself—a great coat, such as is worn in England, serves as a walking accompaniment in the autumn. This is soon changed for a warmer P jacket, which, in damp cold weather, is preferable to furs. As the cold increases, and the atmosphere is dry, he changes this jacket for a great coat lined with sable, as a walking dress; and, lastly, for severe cold, and when obliged to move in a sledge, an immense wrapper, lined with fur, envelops the whole body. His feet are always shod in clogs, and a wadded cap covers head and ears. Thus armed, *cap-a-pied*, no cold can injure him. It is not a matter of choice, but necessity. It is not optional, whether he put on this

* "Thank God, heat breaks no bones."—*A Russian proverb.*

warm clothing; it is imperative. The consequences of omitting to do so are not conjectural, but positive. Turn to his dwelling; review it in detail:—Double doors protect the ante-room from the cold air of the staircase. Upon entering, a sensation of hot-house heat is experienced, for this room is kept warmer than the other chambers. Once in the interior of the house, no perceptible difference is to be found in any of the rooms. Caloric has diffused itself equably through all of them. Whether it be in the dining, or in the drawing-room, or in the bed-chamber, or on the staircase by which you reach it, (when not upon the same flat,) you move in the same equable temperature. Double windows, fitted close into immensely thick walls, exclude the external air. The rooms are warmed by stoves, which are so constructed as to waste none of their caloric with the smoke, which makes its exit through a narrow chimney opening. Some innovations have lately taken place in this particular: English grates have been substituted for stoves in the parlours of many houses, which they warm sufficiently, and have the peculiar advantage over stoves, that the air of the chamber is more fresh and pure. But then these are *inner* rooms, and those which surround them,—the halls, the corridors, the staircases,—are heated by stoves. The bed-room offers this striking contrast to the English dormitory, that it is warmer in winter than in summer. Not chilled with cold, stripping off his clothes with all possible speed, does the inhabitant of St. Petersburg jump into his bed and bury himself under an enormous weight of blankets, to get out of the cold stage. He undresses himself leisurely, and is warm enough under a common quilt and a single blanket. He

does not dread that most awful of all moments when he must leave a warm bed, with his teeth chattering in his head as he emerges into a frost-chilled room from out his close-drawn curtains. No warming-pan, lackered and shining, is seen suspended near his kitchen fire-place. He is not troubled with a species of barking, which may be denominated the *bed-room cough*, characteristic of an English house, so audible when the transit is made from the face-scorching fire-place to the cold, freezing dormitory. In each room of a Russian house is placed a thermometer, by which the heat is regulated. If it be oppressive, a ventilator soon reduces the temperature. If the apartment be too cold, more fuel is thrust into the stove. These, then, are the means employed by the natives against the cold of their climate, and they are sufficiently efficacious to prevent its pernicious effects, and such are, I believe, the real causes of their escaping the many pectoral complaints which are prevalent in more temperate zones.

If it be inquired whether the climate in itself be not a sufficient guarantee, owing to the steadiness of its temperature, it may be answered that no city in Europe is more subject to variations of temperature than St. Petersburg. Situated in a morass, and exposed to sea and land breezes, sheltered by no surrounding hills, it is subjected to continual currents of air; and such are the variations in its temperature, that the thermometer will sometimes fall twenty degrees in as many hours. The man who makes excursions in the neighbourhood may leave the city in the morning, wrapped up in warm furs, and enter it again at night, dripping with rain;

and *vice versâ* : and I should say that were it not for the provision made against cold in every shape, the climate of St. Petersburg would be the last which I should select for a phthisical patient.

It is to *warmth*, then, that I attribute the comparative exemption from these complaints in northern latitudes ; and having stated the advantages, negative as they may be, which are due to it, I shall mention some of the *inconveniences* which are the positive effects of it.

The most obnoxious evil which a house warmed upon the Russian system offers to a stranger, upon his first arrival, is the want of fresh air in the apartments. There is universally a close, heavy, and, sometimes, a sickly smell prevalent in Russian houses, not to be disguised by the burning of spices. There is not that fresh, healthy, bracing feel in a room, whose windows are hardly opened once in a week, which is characteristic of an English parlour at breakfast time, the doors and windows of which have been wide open during the whole of the time employed in dusting the chairs and lighting the fire. This is true : but, on the other hand, the lady of the Russian house does not put her fingers into the warm water of the slop-basin to restore the circulation. Which is preferable ? A robust, healthy person will decide for the latter ; a consumptive one, exhausted by a fit of coughing, occasioned by the transit from the bed-room to the parlour, will prefer the former ; and to such individuals are these observations addressed. Still, in candour I must place *impurity of air* among the most potent inconveniences of equable chamber temperature. Those who are unaccustomed to it are, at the onset, much annoyed by a depressing

influence which it has upon the nervous system. They lose a certain degree of buoyancy, and a degree of inertia is engendered, an inaptitude to exertion and to mental occupation, and an irresistible desire to sleep, as soon as they are seated in a warm room, after having been exposed for any length of time to the cold air. This is often accompanied by some uneasy sensations about the head; the appetite is impaired; the functions are not performed, as they should be; and, last not least, there ensues a total want of sleep.

Such are the inconveniences which many experience upon their first arrival; and the question in reality, should be, not "How do you stand the cold?" but, "How do you bear the heat?" Headaches are frequent, obstinate. Dyspepsia is not uncommon, and the stranger expresses himself as being "altogether out of sorts;" but this wears off in time, and, by adopting such a plan as I shall mention hereafter, he may in a great measure counteract these effects, whilst he is certain to avoid any ill consequences from frigorific influence.

A positive ill, and one to which almost all the natives are subject, is found in hæmorrhoidal affections. These, in a great measure, may be avoided by proper means, for many strangers who pursue the same modes of life as they do in more temperate regions, are, in a great measure, exempt from them. The Russians are, during the winter months, an inactive race, and what exercise they do take is of a passive kind, so that the circulation is not propelled by bodily motion. When within doors, the merchant reclines upon a leathern sofa, wrapped up in a warm morning gown. When exposed to external air he is enveloped in a heavy fur mantle, which

protects him from cold, but allows of no vigorous motion of body. Hence he remains stationary, stamping his feet upon the ground, before his shop-door, or in his warehouse ; and if he be obliged to move to any distance he gets into his sledge, and drives passively along. These sedentary habits are the chief cause of the hæmorrhoidal affections to which the natives are subject. This, then, is another of the disadvantages which arise from the effects of such warm rooms upon the system. Many of them may be counteracted, and, by adopting Russian prudence, as regards the pernicious influence of cold, all the salutary habits of English life may be indulged in, not without benefit, and with no risk.

I am not offering these hints to the strong and robust,—to those who can brave all things, and who ridicule care and caution ; I am addressing those whose lives daily depend upon these two requisites, and whose existence is often abridged by neglect of them. I am endeavouring to impress upon those who are already affected, or predisposed to diseases of the respiratory organs, that the inhabitants of northern latitudes are in a great measure free from such complaints, not because that, living under the poles, they are inured to cold and ice, but because they have found out, and never neglect, the means of protecting themselves from their pernicious consequences. The cure or prevention of such ills may be said to be a species of commutation of one evil for another. It remains to accept or reject it,—to put up with a few of the inconveniences which have been specified, as attendant upon warmth, or to risk certain destruction of life. Will the patient who sees it in this light hesitate upon the choice ?

The inhabitants of cold latitudes are not impervious to cold; they do not brave it with impunity; it is fatal to animal existence, and produces exhaustion of the vital powers. Strangers, arriving from temperate regions, do not get accustomed, or inured, to the cold: nay, the longer they remain in the northern latitudes, the more sensitive they become of its influence. They resist it better on their arrival than subsequently, because they bring health, vigour, and a stock of caloric with them. They become finally reconciled, not to the cold or the climate, but to the habits of the natives. They become, like the natives themselves, sensitive, chilly, very susceptible of cold, and they adopt all those measures which experience has proved to be necessary for providing against it. Hence, after sojourning in northern, and returning to southern, latitudes, they feel the cold most bitterly in winter: they find that, although they have quitted a cold climate, they have left warm houses also. The following may be taken, as a model of a letter from an Englishman, who has spent a winter in his own country, to his friends at St. Petersburg, in which city he had resided for some years:

“ I have been confined to my room by an obstinate cough, an inconvenience to which I was always subject in the winter season when I resided in England, but which I escaped during the whole time of my residence in St. Petersburg. I had no idea I should suffer so much from the cold. Yet it is not from external cold, for I took the precaution of bringing my Russian furs with me. This was quite unnecessary; for after all the trouble which I had with them, I find that I cannot wear them here. I do not understand the reason of this

apparent anomaly, for I have a thermometer in my window, and find that the same degree of cold here is much more supportable than in St. Petersburg. I should not have dared to venture out without a pelisse in Russia, where I find a P jacket quite sufficient here to keep me warm. It is certain that eight degrees of Reaumur,—in London, are more supportable than two degrees in the imperial city. It is, however, of the indoor cold that I have to complain so bitterly, for indoor warmth is a phenomenon only to be found in such houses as are provided with stoves in the ante room, and double windows, of which comforts, alas, I have had no experience since I left Russia.

“ I am afraid that you will hardly be able to read this scrawl, for I am writing to you in my bed-room, which is about the same temperature as your ice-cellars. The water is literary frozen in the jug, and I cannot see out of my windows, which are like ground glass; and I amuse myself when in bed, where, by means of three blankets and a thick quilt, I keep myself moderately warm, with trying to recognize the different species of plants drawn by Jack Frost upon the window-panes. Indeed, I am unfortunate in my dormitory, for, being Christmas time, and the house full of guests, I am lodged in one of the coldest rooms in it. It is enough to try one's temper to hear, as I do, when I complain of cold, that ‘ It is not so cold as in Russia ’—that ‘ surely I ought to bear the cold better here than those who have never been exposed to severe cold ’—that ‘ people do not die of cold in the streets, that their beards are not frozen, that they do not lose their noses by frost, as in Russia ; ’ and then I am told, sarcastically,

that I am 'no Russian,' for 'I cannot bear the cold. When I come down to breakfast, with blue hands and swollen fingers, I am offered the slop-basin to dip them in. I limp as I walk,—' You have chilblains, I suppose; they are common winter guests; how dreadfully you must suffer from them in Russia!' Yet I never heard of them, or certainly never suffered from them, during ten years that I sojourned there. 'What, no chilblains in Russia, where people lose their fingers and toes by cold, as we are informed upon the best authority?' It is useless to say anything to the contrary, they will not believe me. Baron Munchausen would meet with more credit were he to assert again that the cold was so great in Russia that the sounds froze in his trumpet.

"What are most annoying to me are, the constant drafts which prevail in English houses. Every gust of wind makes the casements rattle; and if the rain pelts against the windows, it penetrates through the sashes, and runs down upon the window-seat. The sashes being constructed to let up and down, by lead pulleys, it is impossible that they should fit close. I wish that Corporal Trim had robbed them all of their leads, when he wanted bullets to carry on the siege of Dendermont.

"The drafts from the windows are dreadful. Thus you hear of cricks in the neck from sitting upon the window-seat. It is not from above, alone, that these drafts prevail, although constant puffs of smoke do unceremoniously make their *entrée*. The legs and feet are also exposed to a cold-air-bath from drafts which come under the doors, and which make the carpet, if it be not fastened by nails, dance up and down. The

drawing-rooms are somewhat more comfortable; but then, when a party breaks up for the night, it is cruel to mount two pair of stairs to get to a miserably cold bed-room. The gusts of wind in ascending the stairs are sufficient to blow out the candle. Then, if there be no warming-pan, the dread of the cold ague fit which awaits you between clean fresh-mangled sheets, is ever before your thoughts at night. When once warm in bed, I cannot imagine how it is that human nature can muster up courage enough to leave it, considering what awaits it upon doing so, as when you hear the rap at the chamber door, in the morning, 'Your shaving water, sir,' and you must get out of bed to take it from the intruding hand. How is it that in spite of all this I see so many rosy faces, such colour, such health? It is all attributable to 'fresh air and cold water.'

"But then, poor Amelia; where is she? Since the commencement of the cold weather her cough has much increased, and I fear that she will share the fate of her sister and younger brother. She feels every change of temperature, and can indicate almost the degree of cold by the effect it has upon her lungs. I shall persuade her friends to try a winter in St. Petersburg, and the effects of Russian warm rooms. If my cough does not get better soon, I shall myself return, for I cannot stand the cold of this climate."

I need only mention the invention of the respirator, to prove that the attention of the public has been of late directed to the prejudicial influence of cold air upon delicate lungs and the organs of voice. This shield has met with protection and recommendation

from the scientific members of the profession, and that it may be used even within doors advantageously, is, I think, admissible. A delicate female, labouring under cough, which is aggravated by every external impression of cold, should not make her transit from the fire-side through a cold, damp hall, and ascend a flight of cold stairs, without its accompaniment.

Various essays have already appeared in England from the pens of able physiologists regarding the advantages of warm clothing, and the danger of negligence in that respect. I have, therefore, little to add to what has before been said on this head. I do not presume to put myself on the list with those who have devoted much time and labour to this subject, upon which I venture to touch in a general way only, but, a sojourner in a foreign land, I may be allowed to add my mite of approbation to the utility of such works as have been published by Drs. Paris and Combe, and to state that the necessity of such precautions as they recommend has a host of evidence in its favour, and this evidence I am bound to give, because I have proofs of it in all that I see around me. I do believe that an immense quantity of catarrh and affections of the bronchiæ, nay, of genuine consumption, are avoided in the northern latitudes by the attention paid to warm clothing without, and to equable temperature within. In fourteen years' practice in those regions, I have found pulmonary affections to form the minimum of my list of diseases. I am persuaded that in my own case it has been the specific which I sought for, in vain, during twenty years of my life, in which I suffered from continued harassing coughs, and their de-

bilitating consequences. The admonition of my friends, when I quitted warmer climates for these regions, “ne frigora lædant,” have proved superfluous.

With such impressions, I venture to urge those who labour under similar affections to use those precautions which may guarantee them against many of the distressing symptoms that neglect engenders.

These observations are addressed to two classes, and comprised under two heads. To the affluent, and to those in moderately easy circumstances, a stricter attention to clothing and to chamber warmth is recommended. It is almost useless to address the poor and needy. Their means of providing against such complaints are too insufficient to allow us to hope for any great diminution in the mortality from lung disorders in that class of society. A few hints, however, as regards *prevention*, may not be wholly lost, even upon the poorer orders. I should like to see the inhabitants of the northern counties in England adopt, during the cold months of the year, the sheep-skin pelisse of the Russian boor. It would serve them in several capacities. It would supply them with warm clothing, be an additional cover to their bed at night, and stand instead of fire on the hearth, when they have perhaps no more than the means of furnishing sufficient fuel to cook potatoes. Wrapped up in a sheep-skin pelisse, the working man might sit in his chimney-corner in comparative comfort. He would have less inducement to go abroad, less temptation to seek the blazing hearth of a neighbouring ale-house, if he had the means of making himself more comfortable at *home*. It is the cold of his hovel that he has to dread, more

than the inclemency of the weather out of doors. This he can brave; his labour may keep him warm without, but it is when returning from his plough and from the fields, wet, tired, and chilled, that he would feel the comforts of stripping off his working clothes, and wrapping himself up in a woollen garment. By such means he would avoid coughs and colds, which, once contracted, none of the means within his reach can serve to abbreviate. He must expose himself, he cannot "take care of his cold," as the expression signifies, and yet, in fact, he does so literally. He cannot take care of himself. All the means which the poor can employ can be solely those of the *preventive* system, and little may be within their power. This little may be attended to with advantage. I have been in the hovel in my younger days, and have passed hours in professional attendance where the winds have entered by the doors and crazy casements. This "thorough draft," an expression so common in an English mouth, might be in some measure obviated. The windows might be made to fit more closely without any expense; and paper, pasted all round the casements, would prevent the gusts of wind from puffing in. No pane should ever be allowed to remain unrepaired. If the penury be such as not to permit of the glazier's visit, the opening should be pasted up with oiled paper, which allows light to enter. The doors may be made to fit more closely; they may be listed round; and all such matters, fully explained and insisted on by the philanthropic, would confer a great boon on the poor man, and doubly so if he be sick.

Let these matters be fully explained to him, and as familiarly as possible. Take his common phrase, "Died for want of breath," and comment upon it. Show him the construction of that apparatus which sustains life, make him feel the necessity of its operations, inform him that all the functions of the body are sustained by it, that neither can his blood flow nor his stomach digest, nor his muscles have power to act, if the respiratory organs be deranged in their functions; and once convinced of this, it will be more easy to convince him that an instrument which is so complicate, so delicate, and performs so many functions, must be kept in as perfect good order as possible. Satisfy him that every *lesion* of such an organ must be attended with consequently bad effects, and that the grand secret for keeping it in a healthy state is not to expose it too suddenly to atmospheric changes, and particularly to the chilling influence of drafts of air, which immediately affect the delicate texture, prevent the circulation of blood in its vessels, and so produce inflammation or cough. Enable him to understand that constant coughing acts upon that organ, and determines too great a quantity of blood to it; that sometimes the delicate vessels, not being strong enough to resist the impetus of the blood poured into them, break, like the fine meshes of a spider's web which has been overstrained; that the blood is then coughed up, sometimes in such quantities as to endanger life, at others to produce death by slow degrees, terminating in consumption. The texture is too delicate to be repaired, as other textures are, because the part itself *cannot be at rest*, so that it

ulcerates and frets away ; and that which formerly sustained all the other functions now being exhausted, a stop is put to the working of the whole machinery. Show him that in many cases this is not to be avoided, —that diseases of these organs are the inheritance of the rich and poor, for to the laws of Providence all must submit, but that many evils are produced by our imprudence and by wilful neglect, which might be obviated by care and attention.

Let the good folks at home establish *temperance societies for the lungs* as well as for the stomach, and they will effect a quantity of positive good. Nay the two sister virtues will go hand in hand. How might not the peasants of each country gain by a change in the habits of their lives ! Introduce temperance societies into Russia, and warm houses and clothing among the English, and the reform would, so far as we can imperfectly see, be productive of the greatest blessings to the populations of both. It is in vain to hope for perfection at once, but time does work wonders, and by time is to be understood enlarged views of mankind in general, and the promotion of these views. Let every one do something for the good of his fellow-creatures, each endeavouring to improve their physical condition. Their moral condition will not stand still. As they find more comfort in life the more will they cherish it, and the more easily will they discover that morality is the essence of comfortable existence. Let none be discouraged by the idea that individual exertion is valueless.

So early as the year 1819, when I quitted Edinburgh, I observed that double windows were introduced into the New-College class-rooms, and I believe that many new

mansions of the nobility are so provided. This is certainly one of the most essential points towards securing an equable temperature in chambers. It constitutes a desideratum in English houses, but as it can be effected only in few instances, and as double windows must be the portion of the affluent, so I would simply suggest that the *single* windows in all houses should be made *air-tight*, and that the casements should not rock, as many of them do. This, particularly with respect to the bedroom windows, for that is the purgatory of an English house. The windows in the bed-room of an invalid should be made air-tight, by good carpenter's work, but where old casements rattle they should be made steady by a nail or two driven into the sides of the sash, and then paper should be pasted or glued all round, so as to prevent any wind from coming in at the sides. The sash must be provided with a little door, which may be opened at pleasure, when the room is arranged in the morning, but not left open too long, so as to reduce the temperature too low.

Here, I am well aware, I have to contend with the strong and general national prejudices of a cleanly people. There is "nothing like fresh air." If the room have a close smell, the windows are opened until the apartment gets down to the freezing point, and much below it, and then it "smells wholesome." That is true; but still it is death to tender lungs, and many a soul is sent to its long home by the currents of air in an English house. The expressions of natives may be bandied about, for there is truth in them. "Your rooms have a close, musty, sickly smell," says the English traveller in St. Petersburg. "On est toujours dans un air coulan,"

said a lady to me who had passed two years in London and Edinburgh. The *juste milieu* so difficult to be accomplished in the political world, may be found in the physical; and as foreigners in Russia do not sacrifice all their old habits, but blend them with those of the natives, so I think the same may be done in England with very great advantage; and in this respect attention to the window-frames is of the first importance. The Russian rooms are provided with stoves, but these are not necessary. A well-built fire-place, which throws the heat into the room, and allows only the smoke to go up the chimney,—not one of the old-fashioned sort, which takes in half of one side of a dining room,—but a well-constructed, well-fitted grate, is quite sufficient to keep the apartment warm, provided that the doors and windows be air-tight; but there must be no rattling of casements, no gust of wind from under the doors, to make the carpet dance, or adieu to *comfort*. This English word, so little understood by foreigners, is not even so by ourselves, as regards either the construction of our houses or the mode of heating them. In cold weather, fires should be kept up day and night. The secret consists in *keeping the enemy out of the house*. If he enter, it is difficult to turn him back. By well regulated fires Russian stoves may be dispensed with. The air is more pure, too, in rooms where there are grates; and if the doors and windows be tight, there will be no draft of consequence. The room which requires the most attention, and which is always the most neglected, is *the ante-room, or hall, or long-passage, or that space into which the street-door opens*. Here a warm stove is imperative. Who is not acquainted with

the sound of the instantaneous, spasmodic, choking cough which seizes the invalid in his transit from the warm parlour through the cold hall, and up the chilly staircase? This is a cruel experiment for tender lungs,—an antidote to all the good which medicine can effect. Here is the comfort of a day destroyed in a few seconds, and a night of cough and uneasiness ensues which might be avoided. It is in this respect that Russian houses are so preferable. *The hall* is the warmest of all the apartments, for it is the most heated, in order to defy the admission of the greatest cold. How is this to be accomplished in English houses? It is not easy to alter their construction. A stove will, however, warm the ante room, and it might be so constructed as to allow of a long chimney, which could be carried along the wall and up the staircase. The wealthy only can accomplish these comforts, but by doing so they may remain more securely at home than by seeking warmth under Italian skies. No houses are so ill constructed for invalids as the English. The Scotch flats are infinitely preferable, and will allow more easily of all these improvements; but the inhabitant of an English house has to descend from the drawing-room to the parlour, whence, again, to the former, thence, perhaps mounting two flights of cold stairs, to the bed-room. Health may brook the varieties of temperature to which these operations expose us, but very delicate beings cannot, and the patient may fall a sacrifice.

In conclusion, a few observations as to *clothing*.

The invalid, who has to traverse a cold apartment, just emerging from a warmer one, should be provided with a large shawl, which will envelop the head and

neck. Here the respirator may be used with great advantage, for avoiding a *single gulp* of cold air is of the greatest consequence to the consumptive patient. Thus protected, the bed-room may be reached without danger. If this be not so warm as is desirable, let it at least be made as warm as circumstances will admit. A warm, quilted dressing-gown is an essential part of the bed-room apparel. It should be close at hand, and lie upon the foot of the bed, so as to be slipped on before the patient has totally emerged from the couch. It should be worn during the toilet operations. The feet should be shod in slippers lined with fur or wool. This clothing, than which nothing can be warmer, guarantees the invalid against all bed-room cold, so far as clothing is capable of doing it. The same should be worn at night, previously to going to bed, whilst undressing. As to the cold ague fit which is produced by getting between clean-mangled sheets—how is that to be avoided? The warming-pan presents the only remedy, and the use of that should never be omitted.

By a strict attention to all these matters,—by warming the house throughout as effectually as possible,—by avoiding all currents of air,—by exposing the body as little as possible to impressions of cold, which may be effected by the use of proper clothing,—and by ever bearing in mind that all affections of the lungs are aggravated by neglect of these precautions, some good may be promised to the community.

In offering these hints to the public, I am merely doing so under the impression that an acknowledged truth requires to be often repeated before it is prac-

cally embraced. Unfortunately, it is, though well recognised, often forgotten, and, without some imperative necessity to remember it, it glides away, like the stream,—

“*Labitur et labetur in omne volubilis ævum.*”

THE END.

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