

**Hints respecting the chlorosis of boarding-schools / By the author of Hints respecting the distress of the poor [i.e. John Coakley Lettsom].**

**Contributors**

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HINTS  
RESPECTING THE  
CHLOROSIS  
OF  
BOARDING-SCHOOLS.

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[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]



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HINTS  
RESPECTING THE  
CHOICES  
OF  
BOARDING-SCHOOLS.

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[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]

H I N T S  
RESPECTING THE  
C H L O R O S I S  
OF  
B O A R D I N G - S C H O O L S.

By THE AUTHOR OF HINTS RESPECTING THE  
DISTRESSES OF THE POOR.

*Dr Lettson*  
(S. M.)

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L O N D O N:  
PRINTED FOR C. DILLY,  
M D C C X C V.



HINTS

RESPECTING THE

CHARITABLE

OF

BOARDING-SCHOOLS

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BY THE AUTHOR OF HINTS RESPECTING THE

DISTRESSES OF THE POOR.

LONDON

PRINTED FOR C. DILLY,

## HINTS, &c.

**T**HIS disease, so generally understood by the name of the Green-sickness, is not confined to boarding-schools, nor to great towns; for, from certain causes, it is become frequent in the country; it is, however, so prevalent in boarding-schools in particular, that I thought a few cursory remarks as preventives might be of use to the community: It may indeed be said, in honour of the female sex, that it is upon their virtue and health the human constitution in great measure depends. The irregularities of the male sex have gradually enervated multitudes of the rising generation, to such a degree as to found



the hope of renovating the human species by the greater vigour of the once weaker sex. It becomes therefore an interesting object to unite, with their chastity of manners, a firmness of constitution.

It is not my intention to enter into a minute history of Chlorosis, but rather, as already observed, to give hints for its prevention. The disease indeed is usually well marked : and consequently in general easily ascertained ; the paleness and fallowness of the complexion, the palpitation of the heart, and the difficulty of breathing upon exercise, the bloated appearance, the obstruction or diminution of the menses, and female weaknesses, the loss of appetite, and reluctance to exertion, in general sufficiently characterize it.

Although it is frequently attended with the appearance of general anasarca, it is easily discriminated from dropfy ; there is no diminution of urine ; frequently that secretion is in great quantities, and limpid.

Sometimes Chlorosis is accompanied with a cough, which, joined to the difficulty of breathing,



breathing, affords a suspicion of hectic, but it is not attended with the fever and flushing of the cheeks, which mark this disease; on the contrary, there is, in the Chlorosis, a heavy bloated pale or fallow cheek, with a laxity of the fauces and of the muscles in general, and rarely a cough or fever; but, should any hectic appearances supervene, the treatment must first be directed to the most prominent and dangerous symptoms.

Supposing the Chlorosis to be ascertained, if there be turgescence of the abdomen and constipation, aloetic, or rhubarb and calomel purgatives, may be premised. If nausea attend, a vomit may be usefully exhibited; and, after due evacuations, perhaps no remedy is more salutary than a combination of myrrh, steel, and alkaline salt, similar to that recommended by the late Dr. Moses Griffith. It is to most a nauseous medicine, but the following formula is less disagreeable than any I am acquainted with.



℞ Ferri Vitriol. gr. ij fs.  
 Gum. Myrrhæ,  
 Kali Præparati, ana gr. vj. solve ex  
 Inf. Radic. Glycyrrh. 3 ix, adde  
 Sp. Nuc. Moschat. 3fs. m. ft.  
 haustus\*.

This may be given two or three times a day. In some instances attended with great debility, and especially if the foregoing formula nauseates the stomach, the following mode of exhibiting steel, myrrh, and bark, has agreed well, and produced very salutary effects.

℞ Gum. Myrrh.  
 Ferri Vitriol, ana gr. ij. fs.  
 Conf. Rosæ. q. f. fiat pilula ter in  
 die sumenda, superbibendo hunc  
 haustum.

\* Take of Salt of Iron, two grains and a half;  
 Gum Myrrh,  
 Salt of Wormwood, each six grains;  
 Rub them together, and gradually add  
 Infusion of Liquorice root, one ounce and a half;  
 Nutmeg Water, half a drachm.  
 Make into a draught.

℞ Decoct.



& Decoct. Cortic. Peruv. 3 ix.

Tinct. Cort. Peruvian.

Syr. Cort. Aurant, ana 3fs.

Kali Præpar. gr. vj. m. ft. haust. \*

It is often proper to continue the preceding medicines for many weeks; and, if the viscera be properly cleansed, it is rarely that we meet with disappointment from their exhibition, with the aid of diet and exercise.

In mentioning chalybeates, the use of chalybeate waters will naturally be suggested, and they are fortunately within access of the citizens of London, at Islington; but this remedy will not have the same beneficial effect if drunk at home;

\* Take of Salt of Iron,

Gum Myrrh, each two grains and a half;

Conserve of Roses, a sufficient quantity to make into a pill, to be taken three times a day, drinking after each the following draught:

Take of Decoction of Peruvian Bark, nine drachms;

Tincture of Peruvian Bark;

Syrup of Orange-peel, each half a drachm;

Salt of Wormwood, six grains.

Make into a draught.



it is the exercise of the journey, and the having an object to go for, that assist its virtues: neither Pyrmont nor Spa would produce equal advantage to the patient, as when procured by an easy journey, and drank upon the spot. At Islington Spa there is a garden to walk in, as well as variety of company to engage or divert attention, which contribute to the restoration of health, by amusing and relaxing the mind; for chlorotics are usually of low spirits.

Exercise is so essential to the restoration of this class of patients, that, whatever remedies are recommended, this must be a concomitant; and I shall here dwell a few moments upon it, and conclude with some hints respecting the clothing and dress of young people.

## I. EXERCISE.



## I. EXERCISE.

NOTHING is more essential to children than exercise, and nothing has been more neglected in female boarding-schools. The same complaint cannot be applied to those for boys ; but, even in the environs of London, the play-grounds for boys are too contracted, and the consequence has been an increase of disease, particularly of low remittent fevers and ulcerated sore throats. I knew a school which was seldom attended by fewer than fifty boys, and during fifty years only one of them died, although they never were removed in sickness ; and this individual was a descendant of the great Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania. At this school we had a range of some miles in the country ; and, during nine years that I was a pupil, we had neither sore throats, nor low remittent fevers, and I am certain not one death. Every physician in London knows, that these diseases not only visit the schools about London, but often become very fatal ; perhaps a conjecture may be risked, that more fatal cases occur in one year in any one school within ten miles of London, than



than in that I have mentioned, for the space of fifty years \*.

If the want of exercise may be in some instances justly urged against these schools, what loud complaints may attach to those for females ! The fair object enters school about six years of age, and remains in it till about her fifteenth year. Prior to the first period, brothers and sisters enjoy their sportive exercises in a mutual degree, and are equally healthy ; but, after entering into their respective schools, different habits are adopted, and different degrees of health ensue. Every motion of the little female is squared by rule ; the chaste attitude

\* This tract was written in 1793, and mislaid till the present year. In this interval, the author has visited a school in the vicinity of London, in which the fore-throat has not made its appearance for nine years ; except in one instance very lately. All the children, amounting to upwards of sixty, were there constantly removed, and the disease spread no farther.

The governess of this school obliges every young lady to gargle the throat every morning before breakfast, in order to prevent infection, and teach the practice to her pupils in health, that it may be repeated in sickness. The play-ground is very spacious, and as it is inclosed, the children are allowed in general to enjoy their sports without the presence of teachers. They wash with cold water every morning, as recommended in page 27.

which



which Nature gave is directed, or rather perverted, by iron or wooden instruments and shackles; the pleasing curve of the vertebræ of the neck, which admits of a graceful inclination of the head, and, in counterpoise with the curve of the vertebræ of the back, forms the centre of action, on the centre of power, is destroyed. Sentiments respecting the delicacy of the sex constitute an apology for inducing a delicacy of constitution, as if frailty were a favourable acquisition, and bodily imbecillity the source of mental happiness! Even the usual exercises of walking and dancing are not rendered, as they might be, conducive to health: a school consists of various ages; and, as the young and the elder walk together, their arms attached to their waists, the eldest are compelled to measure their steps by those of the youngest, by which means their exercise is rather tedious than salutary. To prevent this inconvenience, they might be divided into classes or parties suited to age, but each individual should be allowed the free use of the arms as well as of the feet; and, when it can be permitted with propriety, the children should be left to use exercise agreeable to their own inclination, without



out the presence of a governess, to check hilarity. The benefit resulting from exercise does not altogether depend upon air and motion, it is dependent on the combination of mental amusement. In all situations whatever, and at all ages, this is an essential object. A gentleman, habituated to ease and luxury, will rise with the sun, undergo the most laborious exercise in hunting a stag, hare, or fox, for the space of half a day, not only without fatigue, but with benefit to health, owing to the amusement and hilarity which the mind enjoys; but, were the same gentleman compelled to go through half the exercise which afforded no amusement, his fatigue and disgust would be insupportable. This is every day the miserable experience of men, who were once engaged in the habits of industrious trade and bustle, and whose success and wealth have encouraged and enabled them to retire from business: they find life a burthen; and, not having a pleasing object to encourage exercise, they acquire a painful ennui, and find they have exchanged the *otia* for the *tædia vitæ*. It is here that various exercises have been suggested as succedanea; but, alas! they all fail,



fail, because they want the pleasurable zest. The dumb bell is tugged, the feet and legs are dragged along the walks and avenues of a garden, but alike uselessly. I repeat, that children should be allowed to indulge frequently in play in safe situations, without the controul of a governess's eye; the mind being thereby unrestrained, the amusements improve health, almost in proportion as innocent hilarity is indulged.

If females were thus occasionally left to themselves, they would invent a sufficient variety of pastimes; in many schools I have been the means of introducing the rolling of the hoop, dancing and skipping in the rope, &c. In wet weather, the battledore and shuttlecock, hand-ball, tennis, and other amusements, may be substituted. It ought also to be a constant rule, never to suffer children to sit down, either at the needle or a book, for any length of time, but intervene a walk in the garden or playground. I need not add here, that, among the varieties of exercise, that on horseback is well calculated to unite motion and pleasure, when it can be conveniently procured.



cured. As to dancing, it can hardly be ranked among the salutary exercises, because it requires attention, and a degree of solicitude; and solicitude of mind weakens the body: besides, dancing is usually in large parties within doors, and sometimes under burning candles; both injurious to health. Some steps have too little action to be considered as affording bodily exercise, and others are too violent, inasmuch as to have proved fatal, when sudden exposure to cold has succeeded these violent exertions; any exercise indeed within doors is not so beneficial as in the open air.



## II. D I E T.

WITH respect to diet, were due exercise encouraged, children would not only acquire good appetites, but likewise digest the plainest, which is indeed the healthiest food; but there are instances of an early Chlorotic disposition in some females, and these should be indulged with a glass of wine after dinner, and the use of animal food both at breakfast and dinner. Cold meats will often sit easier on the stomach than hot; which, when the juices are afloat, are more apt to induce a degree of nausea; scarcely any thing indeed tends to invigorate tender children more effectually, than a little plain cold meat at breakfast.

All warm drinks, and particularly tea, ought to be excluded from boarding-schools; or, when the latter is allowed, it must be as a treat, and never taken strong



or hot, or of a high quality. Next to water, table-beer is the best liquid after meals.

The breakfast is usually milk, or milk and water, and bread. In general too much bread is eaten, as it is liable to form viscidities in delicate stomachs, unless much exercise be adopted; at all times it should be well baked.

All the food should be well chewed, which not only conduces to good digestion, but likewise to the preservation of the teeth. The act of chewing, is the only exercise the teeth can have, and without which, they acquire disease; as is the case with persons who live much upon fluids, and soft substances.

The milk about London is certainly not very rich, but it would still be a salutary change, to introduce milk-pottage now and then instead of milk alone. The meal, stirred into the water and milk, breaks the tenacity of the latter, and, at the same time, oatmeal is of a gently stimulating warm quality,



quality, which agrees better with Chlorotics, than milk alone ; and, by substituting pottage, less bread will be requisite.

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### III. D R E S S.

WHEN one considers the peculiar organization and structure of woman, it must become a matter of surprize, how the present dress acquired such general acquiescence \*, more especially as it counteracts personal beauty, as well as health ; not only in the present but in the subsequent generations.

The female, destined by Nature to give life and nurture to the species, is organized in a manner suited to these important ends

\* This MS. was prepared for the press some years ago.



and at a certain period the parts, formed to accomplish these purposes, evolve, enlarge, and acquire new powers, unless prevented by folly and fashion. The whole frame indeed is in a constant state of accretion, or growth, till at least the time of puberty, and, in a more particular manner, about this period, the chest, and lower parts.

The custom of wearing stays must hence appear a monstrous appendage of female attire, as most unhappily calculated to press upon and injure the parts so essential to the health of the sex and their offspring. It is no unnatural inference to ascribe the Chlorosis, the female weaknesses, perhaps even cancer and various uterine diseases, in some cases to pressure from this cause. The uterus is cramped from taking its necessary evolution and growth; and consequently pregnancy and parturition, instead of being easy changes in the constitution, become real pains and diseases.

The



The little offspring partakes of its mother's misery, having entailed upon it often a long state of debility, and too frequently deformity and decrepitude. The breasts, the ornament of the sex, instead of being likewise the fountain of health, afford neither a salutary nor even a plentiful nourishment to the suckling, who is hence sentenced to a stranger's breast, or to the culinary faucepan.

Impressed with sentiments, as much the result of medical science as of humanity, may I presume to address the tender parent; if too late to retrieve her own constitution, to adopt those easy means which Nature points out, in favour of her offspring?

At the time of printing these remarks (which were written some years since), a pleasing revolution has taken place in this department of female attire; and I hope, instead of returning to the tight stays of former times, good sense will induce the female sex to continue the present loose  
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drefs,



dress, or rather to exclude stays entirely, as not only useless but injurious.

It is difficult to account for the introduction of fashions in general; but, in spite of all its prejudices, beauty, one would imagine, would be a predominant wish of the fair sex; and to squeeze the body, or any part of it, into a disproportionate shape, must infer imperfection.

Were the feet crippled and rendered too small in proportion to the leg, or the waist to the hips or shoulders, in that ratio is there a departure from beauty and perfection of figure, independent of what is still more important, health and happiness; but even admitting that beauty consists in a disproportionate thin waist, I do not imagine that tight-lacing the stays will effect it. Some of the most elegant and upright, and suitably slender waists, that I have observed, have been of those women who never wore stays, or ever were straight-laced, either when young or after parturition.



A specious argument has sometimes been urged, that stays give strength to the body. Certain it is that, when pressure has become habitual, on its removal, the body at first feels weaker ; and it is well known, that some young women have accustomed themselves to such tight-lacing, as to fall into hysteric fits on being unlaced ; till at length the evil has become so considerable as to compel such women to sleep in stays, in order to prevent the fits. This state of debility, however, would never have occurred, had they avoided this injurious fashion ; indeed, if strength depended upon stays, it is the male, to whom strength is essential, who ought to adopt this part of dress, and not the female, in whom chastity, elegance, and refinement, rather than vigour and strength, are characteristics. Strength, indeed, is important to poor women ; but these either wear no stays at all, or wear them so loosely as scarcely ever to become injurious to health and vigour ; and this forms another proof, that tight-lacing does not contribute to strength.



From the preceding remarks, I wish to impress upon the reader, that health and beauty would be improved, were stays and all unnatural pressure excluded from dress entirely ; and indeed, as petticoats are tied closely round the waist, and by their pressure may impede the organization of the system ; could any substitute be invented, equally convenient, it ought to be adopted, at least till the young female retires from school—a substitute that shall neither prove prejudicial to health, nor to personal beauty ; and that shall allow the perfect evolutions of Nature, but not retard or divert them into monstrous proportions. I would hence recommend a dress, somewhat like the Grecian, to reach from the shoulders to the feet, to consist of as many tunics as may be requisite to the comfortable warmth of the body, and to be tied by an easy broad ribbon, or sash, round the waist, at the part most agreeable to the wearer ; by this means the lower division will give the resemblance of petticoats, and answer every good purpose, without the inconvenience of pressure. If elegance, as well as  
ease



ease and health, be the study of the sex, invention and fancy need not be farther exercised than in placing and ornamenting the sash, or zone, that confines the tunic. The interior tunic might be furnished with a ring or aperture on each side, to receive a string or ribbon from each stocking, instead of using a ligature or garter above the knee, which ought to be excluded from dress.

I have mentioned the propriety of this easy loose cloathing till the time of puberty; not that it is imagined, it would be improper afterwards; on the contrary it is adviseable at all periods, and undoubtedly during pregnancy; but if, when the female first enters into society at large, the prejudice of fashion should overcome considerations of health, to the exclusion of a natural mode of dressing, yet the system will have evolved, and acquired such a degree of firmness as will render it not so liable to injury from a less natural attire. The pleasure likewise which the young female had experienced from the clothing recommended, will occasion  
her



her some difficulty in adopting the system of ligatures and bandages.

It will at once be inferred from the preceding observations, that the painful custom of wearing small narrow-peaked shoes, to cramp the foot, and pinch the toes one over the other, ought to be totally discarded. A foot that has not been tortured and distorted is an elegant part of the human frame; the sculpture or painting of any chaste artist is a proof how essential proportion of parts is to general beauty; and, considering what most parents have to lament from corns, and other diseases of the feet, owing to the early habit of disabling themselves from walking, it is surprizing that any considerate mother should encourage tight shoes and high heels, when she cannot be ignorant of the injuries she has thereby entailed upon herself.

Another means of ensuring future health would be to allow the head to have no other covering than its natural hair; a covering, at the same time that it conduces  
to



to health and cleanness, the most ornamental to both sexes: by this practice the various eruptions, scurf, and other foulnesses of the head would be prevented. The female sex should never return the hair up again upon the head, but shorten it at the forehead, and allow it behind to fall below the neck upon the shoulders; by turning the hair unnaturally upon the head, too much heat is produced, and foulness of the head encouraged: here again, by following what Nature points out, not only health, but elegance and convenience are combined; especially when powder, pomatum, and perfumes, are proscribed the toilette.

In adverting even cursorily upon cleanliness, one cannot but detain the reader a few moments, on washing or bathing children. Every school cannot conveniently be accommodated with a cold, but each may with a shower bath, and no boarding-school should be without one or both; and every child at least twice a week should be accustomed to their use, unless some peculiar circumstances inter-

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dict;



dict; but, whether these baths be used or not, no person of either sex, from infancy till even after the period of parturition, should neglect to wash the lower parts of the body with cold water; the female sex in a particular manner, should never sit down to breakfast without enjoying this salutary refreshing, and decent act of cleanliness; it would obviate those female weakneses, for the cure of which, advertisements of remedies, equally useless and indelicate, disgust the reader. If, however, it be not agreeable to dwell upon these feminine ailments, there is certainly a pleasure in telling the sex of a pleasant and familiar remedy for preventing or curing them: indeed, the women are daily more and more habituating themselves to this practice, by aid of a vessel called a bidet, which no lady's bedchamber should be without.

I would suggest to medical gentlemen the propriety of enforcing this practice to their patients, as combining all the pleasures and advantages of delicacy, cleanliness, and health.

Bedding



Bedding is so nearly allied to clothing, that a few observations on the subject may conduce to health. No person should sleep on a feather bed, which leads to debilitate the constitution, or, if a feather-bed be used at all, a hair or straw mattress should be placed uppermost; the bed should be coarse and light, as fine sheets produce perspiration, and render children liable to take cold; nor should there be any bed-curtains, which confine the foulness expired by the breath. The window should be a little open, to admit fresh air, and if possible two children should never sleep in one bed, nor should the bedchambers be crowded with beds. No child should sleep with a cap on, nor should any be worn in the day as has been remarked. If, however, a cap be allowed in the night, it should not be tied under the chin. By turning in bed, the string is apt to be drawn tight on the throat; and as the custom is to use warm coverings, and close bed-curtains, with perhaps two children in one bed, taking in each



each other's breath and perspiration; the moisture of the perspiration may contract the cap-string, and, in some instances that I have been called to, has strangled the child, never more to be restored.

Unfortunately, schools that have risen to reputation soon become too crowded with inmates for the advantages of health. On entering a school-room crowded with children, a very unpleasant smell and heated air disgusts a person coming from the fresh air: this foul air tends to enfeeble the children, relaxes the frame, and renders it susceptible of cold, and disease; and hence all school-rooms should be furnished with ventilators placed low in the room, and there should be air-holes considerably above, to allow the rarefied air to escape, whilst fresh air is supplied by the ventilators.

These cursory hints, I now refer to the consideration of the public, being persuaded that, were the management of children regulated by them, Chlorosis would rarely occur; nor would sore throats and low fevers so often thin and almost annihilate



annihilate schools near the metropolis. I have seen the issue of whole families swept away by their fatality; and, if the hints suggested shall preserve any individual from this melancholy catastrophe, I shall not have written in vain.

F I N I S.



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