The nurse.

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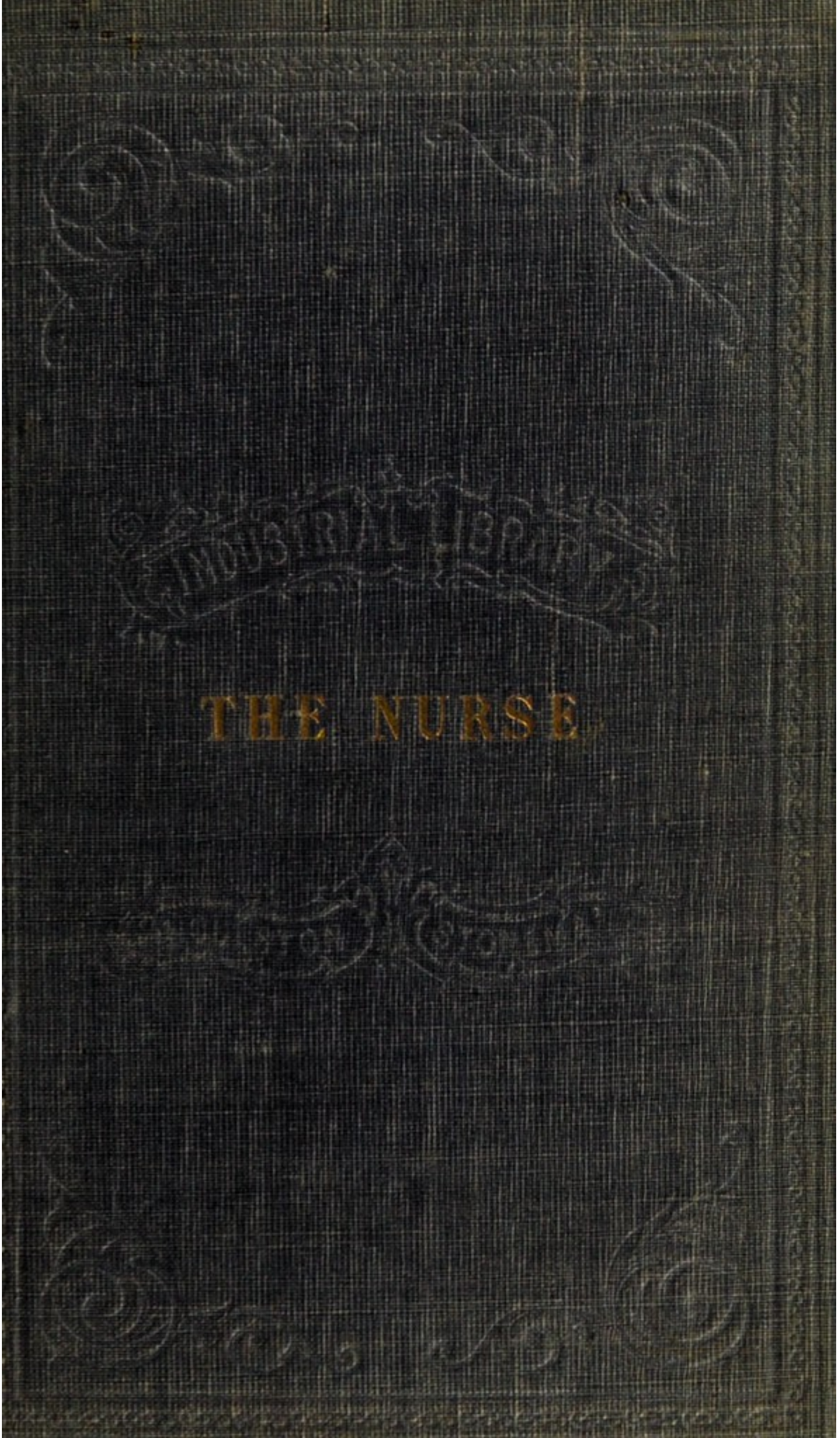
THE NURSE.

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Wm. R. E. Brooks

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THE

NURSE.

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CONTENTS.

PREFACE.

An old woman—such the writer professes to be—may be considered bad authority upon many matters, but not fairly so on the subject which she has undertaken to treat of in the following pages, inasmuch as she has not only herself borne and reared a numerous family, but has watched the bedside of innumerable friends and neighbours, as a deputy for the Doctor, or in the more humble capacity of a friend or Nurse, for at least thirty years of her life. She has also had the advantage of a good education, through the kindness of a brother in the medical profession, with whom she lived as housekeeper, and whose books, experience, and conversation, were always at her command, during a long period of uninterrupted and affectionate intercourse.

May she not then be permitted to offer some advice on subjects with which she is familiar?

—and ought it not to be proportionably estimated, as she does not offer it unsolicited? Gratuitous advice is generally thought little of, but having received a liberal fee from the Publishers of this book, who (no doubt attracted by her fame for skill and prudence) have actually sought her out in the retirement of her cottage, and found her in her arm-chair, she fairly claims attention.

She assures those individuals, whether male or female, who may consult the following pages, that they will not find in them any thing but what she knows to be correct from experience. She has not read much in medical books, though they were within her reach, but has made her own observations in every one of the particulars about to be introduced.

It should, however, be stated here, that there is no intention upon her part of meddling with the medical or surgical treatment of diseases, nor of intruding in any degree upon the province of regular practitioners. No! she would be reluctant to diminish their scanty and hard-earned fees, after all the expense and trouble they have been at in learning long words and seeing hospital sights; but she thinks it quite

fair to give hints and advice to the humble, anxious, and faithful attendants of the bedside, whether acting under the direction of the doctor in cases of danger or difficulty, or taking the entire management of the sick chamber in common cases, and even in some critical circumstances (supposing the absence of the physician), in which they may be of great use, by exercising presence of mind, common sense, and ordinary skill.

Many gentlemen now-a-days could teach their butlers, and still more their grooms, how to discharge their functions, nay, could supersede them in case of necessity, and are very good coachmen from choice.

Both ladies and gentlemen are good judges of cookery; many of them know how dishes ought to be prepared and served up to the minutest point, and can give the most exact and correct instructions as to stuffing, garnishing, and dressing. Ladies are far wiser than their nursery maids, and housemaids, but all pay implicit deference to the NURSE, upon whom all are dependent from first to second childhood.

The nurse, of whatever description, whether

for the suckling infant or the drivelling dotard, for the lady in her confinement or the child in its youth to maturity, or for the strong man laid prostrate by sickness, is a person of no mean consideration and influence. Many ladies have the will, but want the knowledge and experience requisite, to instruct those who may be called upon to act as nurses.

Of all the Guides to SERVICE, therefore, *this* is the most important. Nurses ought to be well instructed, and not left to pick up the knowledge of their business by mere chance practice.

To enlighten them in some degree is the object of this book, which the writer wishes were more worthy of the subject, though she cannot help thinking, on the whole, that it is not bad as the production of "An Old Woman."

THE NURSE.

The stock of instruments necessary for you (I address the nurse in the familiar second person) to possess, is easily enumerated—a pair of large scissors, and a pair of small ones, a pen-knife, a good pencil or pencil case, an inkstand (with ink in it), a few good pens, some sheets of writing paper, and a lavement apparatus of your own, kept in good order, and adapted for children as well as adults—these, with a watch, if you can afford one, will be sufficient to set you up.

As to your qualifications. You ought to know how to make lint and common plaisters; to spread the latter; to make saline draughts, arrange bedding, fasten bandages, &c. You will need dexterity and delicacy of touch in dressing blisters, applying plaisters, changing the linen of a patient, &c. A handy and good-tempered nurse, indulgent to the humours and caprices of the invalid, is a treasure in a sick room. It is not always that a medical gentleman can be found, and prompt and judicious treatment on your part may often save a heavy fit of sickness to those who employ you.

What the treatment should be in each of the

cases in which you may act, I shall point out in due course, though not in any very regular order, but just as notions may occur to me. It is of the greatest importance that you should be able to read and write, else you may be sometimes sadly at a loss when directions are given. I know that your memory may be very good, and that you may recollect exactly the very words that are said; but misunderstandings often do unfortunately occur, from the doctor's meaning one thing, the patient understanding another, and the nurse differing from both. Let me advise you never to receive a verbal direction of the least importance; have a bit of paper ready, and ink, and a pen that is fit to write with, or at least a black lead pencil that will mark; let every direction given to you by the doctor, or any body else, be fairly written down and read over before they leave the room. Whenever drugs or physic are sent without a written direction, be sure to send them back. This system will save you much trouble in the end, and, what is of more consequence, may save the life of your patient.

Indeed, on the supposition that you may not be able to read print, I am at this moment in a puzzle—for in this case, how can you receive benefit from what I am now composing for your guidance? I can only hope that some kind lady will read these pages for you.

If you are no scholar, be sure to make yourself fully acquainted with the meaning of every word of the doctor's directions before he leaves a sick person under your care; do not scruple

to ask him every particular as to the administering of pills, draughts, &c., &c., and the course you are to pursue in case any turns should occur before his next visit; and if you commit any blunder from misunderstanding, or neglecting the doctor's directions, do not make bad worse by concealing the truth from him.

The only way of repairing an error is by a prompt and candid acknowledgment of it; deception in any case is wicked and disgraceful, and in cases of sick people it may prove fatal: the patient will never trust you again if once you try to deceive him, even in a trifling matter. I must warn you also to avoid another fault, that of being consequential and conceited amongst the servants of the family with which you may be engaged; good temper, and willingness to be pleased, will go far towards making friends for you.

At the same time, since your eye and head ought to be of more value than their hands, you ought not to be made a drudge, and should have indulgences in many respects to which the servants have no pretensions; on the other hand, you should give as little trouble to them as possible. It is almost unnecessary to add, that you will require sufficient changes of linen, stockings, bed gowns, and caps, to answer the purposes of personal cleanliness, during the many days and nights in which you may be unable to leave a sick chamber, and soft light slippers that will not creak, nor in any way annoy the sensitive ears of a fretful patient.

In describing the various duties which nurses in general have to discharge, I shall begin with the first dawn of human life—with the newly born infant, for the functions of the nurse have to be exercised even preparatory to its being ushered into the world, in preparing and disposing every thing for its appearance.

When the announcement is made that your services are required in the lying-in chamber, you should busy yourself in selecting, airing, and placing within reach, the various articles of dress which will be wanted for the mother and the infant, in seeing that there is a sufficient supply of warm water, some narrow tape, and a pair of scissors, lying at hand, and an abundance of warm napkins. You should next prepare the bed by placing the mattress uppermost, and on the centre laying a dressed skin or Macintosh apron, over which you are to throw the blanket and sheet as usual, upon which another blanket, folded into a breadth of about three feet, must be laid, and the bed again covered by a sheet; the upper clothing must then be put on as usual, in thickness proportioned to the season. After delivery has taken place, the uppermost under sheet and folded blanket are to be drawn from under the patient, who will then have a comfortable bed to lie upon, without the imminent risk which would have been the consequence of her rising to

have her bed made. The bed being now ready, undress the patient, and put a flannel petticoat, open in the front and made with a broad band and buttons, underneath the usual night clothes, which, when she is in bed, is to be folded up above the hips.

The mother having been made comfortable and quiet, and having taken the cordial, which is generally wrongly administered by the advice of the old doctor, and contrary to that of the young practitioner, and being properly bandaged round the body, we must next attend to the new-born babe.

Although the cry of her little one will be no serious disturbance to the patient, for it is the sweetest sound that ever struck upon the ear of woman, especially if it be the first time of her lying-in, and she has not brought forth in shame and sorrow, you will have it conveyed, in the first instance carefully wrapped in soft flannel, into another apartment, where its eyes, the shape of its nose, limbs, and the anticipated colour of its hair, can be duly discussed, and the wonder and delight of those who may assist on the occasion for the first time can be expressed, without exciting the sensibilities of the anxious listener within the curtains. If there should be any thing remarkable in the appearance of the child, let there be no whispering or scampering about; do not rush upon the doctor, but wait quietly until he makes his appearance.

When I was a young nurse, it was not uncommon for children to be born tongue-tied, and I have seen more than one put to much

pain, and reduced very much by bleeding, in consequence of operations performed by very clever surgeons. Some how or other, whether there be a fashion in these things, or that the march of intellect has something to do with it, very few children now are admitted to be tongue-tied, and with these the doctor does little or nothing. Indeed, I have heard many young medical men say, there is no such thing as a tongue-tied *girl*, and so far as my own experience goes, I must agree with them; but of my own ten children, consisting of five boys and five girls, the former were considered tongue-tied, and operated upon accordingly; the latter were free in their privileged member. If you should fancy an infant to be affected in this way, take care not to agitate the mother about it; leave the matter to the doctor. The keeping of any important secret from a patient (I do not, however, mean that this trifling affection of the tongue is one) should rarely be attempted by any person, but an old woman and a nurse should be discreet in the time of their communications. The doctor will know better what to tell. He is a man of sense in general, and will convey serious intelligence to the invalid with more propriety than any other person.

As to ordinary news, that has been the nurse's perquisite from time immemorial, but just at this crisis the best news is—no news at all. You and the doctor are held responsible for the patient, and you must not abate any of your claim on this point: lay it down as an absolute rule, that under the doctor the sole right of

administering news, or physic, is vested in the nurse for the time being, and *they* will acquit themselves with the most credit, whose doses of either the one or the other are the fewest and the smallest.

The mother will probably soon ask you to place the babe in her bosom, and will indulge in a natural and becoming pride, as she looks upon its little form and tiny features, and fancies a resemblance to some beloved one. Unless her husband be a hardened brute, he will soon come into her chamber, and thank God for his goodness in presenting him with a living babe,—if the first-born, how precious is it!—and for preserving the mother during the pains and perils of child-birth.

But after all this you must enjoin as much quiet as possible; the mother requires repose. During the confinement of your principal charge, a good deal of particular attention will be required at your hands, but it is not my province to write a treatise upon every disease to which our sex is liable on this occasion. Some of the remarks, however, which I shall offer hereafter upon the management of patients affected with fever, and those who have undergone severe operations, are to be considered as applicable to lying-in women in certain circumstances. Yet I will here state, in as few words as I can, what will not admit of being introduced elsewhere.

Your patients, mother and child, must be duly and constantly supplied with fresh, but not cold air. Their room ought to be as spa-

cious as the house will afford, and should communicate by open doors with apartments in which fires are burning in winter, or by night, and the windows ought to be a little open by day, so as to keep up a constant change of air, but without draughts, especially in cold or damp weather.

It is of very great consequence, to avoid sudden and long-continued exposure to cold; patients are disposed to perspire a good deal when they are doing well, and are very subject to take cold if they fall asleep in a draught of cold air. A good nurse, however, who can always contrive to manage the curtains, the doors, and the fire, so as to keep the room in an agreeable state, will find the trouble well bestowed.

Lying-in women are from some cause or other very liable to take and to communicate the puerperal, which is a very infectious fever, and extremely dangerous. Prevention is better than cure in all cases; here you are to use every possible precaution. The first is, to keep your patient constantly surrounded by an atmosphere of pure air, and neither too hot nor too cold; the next is to prevent gossiping servants from visiting at the houses of other sick women, and to exclude all visitors as much as possible.

You will say all you have to say to the doctor in some other part of the house than the sick chamber, and, above all, you must observe the first symptoms of feverishness, or of local pain, and report them in time. During the first

week of their confinement patients are very feeble and fretful, almost childish. They must be treated accordingly—not disturbed by noise, not argued with, nor refused any thing reasonable, yet not indulged in what is unreasonable. The appetite is sometimes capricious, the spirits weak; still you must allow nothing forbidden by the medical man. Your's may be an unpleasant and trying task for a time, but you must perform your duty with firmness, and you will receive your reward in your patient's timely recovery, and her grateful reliance on your good sense.

To a certain degree irritability and fretfulness are the ordinary consequences of your patient's state, but if she begin to complain of head-ache, if the light be oppressive to her, if the face be flushed, the sleep broken and unrefreshing, you ought to send for the doctor, as a little delay, or a little neglect, or a wrong medicine, may be followed by a brain fever and delirium.

I have always found that those children which cry the most stoutly on their first entrance into the world, acquire in consequence a florid and healthy look, and cry much less afterwards. Be this as it may, I never attempt to stifle their first music by cramming any stuff down their innocent throats. Many women think that children cry only from hunger; this is a great mistake, new-born children do it I am sure for exercise or pleasure. Their cry of *pain* comes in time, but it is quite a different thing.

The mother's milk is the best medicine for the removal of that matter in the bowels with which the child comes into the world, and the sooner it is applied to the breast the better for itself and the mother. Sometimes, however, the milk will not flow for two or three days, and the mother will fear lest her baby should die of hunger. The last resource will be a kind neighbour's breast, or whey only, or one part new milk and three parts barley water with a little sugar. In fact, the child seldom, if ever, wants feeding at all, until the mother's breast is ready for it. In those cases in which the milk is backward, the mother has been confined before her full time; and if prematurely born children are kept warm and dry, and duly supplied with fresh air, they will require very little food, but a great deal of sleep. However, if you must do something to keep mamma quiet, take care for the baby's sake that you do not overload its stomach with too much food, or disorder it by any of an improper kind.

If you collect some breast milk in a wine glass, you will see that it is *very thin* to look at, and has very little cream in it; it is sweet to the taste, and has no smell. The baby, remember, is not a calf, with a stomach big enough to hold a whole cheese at once, and materials in it for making cheese, and digesting it afterwards.

Cows' milk, though plainly destined by our bountiful Creator to supply mankind abundantly with delicious and wholesome food, was never intended for a new-born babe. The

mother's breast, and that only, is the child's storehouse.

But I know that it is of very little use to advise when indolence, prejudice, fashion, and perhaps disease, are to be dealt with. At all events, never feed a child under six weeks old with a spoon. Let its food be thin enough to pass through the sponge at the neck of the bottle, which I shall describe by and bye. And if too much food be unnecessary and improper for new-born infants, physic ought to be more sparingly given.

The mother's first milk is the best, and should be the only medicine. If more be required, a little manna may be dissolved in barley water and given from the bottle, or perhaps a few drops of castor oil, or sugar and water; but a child that wants these is very likely to want a doctor, and you had better for your own credit, as well as the safety of the child, leave physic to those who profess to understand it. I am speaking now of new-born children. If the mother suckle the child, or intend to do so, as every woman ought who has strength of constitution and is free from disease, there will of course be no wet nurse employed, and you will have to dress the babe perhaps for two or three weeks, especially if the dry nurse be awkward or unaccustomed to the management of infants. It is your *business*, indeed, to dress the new-born infant, or at least to superintend its dressing for some time after its birth.

A nurse ought to be more proud of the

baby's good looks than of her own; her skill is tried most of all by an infant, which, though it cannot speak of itself, soon declares by its appearance whether it has been judiciously managed or not. In order to acquire adroitness in this, or any thing else, you must first observe regularity—correctness, dexterity, and certainty, will follow. I need not describe what, to be comprehended, must be seen. Place every thing in readiness, every thing in its place, and do not dawdle over the poor baby as a little girl would trifle with its doll.

As to the first washing, some children certainly require a great deal more than others; the best plan, in my opinion, is to waste as little time as possible on the *first* operation, to let the baby be well sponged with tepid water, and rubbed quite dry with a thick, soft, clean, warm old towel. I know that some people souse the poor infant into cold water, and say that it braces the baby, and makes it strong and hardy. I have heard of countries where the mother will swim out with her new-born babe into the sea, or some large river, and any mother may do the same in this country if she chooses; but if we only observe how careful the wildest fowls of the air, and the most savage beasts of the field, are to protect their young from cold; if we consider that He who cares for these creatures has ordained that they shall come into the world at a mild season of the year; if philosophers and old women would reflect on these things, they, at least the old women, would follow the dictates of their own breasts, and shudder at the

idea of exposing the most helpless of living creatures to the pain and danger of cold.

I do not recommend any nurse to immerse the infant all over in water, but to sponge the body, one part after another, drying as you proceed. You begin, suppose, at the head; dry that first; then sponge the neck; dry that also well before you wash the arms and shoulders; and so on. Infants accustomed to this kind of cold-bathing seldom catch cold, and in the coolest season the chill water gives them no uneasiness. Washing, it is true, has been sometimes badly done, and has made enemies to a practice which, if judiciously observed, agrees with all children, especially those that are very delicate.

When the infant is washed and dried, it should be dressed in soft, warm, pliant clothing, fitted loosely to the body, so as to allow free circulation of the blood in every limb, free motion in every joint, and, in particular, free play of the lungs. Wherever it be placed, whether in the bosom of its mother, in bed, or in a cradle by itself, asleep or awake, it ought to be duly supplied with free and fresh air. The more delicate the apparent health of the child, the more requisite is a due supply of air to maintain its feeble life.

Particular attention should be paid to the appearance of the infant for some time after it comes into the world. If it continue to look pale and blue, especially about the mouth, there is reason to fear that all is not quite right in the lungs. This blueish colour often lasts for some days, or weeks even, and

finally goes off without any serious consequences, but it is not a good or a natural appearance, and the doctor's attention should be particularly called to it.

If the first washing has been despatched in the manner I have recommended, rather expeditiously, the second will require to be more deliberately performed, and the infant will then be better prepared in many respects to undergo it. Warm, soft water, with a very little fine white soap, is usually quite sufficient for the purpose; but there is a great difference in children, and you will know what to prepare for. It is not an uncommon, though useless, practice, to sprinkle salt on the infant's skin, and then to wash it off.

Some nurses wash the baby with gin for a few days, but sober women will not like the smell of it, and it can do no good, but much harm. If you wish to make the baby look particularly nice, beat up the yolk of an egg with a little fresh butter (melted), and anoint the skin with it; then wash it off with a soft sponge and warm water. This trouble is only required once. Soft water, white soap, and a sponge, are afterwards amply sufficient.

A yellow appearance of the skin is not uncommon a few days after birth: some people call it jaundice, but it is a very trifling ailment. If the colour partake more of orange than of green, it is best to leave the disease to take its own course; the nurse, at least, should not give physic for it, except perhaps a few drops of castor oil, or a little manna, or even whey.

Of tight bandaging I decidedly disapprove; the old fashion of rolling an infant in repeated folds of linen, or calico, is unnecessary and absurd. The new-born babe, it is true, must have a fold of soft flannel round the middle to preserve the navel from injury; but what, in the name of common sense, could have suggested to our grandmothers (for happily the practice of heavy swathing has been abandoned), the use of as many feet or yards of bandage, as would suffice for an Egyptian mummy!

We do not, it is true, follow the Chinese custom of cramping the feet with ligatures to prevent their free expansion, but some infants are too much bound up at the other end—in the head, which ought not to be compressed injudiciously. The head of a new-born infant is a collection of very soft membranes and of pliable bones, and compression by bandages on the skull, not only changes the *form* of it, but often produces epilepsy, weakness of intellect, brain fever; and if the child outlives these—madness at last.

I have seen a curious report lately by a French physician, who states, that out of 431 patients in a mad-house, there were 247 deformed heads among them. His opinion is, that all this deformity proceeded from tight bandaging of the brain when they were in the nurse's arms. This I take to be nonsense, and only a proof that when man or woman takes any peculiar *crotchet*, they push it a great deal farther than common sense and facts will

allow; but there can be no doubt of the danger of injuring the natural structures of the head by tight bandaging. Instead of contracting it in a circular shape, it should be merely covered with a cap, having near the ears strings, to be tied under the chin. Avoid tight fastenings on all parts of the body, and substitute strings for pins.

The head should be kept very clean at all ages, by a comb, or brush, to prevent the accumulation of dirt, which tends to the promotion of vermin, and sore heads, and constant irritation.

I have read in Dr. Buchan, that pins have been found above half an inch in the body of a child after it had died of convulsions; and many a good mother has undressed her infant in great trepidation, expecting to take away the cause of its screams with its clothes; few women of sense use any pins about children, and no woman of any skill will run the least risk of wounding their tender skins by pins.

The infant usually casts its skin, more or less, within a short time after its birth; whilst this process is going on, the mixture of the yolk of an egg and butter, already mentioned, may be applied when the skin is dry and rough, just before washing.

Attention should be paid to the feet of the child; coldness of its limbs, especially if the colour be pale and blue, is a bad sign; if the flesh feels hard or swollen, medical advice should be taken.

The air should not be excluded from the cradle by any covering, for sleep, if it produces heat and restlessness, cannot be serviceable.

Infants often twitch and start for some days after their birth; this is no bad sign if it takes place only during sleep, and the babe seems well in other respects, or while it is very young; but at a later period, slight startings, even unnatural smiles, occurring in a state of pain and feverishness, should not be neglected; they are sometimes a prelude to fits, if the infant be not attended to.

Infants having little or no power of generating heat within themselves, require very warm clothing at first, but as they grow older and warmer in themselves, the quantity of clothing should be lessened, and at no period ought the growing body, and especially the chest, to be confined in its development by tight clothing, unless there be some tendency to deformity in any member; the constraining of the natural movements is bad.

The rule ought to be, that an infant have no more clothing than is necessary for warmth, and that it be easy and loose, and frequently changed, especially in those portions of the dress which are liable to be wetted; dirty or wet clothes chafe the tender skin of an infant, and communicate also a disagreeable smell, and may tend to the production of cutaneous disorders and vermin; whereas cleanliness, assisted by a gentle rubbing of the skin with the hand, morning and evening, aids the regular washings in promoting perspiration, and pre-

serving the health. If when dressing the child you observe the skin chafed in any part, apply a little hair powder, or *lapis calaminaris*, with a puff, and this will heal it. To prevent any of those excoriations which are apt to affect infants in the wrinkles of the neck, behind the ears, and in the groins, great attention to cleanliness is required; and if the skin be excoriated, bathe the parts two or three times a day with a little warm milk and water, and then use the powder as I have directed.

Some of the infants of the poor, and of their foolish betters too, I fear, are often drugged with gin, opium, or syrup of poppies, to put them to sleep, and keep them in a state of stupor during a long time (I could relate many instances of death having occurred from this practice—nothing of this nature should ever be given to an infant), to allow the mother to work, or go to some place of amusement, or get drunk, as the case may be. It is frightful to think that half the children of the poor die, (as Doctor Kay states) "from being ill fed, dirty, ill clothed, and exposed to cold, and neglected, before they have completed their fifth year."

Gin, and whiskey, I have good reason to know, are among the chief causes of their early destruction. These poisons have the terrible effect of destroying the digestion of the child, sapping the principle of life, and ruining the faculties of the mind. Cordials, and carminatives, sold by quacks and low druggists, are mere opiates disguised.

Infants if fully suckled require no other sus-

tenance than the breast milk until they have cast their *first two* or *four teeth;* there may, however, be periods in which, from one cause or other, the natural milk may not be forthcoming.

In such a case, a thin bottle of glass or earthenware, with chamois leather at the mouth, rolled in the form of a pipe, or with a bit of sponge stitched in parchment, is a good substitute for the breast. The infant takes it into its mouth, and through the soft leather or parchment tube, which answers as a nipple, it draws out the artificial milk from the bottle, and the food thus taken is mixed with the child's saliva, as in the natural process of taking the breast. Many mothers use this contrivance for their infants, occasionally from the first day of their birth, either when they are absent from home for many hours, or from unwillingness to be disturbed by the child at night, an inconvenience which few husbands are pleased with—in such a case a bottle is presented to the child in the nursery by the attendant when it awakens, and is uneasy for it during the night; in the morning the little nestler is taken to the mother, at an hour when both parents can have no objection to the visit.

Doctor Burns recommends asses' milk, if it can be procured, as it most nearly resembles that of women, but as this cannot always be had, he suggests a change in cows' milk, so as to diminish the proportion of curd and increase that of sugar and cream, by adding an equal quantity of new-made whey, a sixth part of fresh cream, or less if it be rich, and a little

sugar. Some use milk with water gruel. All these mixtures, however, must be made fresh as they are wanted.

I have seen many fine children well reared by this "half and half" method, of which one great advantage is, that there is little trouble in weaning the children from the breast, for they are quite satisfied with the bottle; and by gradually feeding it with panada, it parts with the bottle also without difficulty. Cows' milk, however, though the best substitute in general for that of the mother, does not always agree with the stomachs of children.

It is a blessing which the poor woman's infant owes to the robust constitution, the quiet mind, the simple fare, and the honest toil of its parents, that it can take with avidity and easily digest the milk of the cow, can feed and sleep, and so lay the foundation of that perfect health in mind and body, without which all the advantages of fortune are empty dreams. But the usages of society among the higher classes interfere with the mother's health and quiet, impair her powers as a nurse, or are totally incompatible with the discharge of that duty; and what is worst of all, the feeble stomach of the baby is unable to digest the milk of the cow, the most natural substitute for the mother's breast. When this is unfortunately the case, the nurse's skill and resources are put to the test, and great management is required. Cows' milk must never be given unboiled to a delicate child; it must be mixed with a large proportion of barley water, sugar, or plain water, panada,

&c. &c.: good chicken broth, in which bread or arrow-root has been boiled, may be given once a day, by way of variety; and you may try any of the numerous nice things which you will be told never fail to answer: you will be disappointed in them all—in bread, biscuits, rusks, barley-meal, oatmeal, sago, arrow-root, tapioca, prepared this, and prepared that. It is the poor little stomach that is in fault—weakness of constitution, for which there is no remedy but a *wet* nurse.

The mother's temper cannot be disturbed without injury to the milk in quantity or quality. This is undeniable, but one instance, the truth of which is well authenticated, ought never to be forgotten.

A lady (a French woman I believe) in the West Indies ordered a female slave to be flogged for some neglect or disobedience in her capacity of wet nurse. The cruel punishment having been duly inflicted in the lady's presence, the lacerated victim was ordered to take the infant of the mistress again to her breast. She did so, and the child fell straightway into convulsions and died.

In case of sore breasts in the mother, or any accidents which prevent the supply of natural milk, the bottle which I have described is truly valuable. But the child should not have too much liquid: this distends the stomach, and gives a habit of over-sucking, which is prejudicial.

The nurse, in order to quiet the child, is tempted very often to put the bottle into its

mouth at too frequent intervals—perhaps every time that it awakes or cries. This is wrong—the sucking bottle, however, in such cases, has an advantage over spoon-feeding, which is this. The contents of a spoon may be crammed down the throat, as a poultry maid would fill up the maw of a goose, whether it will or not—but the exertion of sucking is a sort of security, that the infant will not swallow more than it requires.

It is always a good sign, in my humble judgment, when milk (I mean that of the cow) agrees well with a person, whether old or young. Be the milk ever so good, it does not suit where there is heat of the skin, thirst, or other symptoms of fever. Feverish children are apt to vomit curdled milk, and some persons hastily conclude that the milk has been the cause of their disordered state, but it is the disorder that affects the milk; however, it will be improper to continue this article of food until the child recovers its health and powers of digestion: still it is the curdy part of the milk that is to be avoided; good whey, when it can be procured from a farmer making cheeses, while fresh, is a pleasant, refreshing, and most wholesome drink at all times, and in every disease. When the child is brought up with the bottle before mentioned, whey is better for the purpose of mixing with milk than barley water, or any thing else.

Until the mother is perfectly recovered, your attention to her cannot be remitted day or night; you must on no account leave the house for a quarter of an hour, still less must you

steal away unknown to your mistress, by confederacy with the other servants; for in such case, something or other, indeed every thing, will be sure to go wrong. The master will not fail to discover the attempt to deceive him, though he may for a time overlook a good deal, rather than ruffle his wife's temper, or endanger her health, and that of her child. Your departure will soon be followed by the damage of your character, and you will either be made the scapegoat of the servants' hall, or be implicated in their loss of place.

No! you must have nothing to conceal, nothing to fear. Do not be accessory to any deception whatever, even upon the doctor; do not say that medicine is taken when it is thrown out of the window; nor, what is much worse, attempt to conceal or deny any forbidden dainty, of food or physic, that your mistress may have been induced to try.

Your office is not only important on account of the highly responsible duties which you only can perform, but for the example of temperance and regularity you have to set to the servants; aye, and possibly to your mistress herself; if you allow her to persuade you to take something warm, she will expect you will oblige her in return.

And here I must caution you to be always moderate in eating and drinking, for excess in those particulars will render you heavy and stupid when you ought to be watchful and

alert; you can never tell the hour by day or night when you may be wanted, and a heavy meal will unfit you for your duties.

I remember, on one occasion, the difficulty which a sick lady had in awakening the woman who had been placed on a chair by her bedside to attend to her wants during the course of a tedious night. The invalid had become so feeble from her illness, that she had not sufficient strength of voice to arouse the woman, who snored in a way that tortured the nerves of her patient, as can be easily understood by those who are affected by disagreeable sounds.

> "The nurse sleeps sweetly, hired to watch the sick,
> Whom snoring she disturbs."

She wanted a drink of whey, but her low tones produced no effect upon the senses of the nurse, who would probably have slept on, even if a gun had been discharged at her ears, so completely had she been stupified by a heavy meat supper, and a proportional allowance of stout, and her tumbler of toddy besides. I do not think that this woman ever swallowed opium, but I knew another nurse who did, and I have seen her in consequence fast asleep in a standing posture, but with her back to the wall. The lady had not strength to raise herself in the bed, nor to turn of herself, but she contrived to stretch out a hand and take the nurse by the nose, though her poor thin and relaxed fingers could barely squeeze it sufficiently to awaken the snorer, who, half stifled from the

pinching of her breathing organ, was at last aroused. From habitual indulgence in the comforts of the table, the drowsiness of this woman became so overpowering, that at last she was quite unfit for her vocation.

Remember, then, the old saying, "If you would have a clear head, you must have a clear stomach." Beer and spirits should be avoided almost altogether. Take tea, but not *too much* even of that, else you may become nervous, and unable to sleep when you might otherwise have time and opportunity for taking some rest.

When your duty is performed in one family, and you have entered the house of another patient, be sure to say nothing, good or bad, of what has passed in your former place: you see your fellow-creatures enfeebled by sickness in mind no less than in body; they think and act, and perhaps speak in pain, and always in weakness; they repose in you a confidence approaching the simplicity of childhood. Respect that confidence; throw an impenetrable veil of secrecy over all; forget every thing. You know not the mischief which an inadvertent expression may finally produce. Let there be no defending and proving after you are gone. Keep your own counsel, for depend upon it, no one will keep it for you. If you conduct yourself with kindness and discretion, you will be regarded as a friend in need, and sent for in all cases of slight and sudden sickness, especially those in the nursery, before the decisive step of sending for the doctor is resolved upon.

But to return to the management of young children, from which I bounced off with my hints about your moral demeanour. The time is now come when the crying child is already suffering pain; some silly women will propose a dose of gin, or whiskey perhaps, or a few drops of laudanum, or a little syrup of poppy, or the cordial of some advertising quack; concerning which stimulants I have already given you my opinion. All these are two-edged weapons, they are more calculated to kill than cure in inexperienced hands, and whatever experience you may have in the sick chamber, you can pretend to none in the use of drugs like these; you are not justified in administering any one of them without the doctor's leave.

Are you then to call in a doctor every time a child cries?—by no means; but do not try to handle the doctor's sharpest tools without his skill. Ascertain the state of the stomach and bowels. If there be inclination to vomit, promote *that* by all means; there is no risk in any case of giving warm water; or you may mix a tea-spoonful of ipecacuanha* wine in a table-spoonful of water, and give two tea-spoonfuls of that every quarter of an hour, until the stomach is unloaded. Antimonial wine is a more uncertain thing, but safe enough if given in plenty of water, and not too much at once. After the emetic has operated, a warm bath will generally produce entire relief,

* Generally called hippo wine.

especially if the bowels as well as the stomach have been acted upon. If, however, there seems to be a want of due action in the bowels, a dose of castor oil, if moderate, never does any harm. If the emetic, the warm bath, and the castor oil, do not still the little sufferer, and compose it to sleep, let the doctor be called in by all means. Indeed the diseases of children run their course so rapidly, that when any symptom of serious illness appears, no time should be lost in sending for proper advice. A nurse of skill should know ordinary ailments by their symptoms. The great distinction between a good nurse and a bad one lies in the capacity to *see real danger in time*, and not to *imagine danger*, and alarm the anxious mother when no cause for anxiety really exists.

Vaccination generally takes place in the third or fourth month, while the child is on the breast, and without any other ailment. Happily for us that terrible scourge, the small-pox, has been almost removed by the now general practice of inoculating with the cow-pock, or vaccine lymph, as it is also termed, the advantages of which inoculation are now generally admitted. Even if the small-pox afterwards attacks one who has been vaccinated, the disease is greatly deprived of its severity. Until a late act of parliament was passed, declaring it a crime to inoculate with the small-pox, some foolish or wicked people were in the habit of indulging stupid parents by imparting this severe disease to their children, instead of the

milder one, thus keeping alive a malady, which it should be the object to extinguish altogether, if possible; but this irregular practice is no longer permitted. There is no mode by which a person can certainly tell whether a child has been properly vaccinated, or not, either during the course of the disease, or by the mark left upon the arm. But for my part I do not admire a great broad deep mark, which the doctors used to say was the best.

By the way, if any *doctor* would submit to take advice from this little book, I would just give him a hint, that, in the opinion of mother and nurse, he does not pay quite so much attention to vaccinated children as to other patients that swallow more physic. Now, if the doctor care so little about his vaccinated little patient, he should not blame parents if they are careless too; vaccination is a blessing for which all classes are too ungrateful. My own opinion is, that children properly vaccinated run very little danger of contracting the small-pox, unless they are unfortunately strongly exposed to the contagion. As a small matter of precaution, however, especially for young ladies, I am always glad when the vaccination is repeated every seven or ten years. I think the risk of failure is greatly diminished by this, and the pain is nothing, nor is the expense worth mentioning.

Hooping cough, which is often fatal to young children, commences with restlessness, heat of the skin, shiverings, loss or fickleness of appe-

tite, aversion to light, and great prostration of strength. There is a troublesome cough from the beginning, but it does not acquire characteristic hooping (or whooping) until about the twentieth day. The whooping comes on in fits or paroxysms, and returns after an interval, longer or shorter, according to the advancement of the disease. When the intervals between the fits begin to grow longer, the violence of the disease is abating.

The complaint may, therefore, be divided into three stages—the first continuing until the whooping shows itself—the second, until the intervals begin to be longer—the third, to the end of the disease.

During the fits the face becomes livid, and there is an agitation of the whole frame, and the patient appears almost suffocated: this is generally succeeded by vomiting, and the expectoration of thick tenacious matter. Hooping cough requires very careful medical treatment, but even skill and attention on the part of the physician will not alone suffice; there must be honesty and common sense in the nurse.

Diet must be strictly attended to; the digestive organs being in a feeble and irritable state, capable of bearing only the simplest food. It is on this account that hospital treatment is the most successful. There patients are placed in well-ventilated rooms, and supplied with proper food at stated periods—quality and quantity being equally regulated; but at home the poor child coughs and whoops, and at last vomits. The father, the mother, and good old grand-

mother, instead of seeing a provision of nature in this for throwing off a source of irritation, vie with each other in replenishing the exhausted stomach with food—often of a most improper kind, syrups, sugar candy, barley sugar, all sorts of lozenges, sugar and honey, lemon juice and treacle; and at night the harassed nurse or common servant maid, to procure a little sleep for herself, probably administers some soothing syrup—or more dangerous narcotic.

In the first stage, the less food the child gets the better—a little sago or arrow-root nicely cooked will be quite sufficient; and even this should only be taken in the intervals between the paroxysms, and not more than three or four times a day. Milk must on no account be used—the best drink is whey; tea may be given if preferred, or black currant tea, but whey is decidedly the best, and whatever is chosen should be persisted in to the exclusion of all other food, as variety is hurtful. All confectionary, whether in the form of cakes, conserves, or pastry, must be prohibited, quiet must be insisted on, and the company of prattling friends dispensed with altogether while the cough continues. If the children are young, you should take great care to have their heads and shoulders raised up when they are in bed, and to watch them when the fit of coughing comes on, to place them on their feet, or at least sitting upright in their beds, and bending a little forward to guard against suffocation. A flannel waistcoat will be found useful to promote ab-

sorption and prevent the changes of temperature in the body, which the weather constantly occasions, and which so often excites the cough; and the following liniment may be safely used; —it will at least do no harm, and this is more than can be said of many nostrums,—

Tartar emetic, one scruple;
Water, two ounces;
Tincture of Spanish flies, half an ounce.

These are to be mixed up together, and rubbed morning and evening upon the spine and the pit of the stomach, which should be afterwards covered with flannel. Should the liniment cause an eruption of pimples, it must then be discontinued. In the last stage, or that of convalescence, a more nutritious diet will be necessary, but even then much caution will be required. Mutton broth, tea and toast, and a little wine and water, will be quite sufficient.

Country air will also be of service, but the patient should rather be removed to some dry elevated situation than to the sea-side: very often a removal only to another room is found beneficial; a warm sheltered house is the best residence.

Baths in this complaint are hardly serviceable, except warm ones occasionally for cleanliness, but exercise in a covered vehicle will frequently be useful, after the cough and inflammation have subsided. The chest should be carefully protected and the feet kept warm and dry, and the night air should be avoided for a long time. It is in this stage of the disease,

when time and care only are required to effect a complete cure, that many nostrums acquire and maintain an undeserved character. On the whole, hooping cough is to be considered an obscure and singular disease, in which it is more easy to do harm than good.

Croup is a disease the attack of which is generally sudden, and the progress so rapid that not a moment is to be lost in applying the necessary remedies, as in its early stage it is by no means an unmanageable disease, but a few hours of neglect and delay may render it exceedingly so. Its attack is most usual in the middle of the night, and it is generally preceded for a day or two by the usual symptoms of catarrh, but sometimes no such warning symptoms occur, and no suspicion of its approach exists, till the stillness of night is fearfully broken by the peculiar dry, hoarse, clanging, metallic-sounding cough, which announces the very presence of the enemy: the child, however, is unconscious of its danger, and having coughed, composes itself again to sleep; and—to one who had not been electrified by the sound of the cough—would appear to be in perfect health, the pulse being regular and the breathing undisturbed. This state may continue for days, the child during the day running about and playing as if nothing were the matter with it, and the cough being scarcely ever heard; or, on the contrary, the symptoms may most rapidly verge into the second stage of the disorder, the cough be-

coming constantly more frequent, each effort being followed by some exhaustion, and an increase of the difficulty of breathing, which has a hissing sound; the face during the fits being flushed, and the child raising itself up for the purpose of breathing more readily.

These symptoms, unless arrested rapidly, run into the third stage of the disease; then the pulse is small and weak; the cough, though less frequent and less audible, is suffocating, the voice almost gone, the countenance becomes anxious, and the oppression great—the head being almost constantly thrown back. From this state few recover. When the peculiar cough strikes upon your ear, send for the doctor without delay, and without waiting his arrival immediately wake the child, and administer an emetic of hippo, or antimonial wine, a tea-spoonful every ten minutes till it operates; also, by means of oil of turpentine, hartshorn and oil, or mustard and vinegar, rubbed on the throat, excite a heat and redness, after which the throat is to be covered with a piece of flannel. Should the doctor not have arrived, after the operation of the emetic, you must administer two grains of calomel, and when the redness of the throat has disappeared, again make use of the same application until the effect is again produced: the doctor will by this time have had time to make his appearance, and will in all probability, unless the case is very severe, find the disease subdued, and little left for him to do.

Children are much more subject to the annoyance of *chilblains* than grown-up persons. Chilblains arise from languid circulation, poor diet, and sitting or standing long in damp cold nurseries; they are altogether prevented from reaching the feet by warm dry stockings of worsted or yarn, and frequent exercise, and wearing warm gloves; using the hands in brisk work will also prevent them from affecting those members. When, however, the first symptoms of itching, heat, pain, and redness of the skin, are observed, these may be cured by rubbing the affected parts with the following embrocation:

Laudanum, one drachm;
Spirits of lavender, one drachm;
Ether, ten drachms.

This is, however, an expensive remedy, and useless with many constitutions of peculiar delicacy and scorbutic habit.

For *burns* and *scalds*, so common from carelessness among the children of the poor, there are many prescriptions. The one I have always found the best, the simplest, and adapted to the most violent as well as the mildest cases, is, spirit of turpentine, or oil of turpentine. A bottle of this oil should always be kept at hand, it acts like a charm in slight cases; as the pain abates, linseed oil, or olive oil, or any sweet oil, may be mixed with the turpentine, and applied upon old linen to the parts affected.

But none of these remedies may be near you,

and it is necessary to apply something immediately, in order to allay the pain; there is one thing then which you can use at once, and that is cold water; if you cannot at once procure the other remedies, use that: plunge the burnt or scalded part into water, or pump it on the inflamed part.

The little blisters or bladders which arise from burns or scalds should not be cut. It is better to puncture them, so that the skin may again cover the part from which it had been raised by the application of the blister. If the skin be broken, a disagreeable ulcer is often the consequence. The best dressing for parts that have been blistered is spermaceti ointment spread upon lint or soft linen, applied gently to the part affected, and kept on by a light bandage.

I do not mean to write a *dissertation* on all the diseases of children; this has been done by far more competent persons than I can be considered, but I must impress upon all of you nurses, the necessity of attending, as far as you may have control in this respect, to the diet, air, and exercise, of the young people who may come under your management.

And this you may do, interested though you might suppose yourself in perpetuating ailments among the richer part of your neighbours, without any dread that there will be too much health among the wealthy, and that your trade will fail, for diseases will come in spite of every precaution; bad air, sudden changes of weather, and other unavoidable causes of this nature.

besides the direct visitation of God, will produce them. We have been called a bundle of habits; it is highly important, therefore, that simplicity of diet (for excessive food kills more than war and plague together), and total abstinence from strong drink, should be practised from the nursery, for *there* the foundation of future strength, or weakness, is generally laid. We often see the good effects of temperate living in old people of naturally delicate constitutions, who are more likely to live for some years longer than young people of good constitutions, but of intemperate habits.

Children are often ruined as to health by being stuffed with unripe fruit, cakes, puddings, and sweetmeats; and worms are often generated in the stomach by foul feeding. A child's belly is often distended like the parchment of a drum, from wind and fermentation, caused within by eating to excess of those things which create acidity. Then comes the doctor, and the dosing to repair the mischief, and relieve Master Bobby or Miss Kitty from their tortures; but physic causes wear and tear of the frame. Perhaps the *wise woman* may be sent for, if she be a favourite with the mother; then is your opportunity for giving her advice that may be followed, and in all probability have effect, if she has reason to entertain a good opinion of your judgment. He was a shrewd observer of mankind who said—

"Allow not Nature more than Nature needs."

It is surely better to avoid in young and old that which renders physic necessary.

Many of the children of the rich have their stomachs destroyed from the habit of eating food unfit for them, and any contrivances calculated to give them a distaste for those things which are prejudicial to the alimentary organs ought to be encouraged. For instance, a lady who desired to give jalap to her children, deluded them at first into taking some of this disagreeable medicine, by baking it in gingerbread. The undesigned but happy result was, that those children soon became unwilling to eat gingerbread from dislike to the jalap; and as they grew up, the association in their minds between gingerbread and jalap caused them to abhor even the appearance of cakes, or any thing of the same kind, to the great benefit of their stomachs.

This was a sensible woman; but I cannot assert so much of another female, mentioned in the "Irish Penny Journal," who used to give her family brimstone in treacle, as a course of medicine, every spring. One of her daughters once unluckily bought a pound of flour of mustard instead of flour of sulphur, and mixed it with the due proportion of treacle. The old lady, like a good economist, would not allow either mustard or treacle to be lost, and ladled it down the throats of the poor children until it was all consumed—and no doubt it proved quite as beneficial as the other ingredient would have been!

Of the diseases which it is highly important to recognise at the earliest possible period,

measles and scarlet fever are among the chief. Neglect or mismanagement may endanger the life, not only of the patient, but of a whole household; whilst timely and judicious precautions will mitigate the disorder, and diminish to a great extent the risk of contagion.

Measles usually commences with the symptoms of a severe cold. For the first day or two the patient is drowsy and dull, and complains of pain across the forehead, loss of appetite, giddiness, constant shivering, a dry cough, and frequent sneezing. Then come a redness of the face and eyes, with a watery eye and swelling of the eyelids, and probably a vomiting of bilious matter. On the third day there is usually an aggravation of the symptoms; with a constant running from the eyes (which cannot now bear the light), and an increased discharge from the nostrils, together with a feeling of stuffing in the chest, and a difficulty of breathing. About the fifth day the eruption generally makes its appearance on the forehead, then on the throat,* then on the face, then on the body, and lastly, on the arms and legs. It first comes out in small spots like flea-bites, which afterwards coalesce into irregular patches, like a half-moon. About the ninth day the eruption dies away, and the skin peels off; and the constitutional symptoms abate with the progress of the eruption. The more complete the eruption, the milder will be the constitutional symptoms.

* But not in raised pimples to the sight, though to the touch they are a little prominent, which is hardly observable in scarlet fever, to which measles bears so strong a resemblance, as not to be easily distinguishable from it.

Scarlet fever (or *scarletina*) in some respects resembles measles, but many of the symptoms of the latter are wanting. It commences with shiverings, restlessness, soreness and ulceration of the throat: the eruption appears between the second and sixth day, in patches interspersed with small vesicles, giving the skin very much the appearance of a boiled lobster. When the eruption has been out a few days it gradually declines and peels off. Scarlet fever may be distinguished from measles by the eruption generally showing itself on the second day, whilst in measles it seldom appears earlier than the fourth. It is also more full and spreading, and forms a uniform flush over a considerable extent of surface. In measles the patches are seldom confluent—running into one another—but separate, leaving the intervening portions of skin of the natural colour. The eruption of the scarlet fever is of a vivid red, and that of measles darker.

During the earlier stage also a careful observer may generally find out under which disease the patient is suffering. Though there is frequently some cough preceding the eruption in scarlet fever, it differs from that of the measles, in being short and irritating, and accompanied by expectoration; neither is there the difficulty of bearing the light, the watering of the eyes, nor the continued discharge from the nostrils, so harassing in measles.

Besides the above distinctions, in measles there is neither the pain at the pit of the sto-

mach, the ulceration of the throat, nor the difficulty of swallowing, which accompany scarlet fever.

These remarks apply only to the most usual and clearly-defined diseases. Many circumstances, such as the age of the patient, his health at the period of attack, his peculiar temperament, injudicious remedial measures, &c., will have a great effect on the course and severity of the disease. The great principles upon which the treatment is to be conducted in both diseases, are nearly the same—to favour the development of the eruption, to moderate the fever, and to remove as much as possible all sources of irritation from the body. Common sense will suggest the separation of the patient from the rest of the family.

It is the practice only of an ignorant nurse to load the patient with too many bed-clothes, and to shut every crevice at which a breath of air could enter, in the hopes of "sweating the disease out of the body;" and, to make assurance doubly sure, administer something to warm the stomach, usually a composition of spices and boiling water, sweetened with sugar and tempered with spirit.

Nothing can be more erroneous than such a treatment. Should the child be young, and a convenient apparatus at hand, a warm bath in the early or febrile stage will be advisable; taking especial care that the patient be not exposed to cold afterwards: immediately after the bath he should be put to bed, the linen being

changed and the bedding clean and well aired. The room should be kept moderately warm, but there ought to be a free circulation of air.

For some cases, sponging the body with warm water will answer equally well as the bath, and there will be less risk of taking cold. The diet in the earlier stage should consist chiefly of slops, with bread; pastry, and vegetable and animal food should be rigidly abstained from. The sudden disappearance of the eruption is highly dangerous, and the use of applications to drive in the rash cannot be too strongly deprecated. It may not be amiss here to protest against the use of washes to remove any sort of eruption whatever.

Pimples and *rashes* are the consequences, not the causes, of disease; they are evidences of some internal derangement, and all attempts to remove them, without first restoring the system to its natural state, will either tend to increase the deformity, or, what is far worse, to remove the disease to one of the great vital organs of the body. Should no medical assistance be at hand, a mild aperient may be administered; such as castor oil, or senna, but the less medicine that is given the better, unless under the eye of a medical man. The administration of medicines, in diseases so dangerous and so variable as these, must, I repeat it over and over again, be left to the doctor; all that the nurse can do, is to see them properly administered, and to refrain from doing harm.

The points for a nurse to remember, as to measles and scarletina, are these—the former is

always an inflammatory disease, and the danger is exactly in proportion to the difficulty in breathing. A relaxed state of the bowels is apt to come on as the eruption of measles goes off. This must be on no account interfered with; it only requires large draughts of warm chicken broth, tea, or barley water. The air of the room requires to be kept rather warmer than in scarlet fever. It is more necessary to keep the patient entirely in bed, thus promoting mild perspiration, and so relieving the lungs. I knew a very clever Yorkshire physician, who used to keep the patients in bed, and give them nothing but tea and whey, with bread to eat, and no medicine but licorice juice dissolved in water to drink. I thought it was the *licorice* and water that carried the patient well through —he told me in confidence that the virtue was in the *blanket*.

Scarlet fever is not so universally of an inflammatory nature. The sore throat and the absence of cough distinguish it from measles. It is a very infectious and a very precarious disease. Sometimes the skin can be washed and sponged with cold water to great advantage; but this must be done by the doctor's order, and under his eye; sometimes he may give wine; the nurse must not.

There are several sorts of *rash* produced in some persons by eating fish, &c., but its sudden appearance, and the absence of constitutional symptoms, will prevent its being confused with either of the above-named diseases. The following gargle may be used for

the throat in scarletina with advantage; it is not only safe and efficacious in the case of sore-throat, but good for washing the gums, or any other part of the mouth. It is made thus:

Tincture of myrrh, one ounce;
Lime water, eight ounces.

By the way, lime water itself is the best wash for the teeth and gums, and is very effectual in clearing the mouth of impurities, and removing a bad taste. It may be procured from any druggist.

Before I leave the treatment of children, I must make some remarks on two very essential points—namely, air and exercise.

From the cradle to extreme old age low-ceiled and confined apartments are among the chief enemies of health. Many children who come into the world in perfect health are soon injured by close confinement. I could point out innumerable instances to show that rickets, imperfect formation of limbs, and many disorders, arise almost entirely from keeping mothers and children in confined air, especially where many human beings are crowded together. The state of great manufacturing towns, before experience proved the necessity of perfect ventilation, painfully showed the destruction of life and health among the children bred in crowded apartments, and thence transferred, at a tender age, into heated mills (which rarely present to view green fields and gardens, and cattle, which cheer the spirits, and consequently invigorate the body); where the air was tainted with miasma from the bodies of the children them-

selves, the machinery, and the materials of their labour. Indeed it is almost superfluous in the present day to insist upon the propriety of admitting fresh and cool air at all times into the nursery.

The practice of making the beds of children immediately after they get up is very bad. If you have any control in these matters, let the bed-clothes, especially the sheets, be exposed to the air by being turned completely over, until they become perfectly cool and dry. This caution applies still more to the beds of grown-up persons; they should never be made while the heat from the body continues in them; and if there is profuse perspiration from disease, the sheets should be aired at the fire before they are again slept in.

Since the foolish prejudice against cool air has given way, children are much less subject to fits than they were in my earlier days. *Sunshine*, however, has not come so much into fashion, but it is true that sun and light are as necessary to form healthy children, as to promote the growth of healthy vegetation; and I know no other way of accounting for the rosy cheeks of country people, but by supposing that they live more in sunshine. It is the absence of natural light, more than the midnight lamp, which fades the complexion and deadens the eye of the inhabitant of towns and cities. The health of hundreds of thousands is undermined; disease is engendered, increased, and perpetuated by dark narrow streets, and insufficiency of windows. Daylight and sunshine are of the first importance, especially to child-

ren, all persons of weak constitution, and convalescents.

Light is not designed merely for the employment of the eye, though its suitableness to that inlet of enjoyment and knowledge cannot be contemplated without the deepest sentiments of admiration and gratitude. Light is essential to the life, health, and vigour of all living things; of the vegetable which has no eyes, and of the animal which sees by day or by night. I once had courage enough (but I was then young and strong-minded) to descend into a deep and dark, but well-ventilated mine, with a well-informed gentleman, who pointed out some very striking instances of the effect produced by the absence of light. There was no vegetation, except a few white sickly plants, unlike any that I had seen before, and tasting of nothing but water. Some tadpoles had been kept in a tub by way of curiosities, and I was assured that without light they would never become frogs. Some pale ricketty children were pointed out to me; the opinion of the people was that the health of their parents had been injured by want of daylight only, for they had good wages, plenty to eat and drink, and there was a constant draught of pure air through the mine. The miners and their families were pale, bloated, and sickly looking—just like the poor people who live in the dark alleys of towns.

But though light is so important to those in health, it ought to be shut out from the sick chamber, so long as the patient is restless and feverish: the absence of light also tends to

sleep, and it is right to darken the bed-chamber, especially during the bright nights of summer, when nervous people often find it so difficult to sleep.

To those whose sight is tender, or who are liable to head-aches, or erysipelas, the light of the sun is often painful, and may increase their sufferings; but many, I know, by a little courage and a little self-denial in their diet and mode of living, by exercising and not fatiguing the eye, may regain the perfect use and enjoyment of sight.

Let the children under your care be carried often into bright open places, and let their play-room, and their nursery too, if possible, be open to the south.

Whenever you hear reports of small-pox, measles, hooping cough, &c., being in the neighbourhood of those children in whom you are interested, do not hope to shut out the disease by closing all the doors and windows; let it be your care to admit as free a circulation of air as possible, avoiding, however, cold and wet. One very effectual way of keeping out infectious disease is to keep gadding girls at home; there can be no worse fault in servants than gossiping from house to house among acquaintances of their own rank in life; married footmen, butlers, grooms, keepers of public-houses, or beer-shops. For servants to carry children to the abodes of such people is an unpardonable fault, and the most effectual way of contaminating the health, and also the morals, of the children committed to their care.

It is not, however, the most offensive air that is always the most unwholesome, though if from disgust it occasions sickness, it is so far injurious. The stench which arises from putrid flesh, though very disagreeable, will not occasion actual disease. The smell of the tan-yard is harmless; so is that of chandlers' and soap-boilers' melting-houses; oil is also considered a preventive of fevers, and plague, and disorders of this kind; though the smell of these substances is very unpleasant to those unaccustomed to it.

I have heard soldiers say that regiments have been exposed in hot climates to the dreadful effluvia from dead bodies, putrefying in heaps in the open air, under a scorching sun, without any bad influences on their health. I once lived on a part of the sea-coast, where sprats were sometimes taken in such abundance as to be spread over the grass fields for top-dressing, and though the stench was intolerable, no one was made sick by it. But the exhalations which arise from decaying vegetables are dreadfully noxious; tens of thousands die from exposure to this kind of air in hot countries, where low swamps abound. The atmosphere becomes loaded with particles of putrefying plants, which cause agues, fevers, and plague.

Indeed, in my younger days, agues were very common in the spring and autumn, before the fens and wet clay-lands were so much drained as they are now; and many a spider have I seen given by my aunt—who was a great doctress in

her way—rolled up in its own cobweb, in the shape of a pill, and swallowed in the same way, but without its being known to the patients, what its real nature was; whether it was the effect of imagination which cured those people, or not, I cannot tell, but I was always informed by them (and they came in crowds for the cure,) that the pill put an end to the shaking.

The people in the island of Jersey suffer greatly from ague, though it has the sea air around, because it lies low, and has a great deal of vegetable substances decaying in the natural seasons, and in closely enclosed gardens and fields.

Even flowers, whether decaying or not, should not be left in bed-rooms; they exhale something which is prejudicial to health, and delicate constitutions are severely affected by a cause so seemingly trivial. Why the scent of fresh flowers, or of decaying ones either, should be injurious to health, is more than I can explain. I leave the philosophy of the matter to wiser people, but the fact is certain, and this is enough for a nurse to know.

Some mothers are so silly that they won't allow their children to run about in the open air, even when there is no dampness (which certainly is prejudicial if the lungs be delicate), without a great deal of fuss and fidgetting, lest a coat, or tippet, or muffler on the throat, should be forgotten; and as to letting them run in and out bare-headed, at pleasure, they would tremble at the thoughts of it. "Dear me, how heated you are!" they exclaim in agony, as they see the

natural good effects of air and exercise, "come in immediately, lest you should take cold;" and in comes the disappointed child, muffled up still closer than before, lest a breath of air should blow upon his skin. The dictates of nature, which prescribe air and active motion, are defeated by stupidity, ignorance, and prejudice; yet, with great inconsistency, they will exhibit their daughters stripped below the shoulders in the dining and drawing-rooms, without fearing that the change, from the close covering of neck and bosom in the morning, will occasion colds. Fashion reconciles them to indecency, and the risk of destroying the health of their daughters, by cold, cough, catarrh, or consumption, besides the serious injury to their moral delicacy. This practice of going half-naked was not common in my younger days.

Exposure to night air is very bad for delicate females, especially after having been shut up in heated rooms, and crowded theatres or churches; they should then muffle themselves well, if they have not close carriages to convey them home.

Among the curious inventions of these times is the contrivance called a "respirator," for warming the air breathed through the lungs. Some benefit may be derived from the use of it, by those of tender or diseased lungs, who are obliged to breathe night air; but by day, it is perhaps more injurious than beneficial, and is, therefore, only calculated for occasional use.

In taking exercise, as indeed at all times, the feet of females should be kept dry and warm.

Ladies seem now to be more generally conscious of the importance of this than formerly. They wear warm boots in winter a good deal when out of doors, instead of wafer-soled shoes of kid leather or flimsy prunella, and silk stockings —precious security against wet and damp!

"It is a common notion, that if children are set upon their feet too soon, their legs will become crooked. There is reason to believe that the very reverse of this is true. Every member acquires strength in proportion as it is exercised. The limbs of children are weak, indeed, but their bodies are proportionally light; and had they skill to direct themselves, they would soon be able to support their own weight. Who ever heard of any other animal that became crooked by using its legs too soon? Indeed, if a child is not permitted to make any use of its legs till a considerable time after the birth, and be then set upon them with its whole weight at once, there may be some danger; but this proceeds entirely from not having been accustomed to use its legs from the beginning. Mothers of the poorer sort think they are great gainers by making their children lie or sit while they themselves work. In this they are greatly mistaken. By neglecting to give their children exercise, they are obliged to keep them a long time before they can do any thing for themselves, and to spend more on medicine than would have paid for proper care."

Children may be exercised in various ways. The best method, when they are light, is to

carry them about in the nurse's arms, changing their position frequently to prevent deformity. This gives the nurse an opportunity of talking to the child, and of pointing out every thing that may please and delight its fancy. Besides, it is much safer than swinging an infant in a machine, or leaving it to the care of such as are not fit to take care of themselves. Exercise gives the energy necessary to throw off superfluous and injurious humours, and generally promotes good digestion, without which all the functions of the body go wrong, and it produces more or less, according to age and constitution, those agreeable sensations, and that flow of spirits, which never exist but with sound health.

Those who sit or lie down all day are languid, unless when momentarily excited by some sudden agitation, from the want of quick circulation of the blood—the seat of life—and have their bowels inactive or disordered, which condition, in young or old, is sure to bring on a train of grievous disorders.

Without the perspiration which exercise produces there can be no sound health; there will be perpetual obstruction in the secretions, and nervousness and hippishness will follow. Physic is a bad substitute for exercise; it will for a time relieve the body of those humours or irregularities which indolence has occasioned, but physic will not brace the relaxed muscles, nor give strength to the frame. The effects of the regular want of exercise in the open air are particularly seen among *ladies* of all ages. The young misses are kept at a piano-forte, or an

embroidery frame, or at lessons of one kind or other, during too many hours of the day, instead of having a good scamper out of doors, and plenty of skipping within.

Exercise for young or old is of such immense importance to health, that I must claim the privilege of recommending it here, though the nurse in her proper character may appear to have little to do with it. But as I am vain enough to think that other people, as well as nurses, will read these random hints of mine, I shall not put my pen aside from my present morning's work, until I have "said my say" on this, or any other point, which may occur to me, in connexion with the proper management and health of the body.

Among other modern methods of giving exercise to young people of both sexes, strengthening their limbs, and making them supple and active, gymnastics, as they are called, have been introduced and practised much of late years in schools and private families; and no better mode of preserving health, and developing the muscular powers of the body, can be imagined.

If it were not for a dance now and then, I know not what would become of many a fine lady who is too grand to use her feet in walking, and too indolent to take any unavoidable or unfashionable exercise; yet a dance in a crowded room, and in a dense and heated atmosphere, can do little good compared with morning exercise in the open air—besides, dancing well now-a-days is a lazy kind of movement; there

is no real *work* in it, no shaking of the legs, nothing of the jig or hornpipe step, nor even of the country dance energy, which used to enliven one when I was a girl. Now, I hear, there is nothing but a slow, mournful kind of walking movement, which hardly stirs the blood, and never quickens the breathing. Still, this motion is better than sitting down altogether.

Boys and young men have generally the advantage of suitable exercises—such as running, leaping, cricket-playing, swimming, &c. Boys do not usually furnish much employment to the nurse, and can manage, in one way or other, to find exercise and amusement for themselves, whether at school or at home; but the case is sadly different with poor young ladies.

Exercise in the open air for young children, as well as for grown-up ones, is so necessary, that I do not like to see either boys or girls, when very little, sent to school (unless they have plenty of play, and are kept in well-ventilated apartments), and their lessons at home should be very short. They require air, exercise, and amusement. If allowed the free use of their eyes, legs, and arms, they will acquire a great deal of knowledge and health at the same time. It is equally fruitless and foolish to *force* the minds of children at the expense of their health. School hours, in my opinion, are far too long—holidays are much too sparingly allowed—and far too many things are attempted to be acquired, by young ladies especially. Young people would cut a far better figure in the world, every way, would look better, walk

better, and talk better, if they laid the foundation of knowledge in a good constitution.

The education to be obtained from teachers, and in schools, can never make the scholar or the man of business; or the agreeable, useful, and really accomplished woman. All those who shine in the world are generally self-cultivated, if not self-taught; your clever little boys or girls continue little people all their days.

If circumstances prevent children from taking exercise in the open air, they should not be restrained from playing a great deal in the house; they can circulate the blood, expand the chest, and give freedom of movement to the limbs, at various active sports in which girls should also join, for it is a great mistake to let them sit while the boys are in motion.

A prudent mother will lose no opportunity of obtaining a holiday, or half a holiday, for her younger children to enjoy the country air in fine weather, and I wish with all my heart that holidays were revived, and school hours abridged as much as possible, for the sake of health. Hundreds of young ladies are destroyed, as to bodily vigour and activity, from confinement at the piano-forte, and all the long list of accomplishments which they are compelled to acquire, often against their natural taste and faculties, as the means of getting them well married, but surely these accomplishments—in many instances abandoned immediately after marriage—are not of equal value with sound health.

The state of the weather must of course be

regarded in taking young children out of doors; the temperature is so continually changing in our country, as to be very trying to the strength of children's constitutions. But I should like to know how they are to be rendered hardy and proof against these sudden variations, if kept within? We have rarely that excessive heat which relaxes the frame, sets the pulse galloping, and produces those copious and continued perspirations which weaken the body, cause the blood to rush to the head, and, if unattended with fatal effects, at least make people heavy, listless, indolent, and sleepy, and take away appetite. Nor have we for many weeks, as I am told is common in other countries which have a better character for climate than ours, those terrible, dry, cold, parching east winds, which wrinkle up the skin, make it rough, like that of a goose, and drive in all moisture from the surface (when in health it escapes by the pores) to the interior of the body, producing inflammation of the lungs and bowels, and other disorders. We have in England, thanks be to God, generally a climate so temperate, as to allow children to be out of doors a good deal. If a continuance of harsh easterly winds should dry up their skins, you must increase their clothing, and encourage a great deal of smart exercise to counteract the effects of the air.

In many parts of Ireland and Scotland, and in some parts of England too, there is in particular seasons such a continued moisture in the air, as to occasion scorbutic disorders, agues, and epi-

demics of many kinds; still I must impress upon you the general necessity of keeping children much in the open air, as the most likely means of making a strong constitution, and preserving that which is already established. In the house, you should endeavour to have the bed-rooms so disposed as to admit a stream of fresh air continually, but without striking directly on the children's faces, particularly when they are asleep,* and you will take care to have the windows opened by day occasionally.

In winter, the chimney fire helps greatly to ventilate a room, because the warm air escapes by the chimney, and is replaced by that which comes in fresh through the door, and even through the chinks and openings of the door and windows. As children grow up sufficiently to find amusement in the care of little gardens, they should be encouraged to do so; but there should be no excess in exercise—moderation in this, as in every thing else, is desirable, for fatigue, instead of strengthening, weakens the body, and thus deprives exercise of its true importance.

Some people send their daughters, when they are pretty well grown up, once a week or so to warm baths, for purposes of health and cleanliness. It is, generally speaking, good to do so, though in the proper bathing season, and on the sea-coast, cold salt-water bathing is in nineteen cases out of twenty far better; but care should be taken not to take the warm bath

* Ventilators are excellent for the purpose.

immediately after a meal, nor to be chilled on coming out of it.

Two young ladies near me took it into their heads this summer to rise at six o'clock in the morning when it happened to be rather cool, and go to an establishment of warm baths. On their return, one of them immediately exhibited every symptom of fever—she was chilly, had hardly any pulse, and trembled greatly. On being put into bed, and having her feet warmed with bottles of hot water, heat returned to her system, but with a violent reaction; her pulse next day was 136, and for a week she was treated by the doctors, who visited her twice a day, as for an ordinary fever. Antimonial draughts, with a little digitalis, reduced her pulse gradually, and the fever, which it was apprehended might have fallen on her lungs, at length subsided without occasioning any essential injury. I state this to show, that with some constitutions the warm bath, though usually conducive to health, may be found quite the contrary.

This remark leads me to the subject of *Fevers* in general. I think that nurses are more in demand for this class of disease than any other, and as there is undoubtedly much risk in attending on patients affected with the malignant kinds, nurses should be paid accordingly.

I have neither the ability nor inclination to distinguish the different forms under which fever invades the body. This is the province

of the physician alone, and he himself is often puzzled to decide upon the exact character which the malady assumes, or at least upon the name it ought to have. But people are often very curious to learn whether fever is really in possession of the ailing person or not, and profess much anxiety to make a call, but have great fears of contagion. Now, such people can do no good at all, and may do harm, if they happen to be more anxious about some affairs of their own with the patient, than respecting his health and recovery. The best answer will be the real truth, that whether the complaint is contagious or not you cannot tell, nor whether the patient ought to receive the visitor, and that the safest plan for the inquirer will be to wait a few days. Still it is a great point to be able to take a fever in time, to see it afar off, and not to lose the first moments, which are the most precious.

Fever comes on at first with shivering, or a sense of cold all over, as if the clothes were damp; the patient creeps to the fire, looks miserable, and is out of spirits. If this cold stage be severe, there is also weariness of the limbs, and pain in the back and loins; there is a bad taste in the mouth, loss of appetite, then heat of skin, flushing of the face and eyes, head-ache, and thirst. Along with these symptoms, there is always disturbance of the frame, something going wrong somewhere. It may be that the patient has been exposed to cold or damp, particularly in the night, has taken a long journey, and has been disturbed, delayed,

disappointed, vexed about something; he thinks it is only cold, only rheumatism, only a return of some old enemy in a new shape; he is tired, wishes to go to bed, will be better in the morning he is quite sure—if not, he will take advice then—at present he should like something warm.

Now, this is just the time for a foolish woman to kill a man, or for a prudent one to save him. If you stupidly attempt to force the palled appetite by something *tasty*, and to raise the enfeebled strength by hot spirits and warm wine, the fever will connect itself with inflammation of the brain or some vital organ, and run its course rapidly, to the great peril of life, and at great waste of health and vigour, the dire consequence of which will be felt for many a long day. If you have any sense, you will see in the loss of strength and appetite one of the beautiful provisions of our frame, "so fearfully and wonderfully made." You will put the patient into a warm bed—you know that the cold will soon be followed by heat, then heat by perspiration, which is the first salutary cooling process intended to work a cure. To promote this, you will cover the patient lightly with blankets, which invite and promote perspiration. In old times, nurses half-smothered the patient in blankets, while at the same time the curtains were drawn closely, and the doors and windows rendered as air proof as possible, to the distress of the patient and the increased danger of the attendants—and however desirous the sick person might be of a drink of cold

water to cool his parched throat, such a luxury was scrupulously refused.

There is more common sense now-a-days exhibited in the treatment of such cases. A smoky chimney in winter is terrible for an invalid, and though it is the bottom of the chimney and its supply of air that are more generally in fault than the top, and perhaps more easily remedied, there is no chance of a cure in many houses unless the master himself should fall sick.

The apartments of those in full health should be cool rather than warm. Invalids, on the contrary, should be kept warm, for, generally speaking, they are less liable to injury from warmth than cold. They have not the power of warming themselves by exercise, and the abstemious diet requisite for their recovery is not favourable to the maintenance of heat. Attention, therefore, to preserve due warmth in the air of the room is indispensably necessary as long as the patient is confined to bed, for he finds it difficult to regain warmth if he once becomes cold. Old persons are very liable to suffer severely in the winter season, from their fires being allowed to go out, especially towards morning, which is the coldest time of the twenty-four hours. I have no doubt that many weak people die of apoplexy from cold alone. They are found dead in bed, just as people are found dead on the top of a coach in a severe frost—they sleep the sleep of death. Drunkards often die in this way, after the effect of their dram is over.

You will prepare some warm tea, with rather more sugar and rather less cream than usual, and give it to the invalid. If the stomach loathes every thing but water, and if there be inclination to vomit, promote that by plenty of warm water, or camomile tea warm, or any thing of that kind. You may safely give a dose of James's powder, following the admirable printed advice which accompanies that medicine, but you had better send forthwith to a medical gentleman, and leave all medicine to him, for direction both as to how it should be administered, and of what description it should be. If, however, the case be very slight, or if it should so happen that some time must unavoidably elapse before the doctor can come, you may always give a dose of Percival's powder, and repeat it if required. When the doctor arrives, he will say you have done exactly right. Percival's powder is so called, because it was first prescribed by an eminent physician of that name in Dublin, and adopted in the hospitals there, whence it has been extended by medical pupils all over the United Kingdom. It consists of scammony, ipecacuanha, calomel, and jalap, each in equal parts. It may be given with advantage, at the commencement of any febrile disease, to old or young; sometimes it causes vomiting, usually purging, often both. Its great recommendation is the safety with which it may be given—one dose every three or four hours, until it produces a decided effect upon the stomach or bowels. A very safe dose for an adult person

is eight grains at once, repeated as above. You may give to a child twelve years old, three grains; to one of four, two grains; and one grain may be given to a child a year old; infants require milder medicine. It is easy to order forty grains of this powder to be wrapped first in paper, then in tinfoil. It may be weighed out by the apothecary into ten packets of four grains each; two of these papers yield eight grains—or one and a half, six grains—half a powder, two grains, &c.; as it soon passes off one way or other, very minute accuracy is not requisite.

Fevers are occasioned by a great variety of causes, many of which may be guarded against by common sense, and cleanliness, and temperance. Careful family management will generally prevent those which arise from diet, over eating, over drinking, too violent exercise, and exposure to cold in draughts of air when the pores are open. Those which have their origin in infection, an unhealthy state of the air, strong emotions of the mind, or violent injuries to the body, cannot be prevented in many instances even with the utmost precautions.

The fevers which attack men in general, where there is no injurious influence in the air, proceed from intemperance or irregularity in some way or other. How many are attacked with inflammatory fevers from hard drinking, from inflaming the blood with wine and spirits, who would otherwise be in health! When typhus fever rages through the land, how much more fatal is it to those who have injured their con-

stitutions by intemperance! They are feverish at all times, and the least additional excitement inflames them in a moment — their blood is full of bad humours, and these are easily fermented. Depend upon it, as long as people eat and drink too much, your vocation will be in requisition.

With respect to the low typhus fever (which gives to so many sick-nurses employment in hospitals, where, happily for them, continued exposure to infected air renders them almost proof against it), the other extreme, low living, frequently produces it. The poor are especially attacked by it, from half starvation, cold damps, and dirty lodgings. Many a fearful sight have I seen among poor people—perhaps an entire family down together—all in one room, and without a shilling to purchase milk, to buy whey, bread, or any necessary or comfort—dependent upon the casual charity of neighbours, who are afraid to come very near the sick family's dwelling. In such cases I have seen, too, the nurse act truly the Christian part, for she could expect very little payment for her attention, trouble, and want of every decent comfort, while she remained under the infected roof; and then, when the poor creatures were recovering, I have seen them with no meat, no wine, nothing to strengthen *them*. But God, who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, generally brought them through their terrible sufferings, because their bodily humours were not in a bad state from hard drinking or any intemperance. A person in this class is not oppressed with the cares of the

world—the duties of office, the importunities of remorseless creditors, or the mortifying neglect of unfeeling relatives. Of them, indeed, it may often be truly said, in every sense, "to die is gain," if their lives have been guided by the gospel—"Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours."

But the common observation of all mankind, and the remarks of the wisest physicians, abundantly testify that poor labouring people, whose constitutions have not been injured by vice and excess, will often recover from the most violent attacks of fever and other diseases, not only without the aid of medicine, or medical advice, but *notwithstanding* the mischievous interference of ignorant quacks, and this by the mere *efforts of nature*, as they are thanklessly called, but which ought to be gratefully acknowledged as the benevolent providence of our Almighty Creator and Preserver, who has endowed this our wonderful frame with a faculty of self-preservation and self-repair which far surpasses our comprehension, though it cannot escape the observation of the most heedless and ungrateful.

In the treatment of decided fevers, you will be entirely under the directions of the doctor; yet some general hints for your guidance will not be amiss in this place. In many other cases of disease, the medical man, on quitting his patient, can form a just conjecture as to the state in which he will next find him, or he can give general directions to be acted upon in such or such circumstances; but in fevers, new and

unexpected changes are perpetually occurring, —they take even the doctor by surprise, and require prompt measures. In disorders of this nature, therefore, vigilance and sagacity are especially requisite in the nurse, and in such qualities an old woman is by no means so deficient as scoffers imagine.

Your particular attention will be required to various symptoms. You will observe how the patient bears light or noise—whether his sleeps be natural or not—deficient or excessive—whether there be much pain in the head, or in any other part—whether the pupil (or central part of the eye) looks dull, large, and staring, or small and dazzled. You will carefully notice his power of swallowing—his mode of breathing, whether hurried or slow—whether there be rattling or snoring during sleep; the heat of the skin will require to be attended to, and especially the due warmth of the hands and feet—the degree of thirst—the state of the appetite, or loathing for food—the tendency to cough or to hiccup—the power of the patient to rise, or turn, or support himself in bed—the attention he pays to what is passing—his wants and feelings of every kind—the occurrence of pain, redness, or swelling in any part. All these, and every passing change, it is the duty of the nurse to observe; she ought to report carefully every thing she has noticed, for better or worse, to the medical attendant when he pays his next visit, before he sees the patient. If he inquire earnestly respecting any particular train of symptoms, she will remember his inquiries,

and direct her attention more especially to them.

The difference between a drowsy, stupid hireling, and an anxious wife or fond mother, is in no respect more apparent than in the notice taken by the latter of every minute particular, and in the dull, careless, contradictory replies of the former to the questions of the doctor. You should study to save the patient as much as possible the trouble of speaking. To talk will be no task to *you*, but a pleasure, I dare say, to which you are entitled; and if you have learned to observe, you will not find it difficult to give the doctor so clear an account of what happened in his absence, that his questions to the patient need to be few. During your interview with the former, you ought not to talk unnecessarily, else he will pronounce that you yourself are labouring, not under the same disease with the patient, but under what he will probably designate a *determination of words to the mouth*, which it is very difficult to cure in some females at any period of life.

The doctor will not remain long in the sick room, for he must know that the danger of infection to himself is inconsiderable, if he do not imbibe the tainted air for too long a time at once; he also is aware that the patient himself attaches the greatest importance to every look and every word that passes between his attendants.

If you have any thing to say, however, before the patient, let there be no meaning nods, nor signs, nor whisperings. The doctor will give

his directions *for the patient*, to you in his presence; he will be brief and guarded in what he says down stairs, and if he find time to take refreshment, or discuss the ordinary news with the family, you will return as soon as possible to the sick man, who will expect you with much of the same feeling that the poor criminal looks for the announcement of his fate in the tone and countenance of the foreman of a closeted jury: let your looks be serene whatever your feelings may be.

Every patient affected with fever, or other complaint of such a nature as to render probable a confinement of some duration, ought to have his bed placed in a part of the house most remote from the street, and, if possible, also from any stairs or passages much frequented by servants or other persons running about; every door in the house should have its hinges oiled, and be covered with woollen cloth, so as to prevent noise in opening or shutting. All furniture that can possibly be spared should be removed out of the sick room; the carpets should be taken away from all parts of the floor, except where they are necessary to prevent the sound of footsteps.

Have dry body linen and sheets always aired and ready for use. Sheets made of Welsh flannel will be found better than blankets, being lighter and more easily changed and washed: they are much cooler in hot weather, and warmer in winter than sheets of linen or cotton; and take this as a universal rule—that, in the winter season particularly, old and feeble per-

sons, whether well or sick, should not be allowed to grow cold towards morning. Have all your medicines and slops in order, so that you can put your hand on them without mistake or hurry.

The author of "The Good Nurse," very properly advises those who have the management of the sick-chamber, to furnish a table with plates, basins, spoons, &c.; a lamp with water, in order to keep any thing warm in the night; lemonade, raspberry, vinegar, which is both cooling and pleasant; oranges — squeezing them into a glass when wanted, and passing the juice through a lawn sieve to prevent the patient from being offended with pieces of skin, &c. Barberries are generally left to the birds, but if preserved in the ordinary way with sugar, they afford a basis for a most agreeable and refreshing beverage, much better than raspberry vinegar, black currants, or any thing of that kind.

The author of "The Good Nurse" also recommends to have ready at hand "a large bottle of vinegar, one of water, and another of brandy, and port wine; which, though they may not be wanted for the patient, may be very necessary for those attending in the room (I doubt this); a waste-pan, towels, glass cloths, change of linen for the patient, the same for the bed; two loose pillows, plenty of pocket handkerchiefs, a bottle of salts without perfume—an article of much value in case of fainting; a bottle of eau de Cologne, a roll of fine rag, the same of flannel; a pincushion, stuck full of pins; a large

goose quill, in order to place through the key-hole of the door, as a signal, when the feather is out, that no one is to attempt to enter, as it indicates that the patient is asleep, or engaged; whereas, if you lock the door, some person may attempt opening it, and by that means disturb the patient: also a wooden poker, from the handle of a birch broom; a tub with damp sand, for the purpose of throwing under the grate to prevent the noise occasioned by the falling of the cinders; a flat candlestick, with a wax candle, and a shade; matches, and a phosphoric box."

You may burn a bit of cork, or tar, in the room, or brown paper, if there are offensive smells, and those are far better for the purpose than chloride of lime, or a fumigation of oil of vitriol and saltpetre, which affect the lungs of all the persons in the room. But the best purifier of the room is pure air. Damp and cold air are, however, to be avoided, particularly during the night, and in the latter stage of feverish diseases, when the hands and feet grow cold, and flannels begin to be required. I have seen more than one dangerous disease of the lungs brought on by too much diligence in ventilating during fevers. If a fire be kept moderately burning, the chimney will supply a constant draught of air; and if from any cause a complete change of air is required, you must close the patient's curtains for a time, then open a door and window until you have effected your object, which will only require a few minutes.

The breathing of a pure stream of air with

the precautions above given, must be good for all cases. The air which has passed over and over again through the lungs of a diseased person, gets worse and worse each time, and is bad for the sick person, and worse for those about him. Eating and drinking in the same room with a sick person taints the air, and is therefore to be avoided altogether: you should not even take tea in the patient's room at any time.

After long attendance on the sick, it is not unusual for relations to fall into a state of weakness and bad health. Many valuable lives are continually sacrificed to the duties in the sick room—delicate and impassioned females of refined education are the most obstinately self-devoted. If the nurse ought to snatch rest by day, and sleep by night, fresh air and moderate recreation, whenever they can be stolen from the sick-chamber, it is still more the duty of the wife and mother to remember, that her continued attention to the invalid, unless moderated by prudence, will defeat the very object she has most at heart. She ought to attend to her health and strength, if not for her own sake, for that of the beloved object of her solicitude. The doctor will tell you when wine or cordials of any kind are to be given, and take care not to exceed the quantity ordered.

The application of heat or cold for the relief or cure of fever, or any other diseases, the use of warm or cold baths, of hot fermentations, or of ice to inflamed parts, are of course best left to the discretion of the medical man. Heat and

cold are capable of doing much good or harm, and ought not to be trifled with, as sometimes they are; yet in sudden emergencies these may be the best and most ready means of relief.

For sudden discharges of blood, from the nose for instance, or from the lungs and stomach, it is always safe to apply cloths soaked in the coldest water, or mixed with ice, to the spine, and to the neighbourhood of the bleeding artery or vein. In some cases of fainting, especially if caused by breathing the polluted air of crowded, close, and heated apartments, the splashing of cold water on the face and breast is a rough but ready remedy.

I have lately seen in a newspaper the following passage, taken from the diary of Sir Samuel Romilly. Does it not forcibly illustrate the lack of good sense and courage in parents and nurses even among the higher classes?

"My little girl was last month seized with a very dangerous fever, which lasted twenty-one days. Having read in Dr. Currie's book of the happy effects produced in many cases by the application of cold water in fever, I asked Dr. Pitcairn, who attended her, whether it would not be advisable to try it. He said he thought it certainly would—that it might be of service, and could do no harm; but that the prejudice against it in London was so strong, that he never ventured it. Cold water was accordingly applied to her, and I have no doubt that it saved her life." It is probable, owing to the prevalence of prejudices like that recorded by

Sir Samuel Romilly, that medical men do not now employ cold water in this way so generally as in my recollection they used to do; and yet when the doctor's direction was followed, I have seen very wonderful cures effected by it, especially in the scarletina, and the fevers of children attended with very hot and dry skins. The rule I remember to have heard was, that the use of cold water was then safest and most effectual when the heat of the patient's skin was the highest.

Now, a prudent nurse will certainly take the doctor's advice, whenever there is great heat of the skin, for that indicates fever, and when the doctor has sense and firmness enough to direct a patient to be soused with cold water, I should no more hesitate to follow his directions, than I should to put out a blazing fire by the same means. In fact, a patient in high fever will bear the sudden application of cold water better than the tepid sponging often substituted for it by hen-pecked doctors.

In the commencement of fever, poor ignorant people always send for wine or spirits, thinking that these things can raise the heart and throw off the sickness; but they greatly increase it, and may render it fatal. As a rule, with respect to patients in general, you ought never to persuade them to eat, and seldom encourage them to drink; nor should they be frequently disturbed either by day or night, or roused up, even if awake, as long as they appear to be still and breathe freely; but you should

visit them during the night once or twice at least, without disturbing them, if they are in such a state as to require attendance at all.

I once knew a dear old lady, who from excessive solicitude would never allow any sick person under her roof to woo or enjoy a quiet slumber. If the object of her anxiety was endeavouring to obtain repose, she would open the bed-room door every quarter of an hour, in order to see if the sick person was asleep. The opening of the door, however softly done, aroused the patient, how much soever disposed to slumber, and, by its frequent recurrence, entirely defeated the end desired. Sometimes the patient would counterfeit sleep, in order to avoid the weariness of answering the repeated question, 'Are you asleep?' and if this occurred, the old lady, unless kept away by some stratagem, or the decided orders of a despotic physician, would perpetually go into the room, under the apprehension that a long deep sleep was alarming; and I have seen her, after a thousand other less disturbing movements had been apparently tried in vain, touch the supposed too heavy sleeper on the shoulder. Great respect for the visitor's motives, and extreme good temper, alone preserved the old lady's domestic patients from making snappish remarks on her intrusion upon their quiet.

You will find yourself frequently placed in a situation of great delicacy and responsibility, both with respect to the spiritual and worldly condition of a patient. For instance, you may have to tend a very irreligious man in a fever,

or other tedious and dangerous disorders, and have frequent opportunities of encouraging those sentiments of contrition and resolutions of amendment, which the terrors of a sick bed never fail to produce on such characters. It is not the clergyman only who is to speak of religion in such a case; it is your duty to recommend religion as far as you have the opportunity of doing so; and, by the words of truth, quietly and unobtrusively spoken, to introduce the most important of all considerations at those happy moments, when the heart, softened by suffering, may be best disposed to listen to the things that belong to the Lord. A gloomy or superstitious demeanour must, however, be avoided by persons in attendance on the sick, who must be animated by the cheerful and encouraging manner of the nurse, looking as if she hoped the best at all times, unless there be a decided hopelessness of recovery, when it would be wrong to deceive a patient by alse and illusory expectations.

There are silly women who confound superstition with true religion, and who fancy that they see the prognostics of death in the night howlings of a watch-dog, in shrouded candle-wicks, in omens which have no more connexion with the destiny of the patient—as to the issues of life or death—than the pen with which I am now writing has to do with the darning of my worsted stockings. A mind weakened by sickness is often wonderfully liable to such impressions as a foolish nurse might excite through her unlucky omens, and becomes pro-

portionably depressed, to a degree which the individual affected would not have thought possible when in possession of health. Avoid then every nonsensical allusion of this kind; pay no regard to dreams, coffins in the fire, and such absurdities, but trust in God, who employs no such agencies in imparting information to us. A word or act of your's may draw the heart of the sick person to pray, and you may be rendered the honoured means of improving to good purpose the thoughts that may have arisen in his mind; and your own prayers, in the stillness of the night, may be offered up to Heaven with good success. The very appearance which you present when in the attitude of prayer, or the sound of voice whispering its words, may, at a moment favourable for good impressions, strike upon the eye or ear of the patient with such power as to excite abiding influences. Thus may a wild young man be led to receive his first devout thoughts through the soft voice of his nurse. Surely this is a far more delightful office than to act the part of the wretched old dame in the play, to throw yourself between the sinner and the Saviour, and (if you dare) to tell him, in order to comfort him, "not to think about God." You will not forget to observe the Sabbath-day, though you may not always be able to attend a place of worship. The return of Sunday should be brought to your patient's remembrance in so cheerful a manner, that he may look for its recurrence with pleasure. His room, his bed, as well as his person, must be

clad in Sunday suit. Whenever you can obtain the doctor's leave for an improvement in his diet, let the treat be added to his Sunday's dinner. Above all, take care that the day be one of silence, repose, and hope. Too many men of business neglect to give their minds that rest from the cares and troubles of the world which is necessary to their general health. I remember once hearing Dr. Smalldose say, that many great statesmen and authors would be alive now if they had been content to work only on six days of the week. When you obtain permission for the convalescent to come down stairs for the first time, let the change be made on a Sunday if you can; and allow no visits of clerks, attorneys, or other men of that kind, on worldly affairs; clear away every thing that can occupy the patient's mind in a painful manner; let there be no books of accounts or letters of business laid before him on that holy day.

With lady-patients your task will be rather to prevent their falling into a danger of the contrary kind. Sometimes they are in too great a hurry to appear at their place of worship, and if they come home heated and tired before their health is re-established, the consequences may be very serious. The evening service, especially, in very crowded churches, is often hazardous for weakly females. The night air is bad; the crowd is bad; the heat and the smoke of the lamps are bad; and the cold damp air returning home is the worst of all. Far better would it be for them, until quite recovered, to collect their families around them for a short

space on the Sabbath, and occupy themselves at home in the study of the Bible, and in supplication and thanksgiving.

The good nurse knows, that without a quiet state of mind, the work of the physician or herself is of very little avail. She has nothing to do with disputed points of doctrine, but a great deal with the indisputable duties of Christianity. She will promote to the utmost of her power reconciliation of estranged friends and relatives, the abandonment of vicious society and vicious habits, to which so many patients owe their state of disease and distress. She will not fail to remind the young and heedless inmates of the house of many little acts of kind attention, that will smooth the temper of the invalid. Whatever her own religious opinions may be, and how different soever from those of her patient, she may do this with credit to herself, and with great propriety; but she will not try to make converts, to cry up this or that preacher, or church, or meeting-house; still less business can she have with the worldly affairs of those under her charge. She will not even be witness to a will, nor be one of a party in any domestic cabal; planning favour to one branch of the family, and disinheriting another; yet she will, at the same time, intimate that life is short at best, and recovery from disease always doubtful; that no man is more likely to die for making a just will, but, on the contrary, is more likely to recover, when he can turn his mind from this

world to the next; that *he* is more likely to make his peace with God, who is already at peace with his neighbour, and especially with his own household; that the death-bed and the grave are not the places into which sinners should carry their resentments, if they hope for mercy themselves. Considerations such as these are never out of place.

Nurses themselves are sometimes attacked by fevers, and other disorders of an infectious nature, from breathing the infected air of a sick-chamber. This is especially the case in rooms in which many fever patients are lodged together without complete ventilation. The air becomes so loaded with the foul matter which escapes through the skin, and is breathed through the lungs of the sick, that it often enters into the pores or lungs of the attendants, and places them too upon the sick list.

Yet you are not to be deterred from doing your duty, if required to minister relief to those who are in need of you, and to whom you can be of service; nor can you often observe much precaution against contagion. It often happens that the nurse has the temporary charge of a patient's ready money and watch during the absence of his friends or relatives; and that during the delirium of a fever, and still more in the dying hour of the patient, she has the tempting opportunity of stealing some of his money or other property, and this without danger of detection or discovery. But remember that there is an all-seeing eye upon you at such

time, and act accordingly. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." I shall tell you a short story, to show you the honesty of an Irish nurse—tender in a case of this nature. A medical friend of mine, who lives in England, had a son ill of fever in Dublin; he went over in great distress of mind, and found his son delirious, but attentively watched over by a nurse, who had been procured by the eminent physicians who were attending the patient. The young man when taken ill had thirty pounds in his purse, of which the nurse had charge by his request; of this she had not disbursed a single shilling when the father arrived in the house, but had expended first her own little cash in the purchase of whatever matters were required for the patient, and then (as my friend informed me) pledged her best clothes to provide every thing actually necessary, rather than touch, during the delirium of the sick gentleman, what had been entrusted to her care. One of his first inquiries on his recovery was for his purse, and nothing could exceed the pleasure of the patient, and the honest pride of the nurse, when the former was assured, that when his life was despaired of the latter had taken the earliest opportunity of surrendering her trust untouched, to the parent, on his arrival from England.

The recovery of a patient depends, under Divine Providence, quite as much upon the care and vigilance of the nurse, as upon the skill of a medical man. Of the two, indeed, I consider the nurse the more essential, without in-

tending to disparage the noble art of healing, or the humblest among its learned and skilful votaries. Though I may be deemed self-sufficient and prejudiced unreasonably in favour of my sex, and of the importance of the offices which a kindly disposed nurse can perform, I shall state what I think, in the confident expectation that all well-judging persons will agree with me.

My deliberate opinion then is, that though sick people may do well by good nursing, without a physician, they will not do well with one and without a good nurse. The doctor only comes occasionally, prescribes, and goes away again, perhaps for forty-eight hours. During this long interval the nurse has to exercise care, and patience, and skill, in observing all the changes that may occur, and which will require corresponding alterations in the treatment. Experience and judgment are manifestly necessary on many critical occasions, which may arise, even though the medical gentleman may be as vigilant as circumstances will permit him to be. The nurse will perceive many turns in a disorder, which the other may not have foreseen, or provided for by directions, and then much may depend upon the discretion of the nurse. And who will compare (unless for contrast) any man alive with a woman for the qualities of watchfulness and patient nursing, which are so essential in the sick-chamber? Men, in general, have too high an opinion of the dignity and talents of their sex, and look rather contemptuously on women, especially if

they are old; and while in the enjoyment of health and vigour, they often think us little better than quacks, and always fools, more or less. Now this is so very ungrateful and unjust on their parts, that I must remind them of a few of their obligations to us despised women. They owe their birth to us; in pain and danger we bring them forth. Can they deny this? We have nourished them at our bosoms. Do they do as much for their children? Let them answer this. Who watched over their infant breathings, passed night after night without weariness or murmur, to administer to their wants when they were sick? Whose voice lulled them to slumber, when they started from their sleep under some new impression, some nervous impulse, or were irritable through peevishness, attendant on some hidden malady Who taught them their first prayer, their first words, their first rudimental lessons? And when they grew up to manhood, when the glory of young men is their strength, but perhaps laid low by fever or a broken limb, whose soft hand bathed the burning forehead, held the aching head with untiring constancy, or with unclosed eyes watched by the bed-side, to soothe the pains of the mangled and tortured body? Who are their best and most anxious nurses? Whose hearts are warmed towards them? Whose eyes glisten with affection? Who, but the wife, the mother, the sister, the daughter, can minister to the sick man in his hours of suffering? And who is next to them in tenderness and practical assistance—who watches by

the wounded soldier in a distant land, or the solitary man at home, who has no mother, nor wife, nor other female relative, to soothe and cheer him? The professional nurse, who, if she be faithful to her charge, and influenced by a full sense of duty and kind feelings, will take more than a hireling's interest in her office.

And how melancholy is the condition of those childless or solitary individuals who have none to care for them in reality; and how pitiable, as well as contemptible, is the lonely sick man in his hour of sickness, whose selfishness has alienated from him the affections of his children and all his relatives; who has run his course of years unhonoured and unloved, and is now dependent upon the mercenary services of a nurse, who can scarcely (and this only from a regard to her own interest) control her temper sufficiently to bear with his unreasonable exactions and peevishness! It is painful to see the fretful impatience of this class of invalids during the progress of disease, or the decay of nature. Such individuals are, however, among the best friends to the physician: they are always anxious for more advice, and among the most liberal to the nurse for their own sakes.

Between the cessation of every severe disease, and the entire recovery of health and strength, there is always an interval of *convalescence*, the duration of which varies with the age and constitution of the patient, and the nature of the complaint. During this period the nurse gra-

dually supersedes the doctor, and finally the cook and patient drive the nurse herself from her position. The following remarks, therefore, though addressed to the nurse, are equally suggested to the consideration of the patient, and all whom they may concern.

One of the first consequences of the abatement of disease is a remarkable emaciation of the entire frame, and particularly a shrinking of the features; the face becoming at the same time so pale or sallow, that a prudent nurse will, if she can, keep the looking-glass from a lady, who, whether she have any pretensions to beauty or not, will be curious to see how she looks after her illness, and will examine her features and complexion more than may be consistent with the serenity of her mind.

With cessation of suffering, and return of comfortable feelings, the patient has an increased sense of weakness; the voice fails, and only regains its former tone by slow degrees. Weakness is perceptible also in the faculties of the mind. The imagination, the memory, the judgment, can indeed generally be freely exercised, but mental employment soon causes fatigue, head-ache, and other disturbances of the system. The temper also becomes fretful, and the good advice and remonstrances of friends are usually acknowledged with less kindness than well-meaning inexperienced people expect. The stomach and digestive organs resume their powers only by slow degrees; food is still insipid, or has an unpleasant taste: too frequently the desire of food returns before the power of

digestion, and this is the time when the patient is most apt to fall a ready prey to the treacherous baits of the cook.

The breathing is free while the patient is at rest, but it is soon hurried by exercise, reading aloud, or speaking. Convalescents are very sensible of cold, though the weather be warm, but perspirations are usually copious during sleep.

Convalescence is most rapid in childhood; longer and more difficult in advanced age. It is greatly impeded when excessive evacuations, or profuse blood-letting, have been resorted to during the treatment of the disease. The diligence of the doctor abates daily—the trials of the nurse increase as her influence begins to wane. The cook always, and too often the fondly foolish wife or mother, begin to interfere (step-mothers are not too often guilty of this fault); and the killing kindness of good-natured friends is frequently the great cause of relapses, for which the nurse, the doctor, or the patient, is unjustly blamed. In short, amendment is much more frequently and more easily accomplished than complete recovery, especially when the patient is immersed in the toils and cares of life. The precautions to be observed in this interval of convalescence depend upon a great variety of circumstances, which can only be discussed in a general manner.

At the first, it is proper for the patient to persist in the use of those remedies which have rescued him from danger. Reason and experience dictate the occasional employment of mild aperients at this time, carefully avoiding

either extreme—the excessive abuse or entire neglect of these medicines.

If in some cases convalescents require the continued advice and physic of the doctor, in all they demand solicitude on the part of the nurse.

They ought to move as soon as possible into a spacious room, enlivened and warmed by the rays of the sun, and supplied freely with dry fresh air, the temperature being regulated between 55 and 65 degrees of the thermometer; and removal into the country, or to the sea-side, is always desirable, when the season does not forbid the change, provided that the patient can have the comforts of home, and the advantage of good nursing. His clothes ought to be warmer than those he is accustomed to wear when in a state of health. It is also proper, in general, for him to take a bath, at about 100 degrees, so soon as his strength will allow; repeating this remedy once or twice a week, and reducing the temperature by two or three degrees at once, until he can bear the Buxton heat, that is, 80 degrees of thermometer. The thermometer, you know, is a glass instrument, set in a frame of ivory, metal, or wood, and marked with figures at the side. If you plunge such an instrument into warm water, the spirit, oil, or quicksilver, in the glass will rise, and as the water cools the fluid in the glass will come down again.

It is one of the signs of the times, that a thermometer of good construction may be purchased for a few shillings, in any town; and

this instrument is so useful in a sick-chamber, that no family should omit to provide one.

If a bath be ordered, you must first learn from the doctor, as I have hinted before, what is to be the heat, and then you must attend to a few particulars which I shall proceed to mention.

Hot water is lighter than cold, so that if you put very cold water, with a splash, into a large tub of hot water, it goes straight to the bottom, and remains there, unless you are very careful to stir the whole together; if you only dip your thermometer into the water, it indicates a great deal higher heat than you require, unless you have the water previously well mixed.

I have often known patients plunge into water at 100 degrees, by medical advice, and complain next day that they felt it much too cold, and were obliged to add more hot water. The doctor will, perhaps, say there was some fault in the thermometer, or in the nurse, who had done her best, but had been puzzled between the warm water above, and the cold water below, and blundered so that every body got out of humour, and the advantage to be derived from the warm bath was entirely thrown away.

But suppose the patient comfortably placed in the warm water, and covered with flannel, he soon begins to perspire, and the water grows colder, and the time is not half gone during which he has been ordered to remain in it. What then are you to do?

You must add warm water, and be careful

how you do this, or you will scald the patient; remember that the hot water will swim on the top, if you do not prevent it. In every bath properly constructed, there is a long funnel, fixed at one end, or one side, reaching to the bottom. The use of this is to enable you to add hot water. It goes to the bottom first, then mixes with the cooler water, and as it rises to the surface mixes itself gradually. It is well, however, for the patient to flounder about the water a little, and ensure the proper mixture for himself. This remark may seem trifling, when you consider the subject a little, but it is attention to such trifles that makes the difference between a good nurse and a bad one.

I ought, perhaps, to have remarked, that invalids are very sensitive to sounds—loud and sudden explosions of fire-arms sometimes produce fatal effects; and the continued annoyance of bells, knockers, and street music, is very prejudicial, especially to the fretful and irritable nerves of convalescents, and delicate women and children.

In the choice of a sick-chamber, seclusion from noise ought to be a first consideration. The bells and knockers of the house should be muffled; the fire-irons of the room most sparingly and cautiously used, and great care taken to keep talkative persons, as much as possible, at a distance. The tolling of the parish bells for the dead is a ceremony that might be discontinued, as it is attended with no benefit to the living (except the sexton) or dead, and is

often productive of great distrss to the feelings of the sick.

But the choice of food is the point on which it is most important to advise the convalescent. He must be restricted at first to sago or arrow-root, with bread, or a small cup of chocolate; next in order, the light calf's foot jelly chicken broth, beef tea; then eggs, boiled neither too hard nor too soft; to these may be added any soft vegetables in season; then roasted chicken, partridge, or fish, perfectly fresh.

Cold meat is an unsafe article of food for invalids; veal, especially veal pie, is, in the summer season, often very unwholesome long before it is disagreeable to the taste. There are strange stories told upon the continent of sausages, very good and nutritious whilst fresh, becoming absolutely poisonous by being kept too long, though they are not offensive either to the taste or smell.

Raw oysters ought never to be given to patients. It is true that they are taken with impunity and advantage by many, but the instances of bad consequences, from whatever cause they may arise, are so numerous, that no prudent nurse will on any occasion deviate from the rule laid down.

There is a pleasant anecdote current in books and newspapers, of some lady calling her doctor up stairs a second time, to inquire whether she might eat a few oysters, and the doctor replying, in a fume, "Yes, madam, you may, shells and all." If this story be true, the doctor was,

I think, as much deficient in sense as in good manners.

The best drink for a convalescent is toast and water, adding gradually a supply of good wine, which, like a good horse, is never of a bad colour.

All patients inclined to the use of spirits, and some others from a mistaken notion, are extremely apt to impose on themselves, the nurse, and the doctor, in taking a *leetle* brandy instead of wine—as they say, to prevent acidity in the stomach. Now, this is one of the popular errors which it is principally the object of this little book to remove; and if it shall do nothing more than prevent the eating of raw oysters by sick and feeble people, and remove the erroneous notion, that brandy prevents acidity in the stomach, it will effect as much good as some volumes of larger size and higher pretensions.

Be it known, then, to all patients, nurses, and doctors, for many of the latter have yet to learn this, that brandy or spirit in any form, so far from preventing acidity in the stomach, is well known to every chemist as the very thing that yields vinegar of the best quality. Pure spirit, free from all admixture but water, does not become acid by exposure to the air—but spirit mixed with various alimentary matters, and exposed to a proper temperature, quickly disappears, and is replaced by vinegar. A gallon of water, one pint of brandy, six ounces of honey, one ounce of cream of tartar, and half an ounce of dough, if left for a few weeks in a warm place, yield a strong and pleasant

vinegar. Now, if the brandy, in the proportion of a pint to a gallon, so far from preventing the other ingredients from turning sour, is found to be necessary to the acidity of the vinegar, how very absurd it must be to recommend the taking of spirits into a stomach containing undigested food, for the purpose of counteracting a tendency to acidity there, because perhaps pure spirits and water may be kept in a bottle for a century!

The experience of Sir John Ross, who passed four successive years in the arctic regions, under severities of wet and snow which we cannot read of without amazement and horror, ought to be very decisive on this subject. That deservedly distinguished officer says—"As I was the only one who drank no spirits, and was also the only person who had not inflamed eyes, I represented that the use of grog was the cause, and therefore proposed that they should abandon this indulgence, showing farther, that although I was much, very much, the oldest of the party, I bore fatigue better than any of them.

"It is difficult to persuade men, even though they be not habitual drinkers of spirits, that the use of these liquors is debilitating instead of the reverse; the immediate stimulus gives a temporary courage, and its effect is mistaken for an infusion of new strength, but the slightest attention will show how exactly the result is the reverse. It is sufficient to give men, under hard and steady labour, a draught of the usual grog or dram, to perceive that, often in a few minutes, they become languid, and, as they

generally term it, faint, losing their strength in reality, while they attribute that to the continuance of fatiguing exertions. He who will make the corresponding experiments on two equal boats' crews, rowing in a heavy sea, will soon be convinced that the water drinkers will far outdo the others. Were it in my power, as commanding a vessel, I should exclude the use of grog, on the mere grounds of its debilitating effects, and, independently of any ulterior injury which it might do, reserving it for those cases alone in which its use may be termed medicinal, or for any special reasons useful."

Let me repeat, that spirit mixed with food promotes acidity when the powers of the stomach are feeble. As spirit is taken by many solely as a medicine for acidity, on such unwarranted assumptions as those above mentioned, I make no apology for detaining you so long on a subject highly important, as well to health as to morals.

Since this paragraph was written, I have seen a very useful ornament for the chimney of a sick room. It may be had at the shop of any dealer in optical or mathematical instruments. It is merely a lamp filled with spirit instead of oil. At the top of the wick is a piece of something black, like a bit of cinder, or sometimes a firm wire is coiled round the wick. Well, the lamp being lighted, and then blown out, a sort of steam continues to follow the wick until it comes to the metal, and then gives out a firm, fragrant smell of vinegar. I am no philosopher, but I believe, though I may not exactly com-

prehend the scientific or chemical reason, that the spirit turns into vinegar of itself, without any addition whatever, by just *looking at* the sponge or wire, for the platinum (as the metal is called) and the wick do not undergo the least change, but go on, like two censorious, bad neighbours, souring by their mere presence the spirits from one end of the year to the other. In countries where spirit is cheaper than here, a manufacture of vinegar of the finest quality, from unmixed spirit, is carried on with great success on an extensive scale.

When the patient becomes convalescent, friends are often too sanguine of a quick restoration to health, and the care of the nurse is abated. Now, you are not to suppose that as soon as pains and feverishness subside, and the appetite and sleep begin to return, that the patient is well, and that he may resume his usual employments and mode of living, which, by the way, may be a very bad one, and that no farther nurse-tending is necessary. This would be a great mistake, because, after an attack of disease which has reduced the frame, and brought on lassitude and languor, months often pass before the health is re-established. After sharp and brief *attacks*, I mean those which soon end in death or recovery, the period of convalescence no doubt is shorter in its duration than after what are called *chronic* disorders, but still there is occasion for great care.

In cases of fever, the patient is not aware (from the rapid circulation of the blood) of

his real weakness, but he feels it wofully as soon as the fever has ceased—the flesh becomes soft and loose, the muscles lose all strength and energy, and the different functions of the body are slow in recovering their powers. You often see the sweetest tempered persons irritable and impatient at this time—the power of speaking constrained—the ideas confused more or less—and all the senses in some degree enfeebled; the eyes weak, less able to bear much light, and quite incapable of reading for many minutes, if at all—the body more susceptible of cold—the stomach unable to digest any thing but the mildest food—the arms feeble—and the legs unable to walk more than a few paces at a time.

Now, I ask you, can any one in such a condition, though he be not actually sick, take care of himself? No; you must advise him not to expose himself too soon to the outward air, if at all cold or damp—and induce him to wear warmer clothes than ordinary, but not so as to bring on perspiration, which would weaken the constitution still more, and add to the danger arising from being chilled while in a state of great moisture in the skin. You are to recommend very moderate and gradual exercise both in the limbs and the stomach—walking at first up and down a room with a sofa in it, and lying down whenever the head feels giddy or confused. An easy chair affords the means of moving from one room to another; a short walk may be taken in the garden, at first with support, then without it; then an airing

in a carriage—then on horseback; but in every attempt, the first sensation of fatigue ought to be a signal to desist. This is much better than to have any fixed rule for walking, or sitting, or lying down. I do not approve of too much regularity of system. In all cases it is far better for the invalid to consult his own sensations, in case of moving about or sitting down, than to say I will walk so many minutes and then sit down, or I will sit up so many hours, and then lie down; nature will be the best guide in all this. If a person under your care is obliged to go out sooner than may be desirable, and in wet, foggy, or windy weather, caution him to keep a handkerchief to the mouth, and to put on very strong boots or clogs, and to keep the feet warm; to avoid any thing that tends to disturb the mind; to eat only when there is an appetite, and then not to satisfy it fully; to make use of things light and easy of digestion, until the stomach entirely recovers its powers. For most people have a choice *in food.* Something they like, something they dislike; and if it be foolish to give in *health* those articles of food which create disgust, it must be far more so, when the health is delicate and the taste fastidious. While the stomach requires nothing, be certain that it is not in a fit state to perform its functions; and even when the *cravings*, which it so often experiences, appear to be signs of appetite, they are not so; the doctor and physic—not food—are wanted.

I do not say that, if the appetite be a *long*

time returning, one should not try to coax it, but this should be done very cautiously, with something agreeable; if this be unsuccessful, wait until it comes round naturally;* abstinence may be carried too far, especially with old persons and children, but two or three days' fasting will do a vigorous man no harm, and I am quite sure that there is more injury to the convalescent from eating too much than too little. It is not to be expected that we nurses should know much of what is passing in the stomach, or any part of the interior of the body, in sickness; but if you consider a little, your understanding will tell you that the foregoing hints of caution in giving food prematurely, are founded on common sense, and are consistent with every-day experience in other matters.

We must learn to walk before we can expect to run; and if you had a broken leg, you would not try even to stand upon it, far less take a long walk; nor would you pass the whole day reading if you had sore eyes. When the stomach then, or any other organ of the body, is out of order, is it not *natural* and rational to use the same precautions respecting them, though you do not see the *reasons* for so doing, that you would in other cases with which you are familiar, and which you so clearly understand?

The mind ought to be inured to exercise and exertion as carefully and as gradually as the

* These hints are partly taken from the instructions of Mr. Hallé.

body. The age, taste, and habit, of the patient must be studied; every thing capable of creating strong emotion is to be shunned; and so is every thing requiring deep or protracted study. The best books are those furnished with engravings and short stories; the various weekly penny journals, and the Pictorial Bible, are among the best and most accessible—better than newspapers.

The patient's conversation should at first be entirely restricted to the affectionate members of his own family. A young child, or a faithful little dog, ought to be the first visitors admitted. These may be followed by intimate friends, or quiet entertaining dependants—the groom and the gamekeeper: perhaps the barber for a country gentleman.

Ladies are more apt to talk, whosoever be their visitors. The only thing practicable is to avert the evil of receiving company as long as possible, and to make the visits very short.

Many are compelled to *live by rule*, and many more undergo great privations, and subject their friends and acquaintances to much inconvenience, by conceited pragmatical deviations from the ordinary usages of society. It is the duty, indeed, and the province of the physician, but frequently the artifice of a quack, to discuss the nature and treatment of diseases, to lay down precise rules and regulations of diet; yet I have often observed that the greatest men in *the profession*, like well-bred people in every other station of life, were ever the most careful to avoid giving unneces-

sary trouble, or to impose unnecessary and arbitrary rules of conduct. The subject is a serious and important one; and I will frankly state what occurs to my recollection under this head, without much regard to method.

There is great truth in the remark, that 'every *man* at forty is either a fool or a physician.' Our sex acquire one or both of these characters much earlier. We are more subject to colds, and other slight complaints, and we talk more of our ailments, and of the diseases of our children and domestics; we frequent sick-rooms more than men; we ask more advice. I do not say we always take it, but we give and take more physic, and have, unfortunately, ample opportunities of acquiring experience, if we only studied more how to observe, and were less the slaves and dupes of quacks and pretenders. Of this let my lady readers be assured, that although short and severe diseases are usually well marked, easily recognised by the doctor, and treated by him with great skill and success, the case is altogether different with regard to long-continued weak and broken health; or what I have heard called *chronic* diseases—that is, diseases which last a long time. Yet these are the very cases in which doctors are the most absolute and unreasonable in their rules and regulations. Now it has long been a matter of wonder with me, that those who are self-willed enough on every other point, dogmatical in religion, refractory in politics, conceited in dress, independent in purse, and John Bull all over in every thing

else, should flock to the levee of upstart doctors, and, whatever be the nature of their disorders, all submit to the very same rules—all, perhaps, take blue-pill and black-draught, eat stale bread, eternal mutton-chops, or breakfast on fat bacon. All renounce port wine or brandy, or beer, or cheese, or potatoes, and other vegetables, and fruits, ripe or unripe. One might imagine some reason why many persons, suffering from the same disease, should adopt the same treatment; but I must repeat my surprise, that all sorts of people, suffering all manner of diseases, should all swallow the same nauseous physic, and submit to the same irksome and absurd privations, merely because they happen to consult the same fashionable physician. In my poor judgment of this sort of patients, no two of them are alike at all; and it would be a great deal better for them, if they would be contented with the advice and treatment of any respectable and attentive doctor, who could take time and trouble to study their particular constitutions, and point out what really does agree with them, and what does not.

The regulation of diet cannot be brought under any fixed rules; in fact, the only plan for a person of sound mind is, to have no rule at all. We were never designed to take our allowance of food by weight and measure, nor always with the exactness of timepieces, though much regularity no doubt is good in this as in every thing else. It never, in my poor judgment, was intended that we should be subject to the impertinent interference of a Don Pedro

Snatch-away. Reason was given to us for the regulation of conduct, and the dictates of reason concur with the dictates of religion and morality, in forbidding only abuse or intemperance. A healthy man cannot long endure abstinence; he is first solicited by appetite, then constrained by hunger, to take food; if this be withheld, disease and death are the consequences.

An invalid we all know takes less food than a person in health, and in some diseases will not require so much in a month, as he could take in a day if in perfect health. During sickness, therefore, there is less anxiety for food, and the loss of appetite is often to be regarded as a means of cure, and not a symptom of disease. Food is required for two purposes only—to allay the sense of hunger, and to supply materials for repairing the waste of the body and nourishing it. Now, during sickness, there is little sense of hunger, and it is often necessary that the body should be reduced to a considerable extent before recovery can take place. To load the stomach at this time is worse than useless; to clog the appetite with jellies, and other sweets, is equally absurd. Now all animals which die from want of food are found to die of *hunger*—a dreadful mode of death assuredly, which has been faithfully described by poets and others, but which bears no resemblance to the fatal debility and exhaustion of disease. There is no sort of similarity between them, except, perhaps, that there is no food in either case; in the one none can be

had, and in the other it cannot be swallowed. The man who has no stomach for his food will die as certainly, but not so soon, as the man who has no food for his stomach; nor will he die in the same way. Though the appetite may be weak, and his powers of digestion entirely gone, we may be assured that the privation of food will not be attended with any of those symptoms that would be observed in a healthy man dying of hunger. But whenever the appetite becomes inordinate, as is the case sometimes in disease, then too severe an abstinence is attended with the same symptoms as the want of food in a healthy man, and the patient may die from persisting too long in a rule properly enjoined by the physician at the *commencement* of the disease.

Abstinence, therefore, and low diet, though generally less injurious to an invalid than to a person in full health, ought neither to be carried too far, nor persisted in too long. Regard must be had to the appetite of the patient, and to his power of digestion, but the latter is the far more important point; for the reason why any kind of food disagrees with a patient is, that it can only be digested imperfectly, if at all. The undigested food requires to be expelled from the system, and every invalid tortures his brain in devising schemes for loading and unloading his bowels with expedition and punctuality.

If persons afflicted with a weak digestion would be content to take their food by small instalments, they would act wisely. Even in

the most violent fevers, a patient may take, without danger, a spoonful of light liquid food every hour or every half-hour without danger. This requires frequent and constant attention no doubt on the part of the nurse, but a valuable life may reward the trouble.

Good cookery, and a proper degree of warmth, tend to digestion; nor is a savoury smell to be overlooked. The nose and the mouth are intimately connected: an indolent appetite is often excited by the odour of a well-dressed dish; but then rich and peppered dishes may be very prejudicial to some, though excellent for others. Any *sensible* person can generally decide in such cases for himself or others. A change of diet is good too: the stomach will be the better for it. I need not say any more on this subject.

It is a very painful, but most important part of a nurse's duty, to assist at severe surgical operations, where large wounds are of necessity inflicted to preserve the patient's life.

The principal preparatory arrangements for these are always made by the surgeon: common sense, and a little experience, will enable the nurse to prepare a large and ready supply of water, hot and cold; linen, towels, basins, good fires, pins, tape, scissors, &c. &c. She will have careful assistants within call, male and female; disturbing the patient as little as possible, and asking no directions from him that can be obtained from any other person.

We suppose that now all is finished. The

surgeon departs; he may perhaps leave behind him some young gentleman, prepared to act with promptitude and vigour, in case of emergency; or the case may be one of less hazard, and entrusted to the sole care of the nurse: be this as it may, she will not fail to lend a constant sleepless eye upon the exhausted patient. If the case be one in which loss of blood be apprehended, she will observe the patient's colour, and mode of breathing; if these indicate approaching faintness, she will follow the directions she may have received from the surgeon, as to the application of cold, the tightening of the bandage, &c.

With regard to the fainting, she will consider it a sign of exhaustion, not a disease of itself. Faintness is an admirable provision of our Almighty Preserver, to check loss of blood. In all such cases, therefore, the fainting fit is to be prolonged, not shortened; so far from being dangerous of itself, it is often the only means of preserving life.

You will often have occasion to apply leeches; this you are to do in the following manner:—take them out of the water, and let them crawl upon a piece of dry linen for a short time; do not take them in your hands, but put them, one or two at once, in a dry clean wine-glass; as soon as they look out over the edge of the glass, bring the nose in contact with the part where you wish them to fasten. If they are to be put inside the mouth, you must use a glass tube made for the purpose, large enough at the

upper end for the leech to poke out his head, but so small as to prevent the body from following the nose. By holding the glass in the hand, you let the leech suck from the inflamed part, without the danger of his slipping into the stomach. In common cases, you wash the part with warm water, and then put a drop of cream on the spot on which you would have the animal bite (if he will not stick without temptation of this kind), or a drop of blood; when the leech falls off you are to clean it, by gently but completely squeezing out the blood into a plate or saucer from the head, or by putting salt on the tail, which acts as an emetic, and makes it disgorge the blood it had sucked. Put the leeches, when thus freed from the blood, into a thin glass bottle of pond or river water, and closed at the mouth with linen, or paper, pricked with a needle to admit the air. Change the water in which leeches are kept every day for a week after they have been applied; they are very tenacious of life; they have travelled across the continent wedged in ice, and when carefully thawed showed no want of life or appetite. Children do not bear leeching well: nothing grieves me more than for the doctor to order leeches to a child's mouth or breast, or over the soft part of the bowels; the bleeding is very apt to continue a long time, and is difficult to stop. It is best to employ persons accustomed to leeching, when they are required for children, and to detain these people in the house until the bleeding is entirely stopped. I have seen such fainting, and other alarming effects, from

leeching young children, that for my part I always decline to undertake the task, unless when they can be applied to the feet, or some part where the bleeding can be stopped at any moment, by the application of a bit of dry lint, confined in its place by a roller of calico. Indeed, I think the feet by far the best place for leeching patients generally. I am sure it relieves a pain in the head, or an inflammation of the eye, or a stitch in the side, better than an application nearer the seat of disease.

I have given you the directions for cleaning leeches, and prolonging their lives for future work, but I must remark at the same time, that in France they are not often used more than once, unless on the same body, or with a certainty of their not having been applied in cases in which there could be danger of any infection from highly diseased invalids. They are not hired out, as with us, for the job, but sold by the chemists, at the rate of half a crown or three shillings a dozen; and after using them, the practice there is, to scatter cold wood ashes over them, which causes such an effect as obliges them (as from salt) to discharge the blood with which they had been loaded.

THE END.

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