

**Advice to mothers, on the subject of their own health : and on the means of promoting the health, strength, and beauty, of their offspring / by William Buchan.**

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Henry D. Galt

Philadelphia 21st Nov 1822

My dear friend

I have just received your letter of the 19th inst.

and am glad to hear from you.

I am well and hope these few lines will find you the same.

I have not much news to write at present.

I am, dear friend, very respectfully,

Your friend

H. D. Galt

P.S. I have just received your letter of the 19th inst.

and am glad to hear from you.



*James Coley.  
to Mr. Pedder*

ADVICE  
TO  
MOTHERS,  
ON  
THE SUBJECT OF THEIR OWN HEALTH;  
AND ON THE MEANS OF PROMOTING THE  
HEALTH, STRENGTH, AND BEAUTY,  
OF THEIR OFFSPRING.

——— Auditæ voces, vagitus et ingens,  
Infantumque animæ flentes in limine primo;  
Quos dulcis vitæ exfortes, et ab ubere raptos,  
Abstulit atra dies, et funere merfit acerbo.

VIRG. ÆNEID. VI.

By WILLIAM BUCHAN, M.D.  
FELLOW OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS, AND  
AUTHOR OF "DOMESTIC MEDICINE."

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1803.

ADVICE  
TO  
MORTHERS

THE SUBJECT OF THEIR OWN HEALTH



BY WILLIAM BUCHAN, M.D.

LECTURER ON THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE  
IN THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS

LONDON

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### INTRO-



## INTRODUCTION.

THE preservation of the lives of infants was the first subject I wrote upon at the opening of my medical career; after forty years practice, I now resume it with increased zeal and pleasure,—zeal, prompted by a just sense of its importance,—and pleasure, arising from the hope of its beneficial and lasting effects. I am sure of being listened to with kind attention by the tender and rational mother, while I am pointing out to her the certain means of preserving her own health, of securing the attachment of the man she holds dear, and of promoting the health, strength, and beauty of her offspring. She will not take alarm at the idea of medical advice, when I tell her that my object is to enable her to do without medicine, and to obtain every desirable end with-

out any painful sacrifice. The path along which I propose to conduct her is plain and easy, the prospects all round are delightful, and it leads to the purest sources of happiness.

The more I reflect on the situation of a mother, the more I am struck with the extent of her powers, and the inestimable value of her services. In the language of love, women are called angels; but this is a weak, and a silly compliment; they approach nearer to our ideas of the Deity: they not only create, but sustain their creation, and hold its future destiny in their hands: every man is what his mother has made him, and to her he must be indebted for the greatest blessing in life, a healthy and vigorous constitution.

But while I thus speak of the dignity of the female character, it must be understood, that by a mother I do not mean the woman who merely brings a  
child



child into the world, but her who faithfully discharges the duties of a parent,—whose chief concern is the well-being of her infant,—and who feels all her cares amply repaid by its growth and activity. No subsequent endeavours can remedy or correct the evils occasioned by a mother's negligence; and the skill of the physician is exerted in vain to mend what she, through ignorance or inattention, may have unfortunately marred.

Several books have been written on the cure of diseases incident to children. The natural effect of such publications is to excite terror, and to prompt mothers and nurses to keep *desiring* poor infants with drugs on every trifling occasion, and to place more reliance on the efficacy of medicine than on their own best endeavours. One of the objects which I have in view is to relieve mothers from groundless fears,—to teach them how to prevent diseases that are almost always the consequences of

mismanagement,—to inspire them with the fullest confidence in proper nursing, and with strong prejudices against the use of medicines, which do mischief twenty times for once that they do good.

Quackery in the nursery is not the only error in which I shall endeavour to undeceive mothers. The want of proper instructions at an early period of life betrays them into a variety of fatal mistakes respecting their own health, as well as that of their children. These mistakes, and the means of rectifying them, form a considerable part of the following work. The language is adapted to every capacity, it being of consequence that every woman should understand it; and the rules laid down are practicable in every condition, except that of cheerless poverty. With the hope of removing this exception, I shall point out the most effectual method of assisting women so circumstanced; and I do  
not



not know any manner, in which humanity, charity, and patriotifm can be more laudably exerted, or even a part of the public revenue more ufeully employed, than in enabling mothers to bring up a healthy and hardy race of men, fit to earn their livelihood by ufeul employments, and to defend their country in the hour of danger.

not know any manner in which the  
 nature, character, and disposition can be  
 made manifestly evident, or even a part  
 of the public revenue more intelligibly  
 explained, than in enabling mothers to  
 bring up a healthy and happy race of  
 men, fit to earn their livelihood by useful  
 employment, and to defend their coun-  
 try in the hour of danger.

THE object of this treatise is to  
 present pictures of the various  
 diseases which at an early period of life  
 render health, as well as vigour, is  
 time for the best and most important  
 ends: it is a powerful check on  
 excess of every kind, and is the means  
 of excitement to cleanliness, temperance,  
 moderate exercise, and habitual ex-  
 ercise. All that is necessary to  
 convince young people that health is  
 the true means of real happiness, and  
 because they are the only means of  
 securing the enjoyment of life, and the  
 very essence of being; and that it is  
 by discouraging to us, and to our



# ADVICE TO MOTHERS.

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## CHAP. I.

### HINTS TO WOMEN BEFORE MARRIAGE.

THE desire of preserving and of improving personal beauty, which discovers itself at an early period in the female breast, is wisely designed by nature for the best and most important ends; it is a powerful check on excesses of every kind, and is the strongest incitement to cleanliness, temperance, moderate exercise, and habitual good-humour. All that is necessary is to convince young people that these are the true means of rendering them lovely, because they are the only means of securing the enjoyment of health, the very essence of beauty; instead of foolishly discouraging so natural a wish, let us

point out the way to its full accomplishment, and thus prevent many amiable women from taking a wrong road, and from destroying both health and beauty by an absurd pursuit of the latter alone.

One of the first truths to be impressed upon the minds of young women is, that beauty cannot exist without health, and that the one is absolutely unattainable by any practices inconsistent with the other. In vain do they hope to improve their skin, or to give a lively redness to the cheek, unless they take care to keep the blood pure, and the whole frame active and vigorous. Beauty, both of shape and countenance, is nothing more than visible health,—the outward mirror of the state of things within,—the certain effect of good air, cheerfulness, temperance, and exercise.

There is nothing, perhaps, so pernicious to women as the use of creams, and pastes, and powders, and lotions, and numberless other contrivances to bleach  
the



the skin, or to produce an artificial white and red. All of them act with double injury, not only in destroying the surface which they were expected to beautify, but in poisoning the habit, and causing a fatal neglect of the great preservatives of life itself. A blotch or a pimple, however offensive to the eye, gives timely notice of the impure state of the fluids, and of the kind efforts of nature to expel the noxious matter. Ought not these efforts then to be assisted by a judicious plan of diet and regimen, instead of throwing back the impurity into the blood, and converting the very means of health into the seeds of infection and disease? Besides, lead or mercury is the chief ingredient in all those boasted cosmetics, and, being absorbed through the skin, cannot fail to occasion cramps, spasms, convulsions, colics, and the incurable train of nervous and consumptive complaints.

Beauty is impaired, and health too often destroyed, by other absurd practices,



tices, such as drinking vinegar to produce what is called a genteel or slender form, and avoiding exposure to the open air, for fear of its injuring the fancied delicacy of a fine skin. Vinegar, used as sauce and in moderate quantities, serves to correct the putrescent tendency of various articles of food, and is equally agreeable and wholesome; but when swallowed in draughts for the purpose of reducing plumpness, it proves highly injurious, causing excessive perspiration, relaxing the bowels, imparting no small degree of acrimony to the blood, and very much enfeebling the whole system. The dread of open air is still more ridiculous and detrimental. Look at the healthy texture of the milkmaid's skin, and at the roses ever blooming on her cheek, and then consider whether the open air can be unfavourable to beauty. The votaries of fashion may affect to despise those natural charms, and to call them vulgar: the heart of man feels their irresistible attraction, and his understanding confirms him in so just a preference.



preference. Surely, the languid sickly delicacy produced by confinement, cannot be compared to the animated glow of a face often fanned by the refreshing breeze!

The woman, therefore, who feels a laudable wish to look well, and to be so in reality, must place no confidence in the silly doctrines, or the deceitful arts, of fashion. She must consult nature and reason, and seek for beauty in the temple of health; if she looks for it elsewhere, she will experience the most mortifying disappointment: her charms will fade; her constitution will be ruined; her husband's love will vanish with her shadowy attractions; and her nuptial bed will be unfruitful, or cursed with a puny race, the hapless victims of a mother's imprudence. She cannot transmit to her children what she does not herself possess; weakness and disease are entailed upon her posterity; and, even in the midst of wedded joys, the hopes

hopes of a healthy and vigorous issue are blasted for ever.

The only way to prevent such evils is, to pay a due regard to those rational means of promoting health which I have already hinted at,—temperance, exercise, open air, cleanliness, and good-humour. These subjects are pretty fully discussed in my “*Domestic Medicine* ;” yet a few remarks may be proper on the present occasion.

In laying down rules of temperance, I do not wish to impose any restraint on the moderate use of good and wholesome food or drink ; but under these heads we must not include spirituous liquors ; relaxing and often-repeated draughts of hot tea and coffee ; salted, smoke-dried, and highly-seasoned meats ; salt fish ; rich gravies ; heavy sauces ; almost indigestible pastry ; and sour unripe fruits, of which women in general are immoderately fond. We pity the  
green-



green-sick girl, whose longing for such trash is one of the causes as well as one of the effects of her disease; but can any woman, capable of the least reflection, continue to gratify a perverse appetite by the use of the most pernicious crudities? Fruit, in the season of its maturity, is no less salutary than delicious. By plucking and eating it before it is ripe, you defeat the benignant purposes of nature, and will severely feel her repentment. The morning is the best time to eat fruit, when the stomach is not loaded with other aliment. Even in the evening I had rather see it introduced, than the enervating luxuries of the tea-table, or the still worse preparations for a supper of animal food. A meal of this sort should not be made twice in one day. After a hearty dinner, a long interval is necessary before nature can require, or even bear without injury, another substantial repast. Suppers are doubly prejudicial on account of the lateness of the hour, and the danger of

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going

going to bed with a full stomach. Apoplexies are often occasioned by such inconsiderate and unseasonable indulgence; but its certain effects are restless nights, frightful dreams, broken and unrefreshing slumbers, an incapacity of early rising next morning, head-achs, paleness of aspect, and general relaxation. Whoever sets any value on health or beauty, will always make very light repasts at night, and will go to bed early; that is to say, never later than ten or eleven o'clock, in order to enjoy sweet repose, and to rise betimes, with renovated strength and alacrity, to the pleasures and duties of the ensuing day.

Pure air and moderate exercise are not of less importance than food and drink. Women are much confined by their domestic employments and sedentary pursuits: for this very reason they ought to go out frequently, and take exercise in the open air,—not in a close carriage, but on foot or on horseback.



When prevented by the weather from going abroad, dancing, provided it be not continued to fatigue, is the most cheerful and healthy amusement within doors. The only sedentary diversions proper for women are playing on some musical instrument, singing, and reading aloud delightful pieces of poetry or eloquence. Young ladies and mothers should wholly resign the card-table to old maids, who can only injure their own health, and who have no taste for any other mode of social intercourse.

It may seem a little strange that I should think it in any sort necessary to recommend cleanliness to the fair sex: I am far from intending to convey the most distant insinuation of their negligence in this respect; I only wish to heighten their ideas of its utility, and to point out farther methods of increasing its benefits. They are rather too sparing of water, from an apprehension of its injuring the skin, or giving it a disagreeable

disagreeable roughness. This is a great mistake. Pure water may be truly considered as a fountain of health, and its frequent use is the best means of improving the skin and strengthening the whole frame. The offices performed by the skin are of far greater importance than most people imagine. It is not merely a covering or shield to guard the fine organs of feeling from irritation or external injury, but one of the grand outlets admirably contrived by nature for expelling the noxious and superfluous humours of the body. The perspirable matter thus thrown out will of itself clog the pores, and relax the skin, unless care is taken to promote its easy escape by keeping the entire surface of the body perfectly clean, well-braced, and elastic, which can only be done by frequent washing, and instantly wiping the parts dry. Those who have not a bath to plunge into, should wash the face, neck, hands, and feet, every morning and night; and experience will soon convince



vince them, that, the more they accustom themselves even to this partial application of clean water, the more comfortable and enlivening they will find it. If misguided tendernefs has produced an extreme delicacy of habit as well as of skin, it will be proper to use lukewarm water for some time ; and then gradually to diminish its temperature, till cold water can be employed, not only with safety, but with benefit. As a preservative of health, it is far more bracing and more invigorating than warm water, though the latter may be often advisable in cases of particular infirmity, indisposition, or disease.

All women of delicacy and good sense are sufficiently attentive to remove any outward soil or visible dirt from their person ; but they do not all know, that a vapour, too fine to be perceived by the eye, is constantly issuing from the pores, the little orifices or mouths of which must therefore be kept clean and unob-

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structed.

fructed. For the same reason, the linen and interior articles of dress should be often changed, as they become impregnated with the perspirable matter, and, when foul, would not only prevent the escape of any more, but would even have a part of what they had received re-absorbed by the skin, and thrown back into the system. The whole dress also should be loose, and as light as may be found consistent with due warmth, so as not to increase perspiration too much by its heaviness, nor to check either that or the free circulation of the blood by its pressure.

Among many improvements in the modern fashions of female dress, equally favourable to health, to graceful ease and elegance, the discontinuance of stays is entitled to peculiar approbation. It is, indeed, impossible to think of the old strait waistcoat of whalebone, and of tight lacing, without astonishment and some degree of horror. We are surprised



prised and shocked at the folly and perverseness of employing, as an article of dress, and even as a personal ornament, what must have checked youthful growth—what must have produced distortions and deformity—besides occasioning various irregularities and diseases. I need not point out the aggravated mischief of such a pressure on the breasts and womb in a state of pregnancy; but I must notice a defect very prevalent among young women of the present day in London, who, though they have not worn stays, may be fairly presumed to inherit from their mothers some of the pernicious effects of such a custom.

The injury, to which I allude, is the want of nipples. This unnatural defect seems to have originated from the use of laced stays; and as children so often resemble their parents in outward form, it is not improbable that the daughter may bear this mark of a mother's imprudence, and may even transmit it to

her own female children. Where stays have never been used, the want of a nipple is as extraordinary as the want of a limb; and no mother is found thus disqualified from discharging one of her most sacred duties. But, in London, the instances are too frequent to be ascribed to accident, and cannot, perhaps, be accounted for more satisfactorily than in the manner here suggested.

In my summary of the means of promoting health and beauty, cheerfulness or good humour is mentioned the last, though certainly it is not the least in point of efficacy. It has the happiest influence on the body and mind; it gives a salutary impulse to the circulation of the blood, keeps all the vital organs in easy and agreeable play, renders the outward deportment highly pleasing, while the perpetual sunshine within spreads a fascinating loveliness over the countenance. Its opposite, peevishness, or ill humour, embitters life, saps the constitution, and



is more fatal to beauty than the small-pox, because its ravages are more certain, more disgusting, and more permanent.

Such are the chief points which I wish to impress upon the minds of women before marriage. Objects of so much importance in every stage or period of life, are deserving of peculiar regard when an union of the sexes is proposed. It is little short of intentional murder on the part of a weak, languid, nervous, or deformed woman, to approach the marriage-bed. Improper passions may urge her to become a wife ; but she is wholly unfit to become a mother. She risks her own life,—she disappoints the natural wishes of a husband,—and should she have children, her puny, sickly offspring, as I before observed, will have little cause to thank her for their wretched existence. The evil is not confined to her own family ; society at large is materially

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terially injured ; its well-being depends on the vigour of the members that compose it ; and universal experience has fully proved, that the frame of a husbandman or a hero is not to be moulded or cherished in the womb of debility, and that the bold eagle will never be brought forth by the timid dove.

I cannot conclude these hints without adding a few words on the choice of a husband. Having endeavoured to prove that health is so indispensable a requisite in females before marriage, they may well suppose that I deem it no less necessary in the other sex. I am always sorry to see that precious blessing sacrificed in an alliance with infirmity, or youth and beauty consigned to the frozen arms of age. Misery must be the inevitable consequence of such unnatural matches. But I fear that my remonstrances will have little effect in restraining the undue exercise of parental authority, or in attempting to  
open



open the eyes of a woman to her certain destruction, when she suffers herself to be dazzled by the splendor of riches, or charmed by the sound of an empty title.

## CHAP. II.

RULES OF CONDUCT DURING  
PREGNANCY.

AFTER what I have already said on the subject of health, I hope I need not make use of any new arguments to convince women of its increased importance the moment they conceive,—a moment, from which they may begin to date the real perfection of their being. Nature has now entered upon her grandest work, and nothing is wanting but the mother's care to complete it. The exertions of this care are not left to whim, to caprice, or even to the strong impulses of parental love. The self-preservation of the mother is made dependent on the proper discharge of her duty : her own health, her strength, her very life are closely entwined with the well-being of the embryo in her womb ;



womb ; nor can she be guilty of the least neglect, without equal danger and injury to both.

I am sorry to think that any awful warning should be necessary to check the commission of so wicked an outrage upon nature, as an attempt to procure abortion. This can never be effected without either the probable death of the mother, or the certain ruin of her constitution : the stimulants which are used to force the womb prematurely to discharge its sacred deposit, must inflame the parts so as to cause a mortification ; or will convulse and enfeeble the whole system in such a manner, as to leave no chance of future health or enjoyment to the destroyer of her own child.

In the ancient history of the Jews, we read of two harlots warmly contending for a living child. How different is the case with our women of that description !—Their wish, if they conceive, is to  
pre-

prevent or to destroy the life of the embryo, even at the risk of their own. Is a monster of this sort to be pitied, when, in the execution of her shocking purpose, she brings on those deadly symptoms which must soon close her guilty career?

The unnatural mother, however, is not always the only monster concerned in those scenes of horror: her base seducer is too often the adviser of the desperate resolution, and crowns his guilty joys with double murder! Another ruffian, some male or female practitioner in midwifery, is also engaged in the hellish plot, and lends a hand to perpetrate the foul deed, alike regardless of the mother's danger, and deaf to the cries of infant blood! I never read, without shuddering, any advertisement, of temporary retreats or pretended accommodations for pregnant ladies: I always view it as a wicked allurements to unfortunate women, and as a daring  
hint



hint from some ready assassins of innocence. It is not long since one of those wretches was convicted of killing both mother and child; and I have myself seen a great number of embryos exhibited by a man, who, I firmly believe, obtained them in this way,

The dread of public shame or of private scorn, though no excuse for murder, may urge the victim of seduction to commit a crime at once so abominable and so dangerous. But is it possible that a married woman should madly and wickedly attempt to procure abortion, merely from an apprehension of a large family, or to avoid the trouble of bearing and bringing up children? Can she hope to taste the joys, and yet destroy the fruits of love? What a frantic idea!—The same poison puts an end to both. And in vain does she flatter herself that her guilt is concealed, or that no law exists to punish it. The laws of nature are never violated with impunity; and,

and, in the cases alluded to, the criminal is made at once to feel the horrors of late remorse, and the keenest pangs of a torn, disordered, and incurable frame.

But suppose that a miscarriage brought about by such detestable means did not endanger the health and life of the mother: suppose that an act held in such just abhorrence, both by earth and heaven, could possibly escape punishment: suppose a woman, deaf to the cries of nature, incapable of tender emotions, and fearless of any immediate sufferings in her own person.—I have one argument more to make her stop her murderous hand: perhaps the embryo, which she is now going to destroy, would, if cherished in her womb, and afterwards reared with due attention, prove the sweetest comfort of her future years, and repay all her maternal care with boundless gratitude. It may be a daughter to nurse her in her old age, or a son to  
swell



swell her heart with joy at his honourable and successful career in life. I only wish her to pause for a moment, and to consider, that, by the wilful extinction of the babe in her womb, all her fairest hopes are extinguished also, and that present danger is aggravated by the certainty of future despair.

A wish to prevent even one act of so much horror has induced me to dwell on this unpleasant part of my subject. But folly, ignorance, and carelessness, are often productive of as fatal effects as a criminal design; and though I may not be able to restrain the latter, yet I hope the former may be corrected by better information. With this view, I shall make some farther remarks on the great preservatives of health mentioned in the preceding chapter. The general rules there laid down hold good in every condition of life; but a state of pregnancy requires a greater degree of care  
and

and judgment in their practical application.

Cheerfulness, or good-humour, which before was placed last in the order of discussion, must now take the lead, being superior to all other considerations during pregnancy. In this state, more than in any other, the changes of bodily health seem to be almost wholly under the immediate influence of the mind; and the mother appears well or ill, according as she gives way to pleasant or to fretful emotions. I admire that fragment of ancient history, in which we are informed, that the eastern sages, while their wives were pregnant, took care to keep them constantly tranquil and cheerful, by sweet and innocent amusements, to the end, that, from the mother's womb, the fruit might receive no impressions but what were pleasing, mild, and agreeable to order. So fine a lesson of wisdom, and of parental as well



well as conjugal love and duty, cannot be too closely studied, or too diligently carried into practice, by the husband who sets any value on his wife's health,—who wishes to secure her affection and gratitude,—and who pants for the exquisite happiness of being the father of a lively, well-formed, and vigorous child.

It is during pregnancy also that every woman should be doubly attentive to preserve the utmost sweetness and serenity of temper,—to dispel the glooms of fear or melancholy,—to calm the rising gusts of anger,—and to keep every other unruly passion or desire under the steady control of mildness and reason. The joy of becoming a mother, and the anticipated pleasure of presenting a fond husband with the dearest pledge of mutual love, ought naturally to increase her cheerfulness, and would certainly produce that effect, were not those emotions too often checked by a false alarm

alarm at the fancied danger of her situation. It is therefore of the utmost importance to convince her, that her terrors are groundless;—that pregnancy is not a state of infirmity or danger, but affords the strongest presumption of health and security;—that the few instances she may have known of miscarriage or of death, were owing to the improper conduct of the women themselves, besides being too inconsiderable to be compared with the countless millions of persons in the like condition, who enjoy both then and afterwards a greater degree of health than they ever before experienced;—and, lastly, that the changes which she feels in herself, and her quick perceptions of uneasiness, are not symptoms of weakness, but the consequences of an increased sensibility of her womb, and timely warnings of the effects of indiscretion or intemperance.

A late writer on this subject very justly observes, that, when such an increase



crease of sensibility takes place in a woman of a very irritable frame and temper, it must certainly aggravate her former complaints and weaknesses, and produce a variety of feverish effects. She grows more impatient and fretful: her fears, as well as her angry passions, are more readily excited: the body necessarily suffers with the mind: debility, emaciation, and many hectic symptoms, follow. But the only rational inference to be drawn from these facts is, that the feelings are more acute in a state of pregnancy; and that any previous indisposition, either of body or mind, now requires a more than ordinary degree of care and tenderness.

Though the chilling influence of fear, and the depressions of melancholy, are very injurious to the mother's health and to the growth of the *fœtus* in her womb; yet anger is a still more formidable enemy. It convulses the whole system, and forces the blood into the

face and head with great impetuosity. The danger is increased by the usual fulness of the habit in pregnancy. When the blood runs high and rapid, a vessel may burst, and in such a part as to terminate, or bring into great peril, the existence of both the mother and the child. Cases often occur of the bursting of a blood-vessel in the brain, occasioned by a violent gust of passion. How much more likely is it to rupture those tender vessels that connect the mother and child! Yet to the latter this is certain death. I knew a female who had the *aorta*, or great artery, so distended that it forced its way through the breast-bone, and rose externally to the size of a quart bottle. This extraordinary distension was chiefly owing to the violence of her temper. I have also met with a most shocking instance of a fighting woman, who, in the paroxysm of rage and revenge, brought forth a child, with all its bowels hanging out of its little body. There is no doubt but  
that



that passionate women are most subject to abortions, which are oftener owing to outward violence or internal tumult, than to any other cause. An accident of this sort is the more alarming, as the woman, who once miscarries, has the greatest reason ever after to dread the repetition of the same misfortune.

Cards, or any kind of gaming, at all times the worst of amusements, should be particularly avoided during pregnancy. The temper is then more liable to be ruffled by the changes of luck, and the mind to be fatigued by constant exertions of the judgment and memory. Old maids, as I before observed, are the only class of females, who may be allowed to spend some of their tedious hours in such absurd and such unhealthy pastimes.

Without entering into farther details, it will be easy for the sensible mother to apply the principle here laid down to

every passion and propensity which may tend to excite painful emotions of the mind, and to impair in the same degree the health of the body. She must learn to keep even natural desires within due bounds, lest pleasure itself, if immoderately indulged, may produce the same effect as pain. Among many excellent hints to pregnant ladies contained in a Latin poem translated by Dr. TYTLER, we meet with the following just admonition :

Subdue desires ; nor let your troubled mind,  
Immod'rate love, or fear, or sadness find :  
Give not yourselves ev'n to the nuptial joy,  
Or aught that may your strength or peace destroy.

And again,

——Curb each loose desire,  
Lest added fuel quench the former fire :  
Lest ye should lose the fruits of pleasure gone,  
And love itself undo what love had done.

The enjoyments of the table must also be kept under the nice controul of moderation,



deration, in a state of pregnancy. Any excess, or any deficiency of proper supplies, will now be most severely felt. The well-being of both the mother and child will depend on her pursuing a happy medium between painful restraint or unnecessary self-denial, on the one hand, and the indulgence of a depraved or intemperate appetite on the other. But, as the natural desire of aliment increases with the growth and increasing wants of the child, it will be proper to consider those variations as they appear in the different stages of pregnancy; and to shew how far it may be also advisable to gratify the involuntary, and often very wild and whimsical desires, which are known by the name of *longings*.

Before I enter into particular details concerning the diet of pregnant ladies, I must beg leave to urge with increased earnestness my former general prohibition against strong liquors, unripe fruits,

pastry, and all sorts of food that are high-seasoned, inflammatory, or hard of digestion. If these are improper before marriage, they must be doubly pernicious afterwards, when they may not only injure the mother's health, but poison, infect, or impoverish the fountain of life and nutriment, whence her child is to derive support. Every female, therefore, will see the importance of guarding against bad habits or the indulgence of a vitiated taste at an early period; that she may not have any painful restraints to subject herself to when a mother, or be then under the necessity of making any great change from her former mode of living.

I have already laid it down as a fixed principle, that a state of pregnancy is not a state of infirmity or disease, but of increased sensibility; and that the changes which a woman then feels in herself, though sometimes accompanied with a little pain or uneasiness, are but  
notices



notices of her situation, or warnings against indiscretion or intemperance. Let us now apply this principle to the regulations of diet, and we shall find it to be the most unerring guide to pregnant women in all their conduct, but more especially in the choice and quantity of their food and drink.

The whole term of pregnancy may be divided into two nearly equal parts, the one comprehending the four months that immediately follow conception, and the other, the remaining five months that precede delivery. During the first period, when there is in most women a strong tendency to an extreme fulness of the habit, nature gives the plainest cautions against improper indulgence, by a weakness of the stomach, frequent returns of nausea and vomiting, headaches, costiveness, and the other symptoms and effects of indigestion. It is a very absurd, and a very fatal mistake, to suppose that women are then in greater

need of nourishing things ; when, on the contrary, in consequence of the ceasing of the *menfes*, and the redundancy of blood in the system, the strictest temperance is not only proper, but absolutely necessary to prevent illness. When this is neglected,—when no regard is paid to the hints of the state of the stomach and of the whole habit, so kindly given by nature,—bleeding becomes the only expedient to save the life of the thoughtless or obstinate glutton ; but she should remember, that it is her own intemperance which renders that operation adviseable.

The alledged or fancied wants of the child may be urged as a plea for some little excess, or an incitement to more than ordinary gratification ; but the frivolity of such an excuse will appear, upon considering, that the *fœtus*, for the first two months, does not exceed a hen's egg in size, and that its growth for the next two months, even till the  
ascent



ascent of the womb, or the usual time of *quickenings*, is so small as to require very little nourishment. This is amply supplied from the natural fulness of the system before noticed, without the dangerous aid of the mother's intemperance. It requires but a moment's reflection, on the part of any woman of common sense, to be convinced that what disorders herself must injure the contents of her womb; and that the injury is the greater in proportion to the delicacy and the slow expansion of those contents. To overstep the bounds of temperance in the early stage of pregnancy, from an idea of the embryo's wanting such supplies, would be almost as frantic as to drown an infant for the purpose of quenching its supposed thirst, or to gorge it even to bursting, in order to satisfy the cravings of imaginary hunger.

But the absurd notion of the embryo's wants has been attended with incalculable mischief of another kind ;—it  
has



has given a sanction to the most whimsical and the most pernicious desires. Green-sick girls do not indulge in such silly and such hurtful fancies as many pregnant women: yet the propensities of the former are checked by the force of ridicule, of argument, or of authority; while the *longings* of the latter bid defiance to all control; and it is even deemed the height of cruelty not to gratify them in their wildest extent. To the candid discussion of this very interesting part of my subject, I hope I need not request the serious attention of every female reader.

One of the natural consequences of conception is the ceasing of the *menfes*, which is accompanied with a redundancy of blood greater or less in proportion to the previous fulness of the habit. Such a swell in the vital stream gives rise to feverish appearances; such as heat in the palms of the hands, flushings in the face, and a slight head-ach.

But



But the stomach is most affected by the changes which then take place in the womb and the whole habit. It is often disturbed by the complaints already described,—nausea, vomiting, heart-burn, and the like. These, as I said before, are not symptoms of indisposition or disease, the most healthy woman being as subject to them in the early months of pregnancy as those who are delicate and infirm. It is thus that every mother receives timely notice of her situation, with proper warnings not to overcharge her stomach, when its powers of digestion are so weak, and a fulness of the habit is so manifest.

Unhappily all pregnant women are not alike disposed to attend to those kind intimations of nature; and, perhaps, many of them do not know, that the uneasiness arising from the above causes would be removed by perseverance in a temperate cooling diet. They think they ought to eat more, instead of  
1 less,

less, in their new state; and torture their invention to find out something to conquer the squeamishness of their appetite. This is a very fruitful source of whims and fancies, the indulgence of which is almost always injurious. It cannot, indeed, be otherwise; as the weakness or diminution of any woman's usual appetite, on such occasions, is not owing to a mere dislike of common or ordinary food, but to a real unfitness of the stomach to receive much of any food. What then are we to expect, when things equally improper, perhaps, both in quantity and quality, are forced upon it, to satisfy some artificial craving, or some imaginary want?

As soon as a woman begins to consult her caprice, instead of attending to nature, she is sure to be encouraged in absurdity by old nurses, or female gossips, who take a delight in amusing her credulity by the relation of many wonderful and alarming injuries, said  
to



to have been done to children, through the unsatisfied desires of their mothers. Every fairy tale, however repugnant to common sense, gains implicit belief; for reason dares not intrude into the regions of fancy: and were a man bold enough to laugh at such fictions, or to remonstrate with a pregnant woman on the danger of giving way to any of her extravagant wishes, he would certainly be considered as a conceited fool, or an unfeeling monster. Argument is lost, and ridicule has no force, where people pretend to produce a host of facts in support of their opinion. Every woman, who brings into the world a marked child, can immediately assign the cause: yet no mother was ever able, before the birth, to say with what her child would be marked; and I believe it would be equally difficult afterwards, without the aid of fancy, to discover in a flesh-mark any resemblance to the object whence the impression had been supposed to originate.

On

On examining various instances of flesh-marks, and other dreadful events, said to be caused by disappointed *longings*, it has appeared that most of them were the effects of obstructions, of pressure, or some external injury; and that none could be fairly traced to the influence of imagination. Similar accidents are observable in the brute species; and even in plants, unconscious of their propagation or existence. It is also well known, that several children are born with marks on the skin, though their mothers never experienced any *longings*; and that, in other cases, where women had been refused the indulgence of their *longings*, no effect was perceptible in the child, though the mother's imagination had continued to dwell on the subject for a considerable time.

The doctrine of imagination, like every thing founded in absurdity, confutes itself by being carried too far.

The



The same power of marking or disfiguring the child is ascribed to the sudden terrors and the ungratified cravings of pregnant woman. The abettors of this doctrine are not even content with a few specks or blemishes on the skin, but maintain that the mother's imagination may take off a leg or an arm, or even fracture every bone in the child's body. I have seen a child born without a head; but it was not alledged that the mother had been present at the beheading of any person, or had ever been frightened by the spectacle of a human body deprived of its head. If shocking sights of this kind could have produced such effects, how many headless babes had been born in France during ROBESPIERRE'S reign of terror!

In order to shew that the fancy, however agitated or strongly impressed with the dread of any particular object, cannot stamp its resemblance, or even the smallest

smallest feature of it on the child in the womb, Doctor MOORE relates the following story of a remarkable occurrence within the sphere of his own knowledge:—

“ A lady, who had great aversion to monkeys, happened unfortunately, during the course of her pregnancy, to visit in a family where one of those animals was the chief favourite. On being shewed into a room, she seated herself on a chair, which stood before a table upon which this favourite was already placed: he, not naturally of a reserved disposition, and rendered more petulant and wanton by long indulgence, suddenly jumped on the lady's shoulders. She screamed, and was terrified; but on perceiving who had treated her with such indecent familiarity, she actually fainted; and through the remaining course of her pregnancy, she had the most painful conviction that her child



would be deformed by some shocking feature, or perhaps the whole countenance of this odious monkey.

“The pangs of labour did not overcome this impression, for in the midst of her pains she often lamented the fate of her unfortunate child, who was doomed through life to carry about a human soul in the body of an ape. When the child was born, she called to the midwife with a lamentable voice for a sight of her unfortunate offspring, and was equally pleased and surprised when she received a fine boy into her arms. After having enjoyed for a few minutes all the rapture of this change to ease and happiness from pain and misery, her pains returned, and the midwife informed her that there was still another child. ‘Another!’ exclaimed she, ‘then it is as I have dreaded, and this *must* be the monkey after all.’ She was, however, once more happily undeceived; the second was as fine a boy as the first.

I knew them both:—they grew to be stout comely youths, without a trace of the monkey in either their faces or dispositions.”

Having before enlarged on the dangerous effects of the passions, and of fear in particular, during pregnancy, it cannot be supposed that I look upon frightful objects, scenes of horror, or any other causes of a sudden shock, as matters of indifference. On the contrary, I would have them very carefully avoided as they have often caused abortion, or otherwise injured the health both of the mother and child\*, though they cannot discolour the skin, derange the limbs, or alter the shape of the latter.

\* I knew an instance of a mother, who not only lost the *fœtus* through a fright, but was otherwise so much affected as never after to enjoy an hour's health. I cannot therefore too strongly censure the frantic impulse which so often urges pregnant women, and nurses with infants at the breast, to rush among crowds at a dreadful fire, an execution, or any other shocking spectacle.

It



It is from this filly apprehension, in consequence of any fright, that I wish to relieve the minds of credulous and timid poor women, who may do themselves a real injury by the dread of an imaginary evil.

It was precisely with the same view that I endeavoured to expose the absurdity of believing that flesh-marks on a child were the consequences of his mother's *fancies* or unsatisfied *longings*. This filly doctrine has been the cause of great uneasiness in many families, and has done much mischief to several pregnant women, sometimes by giving a sanction to the indulgence of their most improper whims, and at other times by making them pine for extravagant and unattainable gratifications.

It is another great mistake to suppose, that the prevalence of such a belief can answer any one good purpose. Surely the fictions of ignorance,

superstition, or imposture, are not necessary to secure to women in a state of pregnancy those kind compliances, and that tenderness of treatment, which their situation requires. The fond husband will embrace with eagerness every opportunity of supplying the real wants of the wife now doubly dear to him, and even of anticipating her silent wish for any rational enjoyment. But she should also know, that the tyranny of caprice will prove no less injurious to herself than disagreeable to others.

Let not pregnant ladies imagine that I am for confining the sphere of indulgence within very narrow limits. I should be more inclined to enlarge than to contract its boundaries, as far as nature and reason would allow. I would not even be particularly strict, except in cases of evident danger. While I discouraged capricious desires, or improper whims and fancies, I would distinguish them from *real* and *involuntary longings*, which



which are sometimes occasioned by that weakness and disorder of the stomach so usual, as I before observed, for three or four months after conception. There can be no doubt as to the cause of such longings; for a similar effect is known to take place at other times, and not only in women, but in men, when their stomachs are weakened or disordered by intemperance, illness, or any accident. I have often met with cases of this kind in fevers, epilepsies, and other nervous diseases; and where the craving often recurred, or steadily continued, I have always directed that it should be indulged, though the object of desire might not appear consistent with the regimen commonly prescribed in those complaints. When the longings are involuntary, and the feelings acute, a patient may suffer much from disappointment or delay; and cases frequently occur of persons who recovered from the most hopeless state, after having disobeyed the doctor's commands, and been

freely indulged in what they had so ardently desired. I do not say that the cure was absolutely effected by the use of the forbidden food or drink; but I am convinced, from repeated observations, that the strong and sudden appetite for such food or drink, however strange it might seem, was a symptom of a favourable change in the complaint, and a sure indication of returning health.

On the same principle, therefore, that rigid prohibitions or denials might be attended with much pain in a state of pregnancy, a state of exquisite sensibility, I strongly recommend a speedy compliance not only with what may be deemed the natural and reasonable desires of the mother, but even with *all her involuntary longings*, which do not evidently arise from caprice, and are not directed to things of a noxious quality. I would pay little regard, for instance, to the whim of such a lady as  
is



is represented by SMOLLET longing for a hair from her husband's beard, and, what was worse, wanting to have the pleasure of plucking it out herself; or to the more disgusting wish of another lady, described by ADDISON, who longed to partake with a flock of carrion-crows, which she saw feasting on the flesh of a dead horse.

It would be also carrying my plan of compliance too far to let a pregnant woman live chiefly on unripe fruits, raw onions, or any other acid and acrimonious substances; which could not fail to injure her own health and that of her child. An opinion prevails that a woman in such a state can digest every thing she likes or longs for; but, supposing this to be true, it does not follow that living on trash, or on improper articles of food or drink, will not be detrimental to the *fœtus* in her womb. Slight or momentary deviations from the rules of wholesome diet or strict

temperance may be occasionally allowed, but perverse habits are never to be indulged.

I hope, therefore, it will not be deemed *needlessly severe* to recommend, in the early period of pregnancy, a becoming check on absurd or pernicious desires, and a moderate use of such things as have been always found to agree with the stomach and constitution. I do not insist upon a total change from former modes of living; but, unless the appetite be very much vitiated, it will direct women at that time to what is most proper and salutary. They have generally a dislike to animal food; and, if induced to eat it freely, from a mistaken notion of their being then in greater need of such aliment, they are sure to suffer some inconvenience. On the contrary, their natural relish for ripe fruits and boiled vegetables may be safely gratified. Milk, jellies, veal-broths, and the like liquids, which  
afford



afford easy nourishment, being converted into chyle without any great effort of the stomach, are also very allowable. Should a particular desire for solid animal substances be felt at dinner, fresh meat of the young and tender kind, veal, lamb, capons, pigeons, pheasants, and partridges, may now and then afford an innocent and grateful variety. But I must again beg, that temperance may always preside at the table ; and that the refinements of cookery may never be exerted to raise a false appetite by artificial provocatives.

While I am thus tracing the boundaries of rational indulgence, which should not be over-stepped by those who have it in their power to command every gratification, I see also the necessity of some admonitions to women whose narrow circumstances may appear to require no additional restraint. It has been very truly observed, that, in the lowest classes of society, especially in  
great

great cities, we often meet with a sort of luxury more baneful than any which prevails in high life,—a luxury that consists in the immoderate use of strong liquors ; to which the miscarriages, the fevers, and the death of so many poor married women in London and other populous towns must be ascribed. There is nothing, in fact, so pernicious to the mother, and to the *fœtus* in her womb, as drinking ardent spirits, especially when carried to excess. It is administering poison to the embryo, and is certainly a species of murder.

The taste of such persons is not more depraved with regard to their drink than their food. The latter perverseness is indeed very frequently the consequence of the former. Spirituous liquors destroy the natural appetite, and leave no relish but for bacon, or other salted and smoke-dried meats, salt fish, or red herrings, than which nothing can be much more stimulating, inflammatory,  
and



and indigestible. But suppose that their fondness for this worst of aliment is not always the effect of swallowing *liquid fire*, but of habit; and that the stomach, strengthened by the hardy employments of some of those poor women, may be able to digest any thing; why should its powers be exerted in such unproductive efforts? A greater quantity of food is certainly requisite, in proportion to the greater quantity of labour; but let that food be of the most wholesome kind. Plenty of vegetables, with the addition of a little fresh meat, will satisfy every natural craving, and will afford both the mother and child the purest supplies of health and vigour.

After the fourth month of pregnancy, the growth of the *fœtus* becomes very rapid, and the demands for nourishment, made by a thriving child on the constitution of its mother, are proportionally strong and incessant. Nature now, with wonderful care, invigorates

the organs of digestion to answer those increasing demands. The stomach is no longer so apt to be disordered as before; its functions are performed with ease and effect; and a more liberal mode of living is not only allowable, but necessary. All the restraint which should be imposed is a little attention to the quality of the food. Provided it be cooling and nutritious, it may be used freely, and as often as the appetite requires. I need not repeat what I have already said in favour of ripe fruits, boiled vegetables, milk, jellies, veal-broth, and animal substances of the young and tender kind. The bill of fare may be enlarged rather than contracted at this time; and variety may be allowed to present her sweetest stores to the taste and fancy, but without the aid of any pernicious seasoning.

I have just hinted at the propriety of indulging the appetite *as often* as the desire of food is strongly felt. It is even



adviseable to prevent importunate cravings. Emptiness is more to be dreaded in the advanced stages of pregnancy than a little excess. Instead, therefore, of continuing my former prohibition against suppers, I would now recommend agreeable repasts, consisting of biscuits, fruit, oysters, eggs not boiled hard, or any other light food and easy of digestion. But meat suppers must never follow a late or hearty dinner: an unseasonable load would oppress the stomach: moderate supplies, on the contrary, are necessary to satisfy the child's strenuous demands for sustenance, which do not cease even by night. These, if neglected, will cause uneasy sensations in bed, and often prevent sleep. It is justly remarked by Dr. DENMAN, when speaking of this restlessness, which is generally troublesome towards the conclusion of pregnancy, that those women who suffer most from it, though reduced in appearance, bring forth lusty children, and have easy labours.

hours. But, if the mother has little uneasiness, and grows corpulent during pregnancy, the child is generally small; and if the child should die before the time of parturition, the inquietude entirely ceases. In the first case, as this judicious writer observes, the absorbing powers of the child seem too strong for the parent; but, in the latter, the retaining powers of the parent are stronger than the absorbing ones of the child: so that, on the whole, it appears natural that women should become thinner when they are pregnant.

One direction more is necessary with regard to suppers. They should never be later than nine o'clock, after which an hour may be spent in cheerful conversation, as the best means of preparing for the enjoyment of sound repose. I hope that the custom of going to bed early, and of rising early, which is one of the best preservatives of health at all times, will be particularly adhered to during



during pregnancy. Women in this condition should not, upon any account, be tempted to sit up after ten, and they will find no difficulty in rising at six, though, towards the conclusion of their term, they may safely remain an hour longer in bed every morning.

In my former hints to women before marriage, I pointed out the peculiar importance of open air and frequent exercise to females, who, in general, spend too much of their time in domestic and sedentary employments. I recommended a variety of active diversions both without doors and within, according to the state of the weather. I would have young ladies dance and jump about as much as they please, and as nature wisely prompts. But, when they become wives and mothers, their deportment must be different, or they will risk the loss of the embryo in their womb,—a loss always attended with irreparable injury to their own health.

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Miscarriages are often occasioned by great bodily exertions, though in the form of amusement, as well as by the straining efforts of hard labour. It was not without the justest reason that HIPPOCRATES forbade dancing and all violent exercise during pregnancy: he himself had been witness to a foetus being dropt on the stage by a performer in the dancing line. Let not pregnant women then attempt to vie with other females in the lively dance: the former should even avoid all crowded assemblies, whether gay or serious; for, besides the impurity of the air in such places, of the bad effects of which they are very susceptible, they are exposed to great danger from any accidental pressure. I have known a lady to suffer abortion in consequence of the squeeze of an elbow at entering a church door. How much more likely is this to happen at balls, at play-houses, and other places of amusement, which are commonly more frequented than places of worship!

When



When I say that violent exertions and hard labour are apt to occasion miscarriages, I do not mean to recommend indolence and inactivity to pregnant women. This would be running into the opposite extreme, which is still more dangerous than the other. Indolence in pregnancy is not only one of the great causes of abortion, but of the puerperal, or childbed fever, so fatal to delicate mothers. A woman who lives fully, and neglects exercise, cannot fail to bring on a plethora, or a fulness of the habit and redundancy of humours, which must be productive of very bad effects. The whole frame becomes languid: all the vital organs seem to lose their energy: the powers of the womb in particular are enfeebled or perverted; and though a miscarriage should not take place, the labours are sure to be long, severe, and dangerous; and the offspring puny and deformed. In order, therefore, to secure the blessings of a happy delivery and a healthy

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child, a pregnant woman ought to take every day a moderate degree of exercise, such as she has been most accustomed to, only using less exertion, and guarding against fatigue.

Some writers on midwifery have asserted, that, in the early months of pregnancy, the exercise should be very moderate, but might be safely increased in the latter months. The absurdity of such a notion has been very ably exposed by the fairest reasoning, and the incontrovertible evidence of facts.

The example of the brute species has first been referred to, as, in every thing that respects the preservation of life, their instinct is more unerring than the fanciful speculations of man. It is observable of the quadrupeds in our fields and parks, that the most frisky of them, when pregnant, assume a grave and steady deportment: their natural fond-  
ness



ness for going together in herds and flocks is suspended; and, if left to their own inclinations, they gradually lessen their usual exercise as they advance in pregnancy.

The same thing is well known to be equally true of wild animals. In a state of pregnancy, they take no more exercise than is necessary to procure their food. If forced to greater exertions in self-defence, or when hard pursued, they often drop their young; and though beasts of prey have no claim to pity, yet surely the harmless and timid hare ought not in that state to be worried, merely to gratify a cruel or inconsiderate sportsman's fondness for the chase. It is still more inexcusable to over-load, or to strain by ill-timed labour, a mare in foal, which has frequently caused a premature expulsion of her young.

From these remarks on the instinctive conduct of brutes, a very wise lesson has

been drawn for the guidance of pregnant women. They are not, for some time after conception, more sensible of fatigue than at any other period, nor have they any certain proofs of their own condition. What then, it has been reasonably asked, should direct them to make any change in their customary exercises? These may be continued, but never to a violent or immoderate degree, for at least four months, not only with safety, but with the utmost benefit. When the contents of the womb begin to increase very perceptibly, the same degree of exercise, which pregnant women before enjoyed with pleasure, will now make them faint and weary;—a strong hint to diminish it. Their own feelings will direct them better than the caprice of others; and no subtlety of argument should induce them to believe, that nature in this case alone deviates from her uniform course of action, and requires them to exert themselves more in proportion as they are less



less capable of it; or, in plainer words, to run the faster the greater weight they carry. Slow, short walks in the country, or gentle motion in an open carriage, must be far better suited to the advanced period of pregnancy, by uniting the advantages of fresh air with those of agreeable and salutary exercise.

In order to leave no doubt upon this subject, an appeal has been made to facts, and particularly to the experience of women who follow very hard occupations in the country. They feel no inconvenience from their usual employments in the early months of pregnancy, and require no indulgence, but a little abatement of their toil when they become unwieldy. They know nothing of artificial precepts, which would teach them to invert the order of nature. Temperance and moderate exercise, proper periods of labour and of rest, the country air, and the cheering influence of a contented mind, insure to

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them

them the continuance of health in every stage, an exemption from the common diseases of pregnancy, an easy lying-in, and a speedy recovery from childbed. The vigour also of their offspring is justly proverbial.

It would be painful to contrast with this picture the enervating effects of indolence and luxury in high life, or the truly pitiable condition of poor married women in manufacturing towns, and in great cities. The confined impure air which they breathe in these places, relaxes the frame and destroys its activity. What they eat, what they drink, is often improper, sometimes pernicious. Their meals and their hours of rest are equally irregular. The victims of poverty are seldom able to procure the means of scanty subsistence, without the sacrifice of necessary sleep. Their condition is really more distressing than that of female slaves in the West Indies. These experience a little mercy when pregnant,



nant, their owners being actuated by the double impulses of self-interest, and of humanity towards breeding women: but, in London, the wretched hireling experiences no lenity on account of her pregnancy; she is even obliged to conceal her situation as much as she can, in order to get employment; and has often no alternative, but to perish with famine, or to run the risk of miscarrying by continued exertions at the washing-tub, or at some other toilsome work, for sixteen or eighteen hours, according to the caprice or the fordid views of her unfeeling employer. To impose such tasks on the hungry and the distressed,—to cause abortion by oppressive labour,—under whatever pretence the inhuman mistress may strive to justify her own conduct,—is certainly MURDER!

Though my former remarks on dress may be easily applied to a state of pregnancy, yet this is a matter of so much concern to mothers and to their chil-

dren, that I hope my female readers will pardon me for troubling them with some farther observations on the subject. Before marriage, errors in dress can only injure their own health, or disfigure their persons; but, after conception, the form, the health, and the very existence of the child, will greatly depend upon the mother's dress. Indeed, were I to assign a cause not only for the diminutiveness, debility, and distortion of infants, but for those *flesh-marks* which are superstitiously ascribed to *disappointed longings*, I should be much more inclined to impute these evils to pressure upon the womb, than to the alleged influence of the mother's fancy. The gradual ascent of the womb, after the fourth month, is wisely designed by nature, to acquire more space for easy growth and expansion. But her benignant purposes are defeated, if the body be girded by tight bandages, or squeezed within the narrow circle of a whalebone press.

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I need not stop to explain a thing in itself so obvious, as the operation of such fatal checks on the increasing size of the *fœtus*; but how they should be productive of flesh-marks and deformity may require some little illustration. It is well known that young trees and plants, and, in a word, vegetables of every kind, when confined in their growth, get distorted, or take on a bad shape; and that the tender bark as well as the fruit will be marked, if they suffer the least compression or restraint. Why should not compression have similar effects on the *fœtus* in the womb, where it is almost in the state of a jelly? The great wonder is, that it should ever escape bearing the marks of a tight-laced mother's indiscretion.

The doctrine here laid down does not rest solely even upon the fairest reasoning by analogy, but is supported by facts. Nations that go almost naked are strangers to flesh-marks and deformities,

formities, except what may arise from accidental injury, or external violence. But in proportion as men remove from a state of nature, and false refinement introduces, as personal ornaments, tight and oppressive incumbrances of dress, we see a pigmy or deformed race crawl about, to publish their mothers' folly, and to reproach them with having thwarted or cramped nature in her operations.

In my "Domestic Medicine," as well as in a former part of the present work, I felt great pleasure in paying a just compliment to the taste and good sense of the ladies, so admirably displayed in the present fashions of dress. The high-heeled shoes, in which they used to totter about as upon stilts, and the tight-laced stays, which gave them the appearance of insects cut almost asunder in the middle, are happily exploded: the poet's fiction is realized,—the philosopher's wish is gratified, in seeing  
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ing Beauty arrayed by the Graces ; and health, ease, and elegance, alike consulted in the dresses of our fair countrywomen.

But as fashion is very changeable ;—as there is nothing, however ridiculous or hurtful, to which it cannot give a sanction ;—and as the return to old absurdities and old prejudices may be dreaded, unless the propriety and importance of the present reform are strongly impressed upon the mind, I shall endeavour to heighten these by a view of the dreadful evils which arose from the former system of tight bandages, and of stiff and cumbrous clothing.

It is not many years since the sugar-loaf shape was universally admired, and the small waist, though contrary to nature, was looked upon as the distinguishing mark of elegance. Husbands used often to make it their boast, that, when  
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they married their wives, they could span them round the middle. It was then thought that nothing could produce a fine shape but tight lacing, though it never failed to have the contrary effect. Not only deformity without measure, but death itself was often the consequence. Ladies were known to drop down lifeless in the dance, when no other cause could be assigned but the tightness of the dress. Miscarriages were frequently occasioned by the same cause ; and various other injuries to the *fœtus* must have far exceeded all power of calculation.

Yet, during the prevalence of so strange an infatuation, while deformity was deemed beauty, all remonstrances on the subject would have proved unavailing. It would have then been useless to employ such arguments as now carry conviction to the unprejudiced mind. We may at present observe, with the hope of being listened to, that nature,



ture, when left to herself, gives every animal, except those that are formed for swiftness, a prominency about the middle. If this is not only compressed, but the belly squeezed close to the backbone, obstructions of the viscera must ensue; and no great knowledge of the human frame is necessary to satisfy any person, that such obstructions must prove fatal to health. When the vessels, that take up and convey the nourishment to the body, have their functions by any means impeded, the whole system must suffer, and at length perish by a gradual decay. But nothing can so effectually impede the functions of those soft parts as pressure. The stomach becomes incapable of performing the grand office of digestion; the midriff is forced upwards: the cavity of the chest is thereby lessened, and sufficient room is not left for the proper play of the lungs. A difficulty of breathing, coughs, and pulmonary consumptions, are the natural consequences.

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All those dangers, occasioned by tightness round the waist, are obviously increased during pregnancy, when the heart, the lungs, the stomach, and all the adjoining parts are in a state of tender sympathy with the womb; and when the growth of the *fœtus* necessarily requires more room, as before observed, for easy expansion. To confine it at that period must inevitably produce weakness, deformity, or abortion. “Remember,” says the ingenious author of *PÆDOTROPHIA*,

————Remember, not to gird too tight  
Your swelling waist, tho’ pleasing to the sight;  
Nor, for a shape, within the straiten’d womb,  
Like Gallic mothers, the poor child entomb.—

But young English wives have often been guilty of the same fatal imprudence, not, indeed, so much for the sake of “a shape,” as from impulses of false modesty, and for fear of appearing either indecent, or too proud of the happy proofs of their fecundity.

I hope



I hope, however, that the days of folly and of absurdity in those respects are past; and that the evils, which were then so frequent, will operate as a warning against any possible restoration of that most awkward and most pernicious contrivance called *stays*. Let me also very earnestly forbid the use of tight necklaces, tight garters, or any ligatures which may restrain the easy motions of the limbs, or obstruct the free circulation of the blood and juices. I should farther observe, that it is not enough to have discontinued the high-heeled shoe, unless the shape of the foot and toes is a little attended to. Trifling as this circumstance may appear, the neglect of it has often been attended not only with pain, with cramps, and with corns, but with many still more distressing consequences. Of these I shall have occasion to speak more fully in my observations on the dress of children.

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To sum up in a few words the chief part of my advice on this subject to pregnant women, and to the fair sex in general, I need use but a single assertion, that a flowing dress, sustained by the shoulders, and gently compressed by a zone round the middle, with only as much tightness as is necessary to keep the clothes in contact with the body, ever was, and ever will be, the most healthy, comfortable, and truly elegant habit that females can wear, or fancy invent.

The hints concerning cleanliness, which are given in the last chapter, will be found no less useful after marriage than before, with this single exception, that, during pregnancy, lukewarm water is preferable to cold, not only for a total immersion of the body, but also for partially bathing the upper and lower extremities, more especially the latter. I have, indeed, known



many pregnant women, who always used cold water on these occasions, and who plunged into the sea two or three times a week during the summer months, without injury. Yet I think their example too bold, and too dangerous, to be recommended to general imitation.

## CHAP. III.

## A FEW REMARKS ON CHILDBIRTH.

THERE is not any part of medical science which has been cultivated with greater assiduity, and finally with greater success, than midwifery. The errors of ignorance, the rashness of presumption, the amusing theories of ingenious fancy, have at length given way to the unerring dictates of reason and experience. By these it has been clearly proved, that, in every healthy and well-formed subject, the powers of nature alone are fully adequate to the accomplishment of her greatest work, the preservation of the human species; and that the busy interference of man is more likely to disturb and impede, than to assist her efforts. Whatever differences of opinion may prevail on  
other



other points merely speculative, all well-informed practitioners are now agreed in this, that the regular process of a labour must never be hurried on by artificial means, nor interrupted by the meddling hand of indiscretion or officiousness.

It is painful to reflect on the numbers that must have perished, while a contrary method was pursued. People had taken it into their heads, that a woman in labour could not use too much exertion on her own part, nor be too much aided by others, to quicken delivery. In the poem before referred to, this notion is inculcated in the form of a medical precept. The poor woman is there desired,

“To grasp some strong support with all her pow’r,  
“T’increase her efforts in that painful hour.”

A happy revolution has now, however, taken place in the system of midwifery; and the most eminent professors have

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made

made it the first object of their public duty to reprobate the abominable custom of *giving assistance*, as it was called, by dilating the internal and external parts artificially ; and of exciting patients, not only by the strongest persuasions, but by the stimulus of hot cordials, *to help themselves*, as they termed it, and to exert all their voluntary force beyond the dictates of nature ; “ as if,” says Dr. DENMAN, “ a labour was a trick to be learned, and not a regular process of the constitution.”

Though the writer now quoted, and many others of no less celebrity have omitted nothing of importance in their directions both to midwives and lying-in women, yet as their books, from being deemed works of professional science, are seldom read by the latter, I shall select a few of their most useful remarks, and exhibit them in the plainest form I can, to guard women in labour against the fatal consequences of their own errors,



errors, or of the improper advice which may be given them by others.

On the first signs of approaching labour, pregnant women are too apt to take alarm, and instantly prepare as for a work of the greatest toil and danger. Their fears are as groundless as their preparation is unnecessary. If they have done nothing to injure their health during the previous state of pregnancy, they may rely with perfect confidence on the admirable resources of nature. When left to herself, her efforts are always adapted to the constitution of the patient, and to the state of those delicate and acutely sensible parts, which would suffer the greatest injury from sudden or ill-timed violence. All that is required of women in labour, is a becoming submission to her course of operations. The steps, by which she advances to her great end, are sometimes slow, but always safe; and she is not

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to be hurried, or disturbed, with impunity.

It is true in almost every situation, but particularly in childbirth, that those who are most patient actually suffer the least. If they are resigned to their pains, it is impossible for them to do wrong; but if, from too much eagerness to shorten those pains and to hasten the final effect, a woman should keep in her breath, and strain with all her might to increase, as she may imagine, the instinctive action of the womb, the consequences must always be injurious, and often fatal.

In the first place, such improper efforts of the patient may exhaust her strength, so as to render her incapable of undergoing the necessary fatigue which attends the complete expulsion of the child. On the other hand, if the parts are not duly prepared, violence  
is



is more likely to tear than to dilate them; and accidents of this kind have often occasioned a fever, or have rendered a woman miserable for the remainder of her life.

The imprudence of taking hot and cordial nourishment during labour, is no less reprehensible. In plethoric habits, it must have a feverish effect: in any constitution, it is at that time a dangerous stimulant. The nature of the principle, which should actuate the womb, is immediately changed;—the pains are rendered disorderly and imperfect;—and the foundation of future mischief and difficulties, in some form or other, is invariably laid. A labour may be so slow, or of such long duration, as to render a little refreshment from time to time necessary; but this should always be of a mild and cooling quality, the very reverse of inflammatory food or spirituous liquors.



I have already intimated, that, in all *ordinary* cases, the chief duty of a midwife is to let nature take her regular course without busy interference;—to restrain, rather than encourage the exertions of the patient's strength;—and, when these may be involuntarily carried too far from the impulse of acute pain, to resist them by the application of some equivalent force. But I am very sorry to add, that the contrary method is too often pursued, especially by practitioners in country-places, where the patients are so widely scattered, that dispatch is the first object of consideration, and the maxims of improved science as well as the dictates of humanity are disregarded from stronger views of interest. The moment an order comes for the man-midwife, he packs up his bag of tools, which may be justly called the instruments of death: he mounts his horse, and gallops away, resolved to hasten the process by all practicable means, that he may be the sooner ready to attend to another call.



call. At whatever stage of the labour he arrives, he spurs on nature with as much eagerness as he had before spurred on his horse, though the closely entwined lives of the mother and her offspring may be endangered by his precipitancy. Yet such, perhaps, is the impatience of the poor woman herself, and such very often the ignorance of the by-standers, that the quicker he is in getting through his work, if no *obvious* injury be done at the moment, the greater reputation he undeservedly acquires, and the more he enlarges the sphere of his murderous practice. Instruments are sometimes necessary, but they should be used as seldom as possible.

One method of preventing the evils which must always arise from the hurry of professional men, would be to pay them more liberally for their patient attendance. They have nothing but the full employment of their time to trust to for the means of support; and it is just that they should have an adequate compensation—



penfation for fo valuable a facrifice. But as this cannot be generally expected, I would recommend the cheaper encouragement of female midwives, none of whom, however, ought to be permitted to praftife, without a regular licence, obtained—not by money—but by proofs of real qualifications. Such perfons could fpare more time, and would be found much fitter affiftants to lying-in women, than any furgeon, whatever may be his fkill or talents. I do not infift on the point of delicacy, but of abfolute fafety, being perfuaded that hundreds of lives are deftroyed for one that is preferved by the ufe of inftruments in a labour.

At fuch times alfo, it is highly improper to admit any perfon but the midwife and a difcreet nurfe into the apartment. To fay nothing of the noxioufnefs of the breath and perfpiration of feveral people in a clofe room, the officious folly, the filly tattle, the inconfiderate language, the fluctuating hopes



hopes and fears of so many gossips, must be productive of the very worst effects. Let me, therefore, conjure pregnant women never to comply with the request, however well-meant, of their female friends, to be sent for at the moment of labour;—they are sure to do some harm;—it is impossible they can do any good. The patient will find quietness and composure, of far greater service than the noisy rallying round her of her friends, to awaken and cherish the idea of danger.

After delivery, when repose is the chief restorative of fatigued nature, and when the purity of the air in the patient's chamber is the best preservative from fever, the exclusion of visitants must be still more strongly insisted upon. The whisper of fond congratulation from the man she holds dear, and whom she has made happy, is all that should be allowed even for a moment. With the same view of quieting any flutter of  
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the spirits, and of preventing the uneasiness which a mother naturally feels from the cries of her child, the operation of washing and dressing the infant should for a few days be performed in an adjoining room.

As the pains of labour, however regular in its progress and happy in its issue, must produce some irritation of the system, and a tendency to fever, external quietness, and perfect composure of mind as well as of body, are certainly the first objects. But our care should be extended to some other points also. Too much attention cannot be paid to cleanliness: all impurities are to be instantly removed. It is equally necessary to change the linen often, on account of its retaining the perspirable matter, which would soon be thrown back into the habit, and there produce the worst effects. Whenever the weather permits, the upper sashes of the windows



are to be let down a little, to admit fresh air; yet so as not to expose the patient to its direct current, for fear of checking the gentle and salutary perspiration, which naturally follows the fatigue of a labour, and is designed to abate any inflammatory or febrile symptoms. It would be no less dangerous to think of increasing or of forcing this natural discharge by large fires, a load of bed-clothes, closely drawn curtains, or the still more pernicious heat of caudle impregnated with spices, wine, or spirits. A fever is almost sure to be the consequence of such ill-judged expedients, in whatever manner they may act. Sometimes they will put a total stop to perspiration, though they set the body on fire, and thus produce the very evil which they were foolishly employed to prevent. At other times, they cause so profuse and violent a sweat, as must not only exhaust the strength of the patient, and frequently destroy the power of suckling her child, but pre-  
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pare the way for the ready attacks of a fever upon the least exposure to cold.

A temperate degree of warmth, therefore, will best promote that disposition both to sleep and to perspire, which every woman feels after labour. The fires should be suited to the season, or rather to the state of the weather, and made barely sufficient to counteract the effects of cold, and of dampness or moisture. The drinks should be mild and diluting; and the bed-clothes should be light and porous, to favour the escape of the perspirable matter, while they afford a comfortable covering. A due regard to this regulation is the more necessary, as the patient must not be in a hurry to quit her bed, even when she may fancy her strength and spirits perfectly recovered. She should be informed, that the womb does not resume its natural state for two or three weeks; and that her lying in bed



for that time is most conducive to so desirable a purpose. A sofa is very convenient to recline upon, while her bed is at any time adjusting, or to afford some relief from a long continuance in the same position. But I would by no means advise sitting up in a chair, or removal into another room for the reception of company, till the end of the third week, and then only in case of the most perfect consciousness of health and vigour.

The opposite extreme of too much indulgence is, indeed, more prevalent. It is a lamentable truth, that numbers of women, after having been safely brought to bed, are killed by imaginary kindness. They are smothered, instead of being kept moderately warm. The action of heat from without, is increased within by inflammatory food and drink. Neither of these should be in any case allowed. Women of strong and full habits have nothing to fear from empti-  
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ness or fatigue; but may be said to invite danger and disease by improper gratifications of the palate. They should confine themselves for at least three or four days to barley-water, gruel, and beef-tea. Very weak and delicate women may be allowed something more nutritious, such as calves-feet jellies, or veal and chicken broths, which are much better suited to the weakness of their stomachs, and will sooner afford the wanted nourishment than the solid animal substances.

If the rules of temperance before laid down have been followed during pregnancy, the patient will be easily reconciled to abstemious living for a few days. Indeed, the relaxed state of the stomach at this time commonly prevents any natural craving for animal food. But, if a woman has been unhappily accustomed to luxuries, or if soups should disagree with her, she may be indulged in a little fish, a little boiled veal or chicken,



chicken, and bread pudding. Every succeeding day will render such indulgence safer. Hot spices, however, and ardent spirits in any form or mixture, are to be absolutely prohibited during the whole time of lying-in. Wine itself is liable to do much mischief till every symptom of fever or inflammation disappears; and, even then, should be very sparingly used, not more than a glass or two being allowable at the principal meal only.

But though quietness, repose, the admission of fresh air, strict cleanliness, and a temperate cooling regimen, must contribute very much to prevent fever, and to promote a woman's safe and speedy recovery from childbed; yet all these prudent measures will often fail, without her own faithful discharge of one of the most sacred duties of a mother, that of suckling her infant. Unless the milk, which is ready to gush from her nipples, finds the proper vent, it will not only

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distend and inflame the breasts, but excite a great degree of fever in the whole system. Every attempt to disperse it by artificial means, being an act of flagrant rebellion against nature, is as dangerous to the mother herself, to say nothing of her child, as an attempt to procure abortion. The evident determination of the blood to the breasts, for the wisest and most benignant purpose, can never be repelled with safety. It is either deposited upon some other part, there to produce inflammation; or, if purgatives and sudorifics are used to carry it off by different outlets, the violence of their action must be attended with dangerous shocks, even to the firmest habit.

It may be said, that there are instances without number, of mothers who enjoy perfect health, though they never suckled their children. I positively deny the assertion; and maintain, on the contrary, that a mother, who is not prevented by  
any



any particular weakness or disease from discharging that duty, cannot neglect it without material injury to her constitution. The same midwives who would assist her in procuring a miscarriage, if she wanted it, may now also undertake to disperse her milk with the utmost ease and safety. Let her not trust to the wicked delusion. The mischief is not the less certain from its being, perhaps, unperceived at the time; and cruelty to one child often destroys the power of procreating another.

If we take a view of all animated nature, it is shocking to find, that woman should be the only monster capable of withholding the nutritive fluid from her young. Such a monster, however, does not exist among savage nations. They cannot separate the idea of bringing forth a child, from the necessity of giving it suck. The wives of the American savages are said to extend this mark of motherly tenderness and solicitude even

to infants that die upon the breast. After having bestowed upon them the rites of burial, they come once a day for several weeks, and press from the nipple a few drops of milk upon the grave of the departed suckling. I have seen a drawing taken from nature by a gentleman at Botany Bay: it represented a female of that country, after having opened one of her veins, and made an incision in the navel of her sickly child, endeavouring to transfuse her blood into its body, and hoping thereby to restore its health, and to prolong its existence. Observation and experience had taught her, that the umbilical cord, or navel-string, was the medium through which the *fœtus*, while in the womb, received nourishment from its mother: she fancied, therefore, that she could transfuse her blood through the same channel, and renovate a life which was dearer to her than her own! Let the mother in civilized society, who, from motives of selfish ease and imaginary



ginary pleasure, denies her infant the vital stream with which she is abundantly supplied for its sustenance, think of the poor savage, and start with horror at her own unnatural depravity.

It is also a great mistake on the part of such selfish mothers, to fancy that they can take more pleasure by abandoning their infants to the care of hirelings. Some of them may be callous to all reproaches of conscience for the frequent diseases of those children; but leaving moral sentiment and natural tenderness out of the question, pleasure is inseparably connected with the enjoyment of health; and I have already shewn how much this is endangered by a mother's unwillingness to become a nurse. I need not repeat what I said of the inflammation and suppuration of the breast; but my hint on barrenness, as one of the probable consequences of an attempt to disperse the milk, may be farther enforced by observing, that the

womb is the part most likely to be affected in such cases: the repelled humour has often been deposited on that delicate organ, and has there produced deep-seated and frequently incurable ulcers. Many instances of this sort, as well as of other disorders arising from the same cause, and equally fatal to fecundity, gave rise to my former assertion, however harsh it may sound in the ear of fashionable perverseness.

But I can with equal confidence assure the fond parent, faithful to her trust, and eager to cherish her infant with the vital fluid which nature has kindly given her for that purpose, that nothing else can so effectually promote her recovery from childbed, the speedy return of good health, and the long continuation of that invaluable blessing. Besides, all nurses concur in declaring, that the act itself is attended with sweet, thrilling, and delightful sensations,  
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of which those only who have felt them can form any idea.

I have already admitted, that a mother may be prevented from giving suck, by some particular weakness or disorder; and in touching on the same subject in another work, I observed that women of delicate constitutions, subject to hysteric fits, or other nervous affections, made very bad nurses. Lest that remark might give too great a scope to excuses, on the ground of pretended weakness or delicacy, I added, that every mother who *could, ought* certainly to perform so tender and agreeable an office. I now go farther, and maintain, that every woman who is not able and willing to discharge the duties of a mother, has no right to become one. The same personal defect, or constitutional infirmity, which may disqualify her for nursing, ought to be considered as an equally strong disqualification for marrying. But if, after marriage, any subsequent

sequent disease or accident should render the discharge of a mother's first duty impracticable or dangerous, she is, in such cases only, blameless for calling in the aid of another to suckle her child.

In the next chapter, I shall have occasion to speak of the salutary effects of the mother's milk on the new-born infant. The aim of my present observations is to convince lying-in women, that the free and natural discharge of that precious current is essential to their own health and safety. But as some young mothers, however well inclined, may be discouraged from persevering in their attempts to give suck, by the difficulty, awkwardness, or pain, attending the first experiments, I shall subjoin for their direction in such cases, a few rules laid down by the most approved writers on midwifery.

The first advice given by those eminent practitioners is, to put the child to  
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the breast as soon after delivery and due repose as the strength of the mother will permit, care having been previously taken to wash the breasts with a little warm milk and water, in order to remove the bitter, viscid substance, which is furnished round the nipple to defend the parts from excoriation or soreness. When the woman has never nursed before, the nipples at first are sometimes not sufficiently prominent to afford a proper hold for the child. The ends also of the small tubes through which the milk passes, are contracted, to prevent its flowing out spontaneously. From these circumstances, as well as from the inexpertness both of the mother and the infant, some pain and difficulty may arise. But the common practice of having the breasts drawn by an old child, or some grown person, is deemed improper, because the degree of violence used on these occasions will often irritate and inflame the parts, and frighten the woman against the renewal  
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of such painful experiments. Much gentler means will produce the desired effect. The breasts should be fomented with flannels dipt in warm water; and then a glass or ivory cup, mounted on a bag of elastic gum, ought to be applied in such a manner to the nipple, that it will draw it out gently and gradually, while, by moderate pressure on the sides of the breast with the hands, the milk will be pushed forward. In obstinate cases, instruments of more attractive power may be used, though with caution, for fear of injuring the breast.

If the difficulty be not owing to a flatness of the nipple (upon the principal cause of which I before hazarded a conjecture), but to a little rigidity of the milk-vessels, nothing more is necessary than the warm fomentation above recommended. The stiffness or contractions of the ends of those fine tubes will gradually yield to the natural efforts



efforts of the infant. They will soon become straight, so as no longer to impede the egress of the milk, which is drawn into them by the suction. Impatience, or excessive eagerness, in these cases, as in all others, defeats its own end. The attempts at first should neither be too often repeated, nor too long continued; and when the child is put to the breast, the mother ought to be supported by pillows in bed, in a reclining posture, and with due precautions against catching cold.

Such are the dictates of enlightened practice, of which I am happy to avail myself, as an additional incitement to mothers not to shrink from their duty. A little pain is easily surmounted, and is followed by lasting pleasure. I must not omit another caution given by the same writers, in case of any particular soreness of the nipples, always to procure the best medical assistance,

as

as the modes of treatment pursued by ignorant persons are, in these instances more especially, no less injurious than absurd.



## CHAP. IV.

OF THE NURSING AND REARING OF  
CHILDREN.

EVERY thing is perfect, says ROUSSEAU, as it comes out of the hands of God ; but every thing degenerates in the hands of man. This is particularly true of the human species. If the mother, during pregnancy, has not suffered any injury from accident, or from her own imprudence ; and if, after the accession of labour, neither she nor the midwife has disturbed or impeded the efforts of nature ; the offspring of strong and healthy parents is sure at the birth to be well-formed, healthy, and vigorous. Any instances to the contrary are so rare and extraordinary, as almost to leave some doubt of the possibility of such an event : yet it appears from the best calculations, that at least one half

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of the children born die before they are twelve years old. Of the surviving half at that period, how many perish before they attain to maturity! How many others are stunted in their growth, distorted in their figure, or too much enfeebled ever to enjoy the real sweets of life! What a train of ills seems to await the precious charge, the moment it is taken out of the hands of nature! But as most of these calamities are the consequences of mismanagement or neglect, I shall endeavour to shew how they may be prevented by tender and rational attention.

## SECTION I.

### *Of the influence of Air on the Health and Lives of Children.*

THE first want of a new-born infant is clearly manifested by its cries, not arising from any sense of pain, but from a stimulus or impulse to expand the

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lungs,



lungs, and thereby open a free passage for the circulation of the blood, and for admission of air, so essential to the existence of every living creature. While the child lay in the womb, its lungs were in a collapsed or shrivelled state: it received all its supplies through the medium of the navel-string. But at its birth a very obvious change takes place. The pulsation or throbbing of this cord first ceases at the remotest part, and then, by slow degrees, nearer and nearer to the child, till the whole string becomes quite flaccid, all circulation being confined to the body of the infant. It is then that the cries of a healthy child are heard; in consequence of which the air rushes into the lungs; their tubes and cellular spaces are dilated; the bosom heaves; the cavity of the chest is enlarged; and the blood flows with the utmost ease. But as the air passes out, the lungs again collapse, and the course of the blood receives a momentary check, till a fresh influx or inspiration

tion of air, in concurrence with the action of the heart and arteries, renews the former salutary process, which never ceases during life.

The air, thus inhaled, after imparting its vital properties to the whole frame, takes up the perspirable matter constantly issuing from the interior surface of the lungs, and carries off, on its expulsion, a considerable part of the noxious and superfluous humours of the body. Its purity is of course destroyed, and, in consequence of being frequently breathed, it becomes unfit for the purpose of respiration. In a confined place, therefore, it is not air we inhale, but our own effluvia; and every other cause, which tends to waste or pollute the air, renders it in the same degree injurious to the strength and health of those who breathe it.

In this account of one of the most important of the vital functions, I have  
avoided



avoided the minute details of anatomical science, which would, indeed, have made it more accurate, but less intelligible to the generality of my female readers. I thought it far better to explain to them, in as familiar language as I could, the cause of an infant's cry at the moment of its birth, with the hope of rendering them attentive to the purity of what nature so strenuously demands. The quality of the air we breathe, is of much greater consequence than our food or drink, at every period of life, but particularly in infancy, a state of the utmost delicacy and weakness. Good air braces, bad air relaxes, the tender frame: the former is a source of health and vigour, the latter of infirmity and disease.

It should therefore be the first object of a pregnant woman's care, to secure, at least for the time of her lying-in, a wholesome situation. Instead of flying from the country to town, as many do,

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she should fly from town to the country. If her circumstances will not admit of this, she must fix her abode in as open and airy a street as she can, and at as great a distance as possible from noise, from tumult, and from those nuisances which contaminate the atmosphere of great cities. Let her apartments be lofty and spacious, dry rather than warm, and exposed to the sun's morning rays. I have already explained the importance of cleanliness, and of occasionally letting down the upper sashes of the bed-room windows in fine weather, to admit fresh air, and to prevent fever. An attention to these points is not less necessary on the new-born infant's account, than on his mother's. Let not the first air he breathes be foul from confinement, too much rarefied by heat, or charged with any noxious exhalations. The mild temperature to which he has been used in the womb, renders it very proper to preserve for some time the same moderate degree of warmth



in his new place of residence. But he is not, on that account, to be roasted before a great fire, or kept panting in steam and pollution.

If the room be kept properly ventilated and free from impurity, the infant will soon get hardy enough to be taken out into the open air, not only without the least danger, but with the greatest advantage; provided always that the season of the year, and the state of the weather, encourage such early experiments. A month spent within doors, is confinement long enough in almost every case; and the nursery is then to be frequently exchanged for green fields and sunny eminences. There your child will drink, as it were, the vital stream pure from its source; he will draw in at every breath fresh supplies of strength and alacrity; while the bracing action of the air on the surface of his body, will give the degree of firmness unattainable by any other means.

In the course of a few months, the state of the weather need not be much regarded; and its unfavourable changes, unless the heat or cold be intense, must not operate as a check on those daily excursions from the nursery. Our climate is very fickle; we shall suffer much from its rapid variations, if we are not freely exposed to them in early life; do not therefore sacrifice the future comfort and safety of the grown man, to mistaken tenderness for the infant. If your child be accustomed from the cradle to go out in all weathers, he will have nothing to fear from the bleak north or the sultry south, but will bear every change of season, of climate, and of atmosphere, not only without danger, but without pain or inconvenience.

What is here said of the importance of fresh air, and of frequent exposure to all sorts of weather, in early life, must derive additional weight from a consideration



sideration of the bad effects of confinement and of unwholesome air upon children. This part of the subject is pretty fully discussed in my "Domestic Medicine." I there explained the reason why so few of the infants that are put into hospitals or parish work-houses live. Such places are generally crowded with old, sickly, and infirm people, by which means the air is rendered so extremely pernicious, that it becomes a poison to young children. I also took notice of one of the worst afflictions of poverty in great towns, where the poorer sort of inhabitants live in low, dirty, confined houses, to which the fresh air has hardly any access. Though grown people, who are hardy and robust, may live in such situations, yet they generally prove fatal to their offspring, few of whom arrive at maturity, and those who do are weak and deformed.

While I was considering the hard lot of the poor, most of whose children

perish, because the wretched parents are not in a condition to take them often out into the open air, I could not but observe that the rich were without any excuse for neglecting so essential a part of their duty. It is their business to see that their children be daily carried abroad, and that they be kept in the open air for a sufficient time. This will always succeed better, if the mother goes along with them. Servants are often negligent in these matters, and allow a child to sit or lie on the damp ground, instead of leading or carrying it about. The mother surely needs air as well as her children; and how can she be better employed than in attending them?

In the same chapter, I had farther occasion to censure a very bad, though a very prevailing custom, of making children sleep in small apartments, or crowding two or three beds into one chamber. Instead of this, the nursery and the sleeping-rooms ought always to



to be the largest and most airy apartments in the house. When children are shut up in small rooms, the air not only becomes unwholesome, but the heat relaxes their solids, renders them delicate, and disposes them to colds, and many other disorders, particularly of the convulsive kind. All medical men, who have had much practice in the treatment of children, agree in opinion, that convulsion-fits, of which so many infants die, are to be chiefly ascribed to a confined and impure air. I wish to impress this truth on the minds of mothers and nurses, to make them sensible of the danger of small or close rooms, and of the pernicious folly of covering an infant's face in bed, or the front of its cradle, and thereby making it breathe the same air over and over all the time it sleeps.

It may be of no less consequence to repeat and enforce my cautions to parents against sending their children,

while very young, or indeed at any age, to crowded schools, the atmosphere of which is really a floating mass of putrid effluvia. The breath and perspiration of so many persons in a room, even supposing them all to be in good health, must waste and corrupt the air, destroy its vital properties, and of course render it wholly unfit for the support of animal life. But should any one child happen to be diseased, all the rest are very likely to catch the infection. When I see a poor baby, before it can well walk, carried in a nurse's arms to school, I really feel stronger emotions of pity, and of alarm for its safety, than if I had seen it conveyed to a pest-house. In the latter place, children would be kept separate, and proper means would be used to prevent the spreading of contagion: in the former, all are thrown together, and there remain with relaxed lungs, open pores, and steaming bodies, so as to render it almost impossible for any to escape.

As



As thousands of children die every year the victims of diseases caught at schools, and as the health and constitutions of still greater numbers are irretrievably ruined by the confinement and the bad air of such places, parents must not be offended at the seeming harshness of my language in reprobating so absurd, so cruel, and so unnatural a practice. I know that as soon as children begin to run about, they require the most watchful care to prevent mischief. Will any mother urge this as a reason for being tired of them, and for confining, as it were in stocks, that restless activity which is wisely designed by nature to promote their growth and vigour? Will she, from a wish to save herself some trouble, or to gain time for other business infinitely less important, send her little babes to school, under the silly pretence of keeping them out of harm's way? I hope what I have already said is sufficient to convince persons of common understanding, that they cannot

not be exposed to greater harm, than by being fixed to a seat in the midst of noxious steam for six or seven hours a day, which should be spent in the open air and cheerful exercise.

Should it be alleged, that children are sent young to school, from a becoming zeal for their early improvement, I need only reply, that learning, however desirable, is too dearly bought at the expence of the constitution. Besides, learning can never be acquired by such preposterous means. Confinement and bad air are not less injurious to the mind, than to the body; and nothing so effectually prevents the growth of the intellectual faculties, as premature application. Sending a child to school in his nurse's arms, is the sure way to make him an idiot, or to give him an unconquerable disgust to books: the only book he should then look at, is the great volume of nature. This is legible at every age, and is as gratifying to a child as to a man: it



it abounds with the most delightful and most useful information: it is equally conducive to pleasure, health, and knowledge,

A thousand absurdities in the fashionable modes of education present themselves now to my view; but I must only take notice of errors in the physical treatment of children; and surely no errors of this sort can be more reprehensible, than that which I have been just describing. Debility of body and mind is the certain consequence of sending very young children to school; and of sending them, at any age, to crowded or confined schools. The terms of instruction are in general so low, that a master or mistress of a school is obliged to take a great number of scholars, in order to get a living; and can seldom afford to rent a spacious room in an open and elevated situation. Yet not only this is absolutely necessary for health, but a large play-ground also; where even day-scholars

lars should be permitted to go out frequently, to taste the freshness of the vital breeze. The plants of genius and of manhood cannot flourish but by frequent exposure to the enlivening rays of the sun.

## SECTION II.

### *Of warm and cold bathing.*

IN observing the regular succession of an infant's wants, after the supply of air procured by it's first cries, it's seeming uncleanness attracts our notice. The skin appears covered with a slippery glue, which soon dries, and forms a sort of scurf. This should be washed off very gently with a soft sponge and warm water, having a little soap dissolved in it. Nurses, in general, are as eager to remove every speck of it, as if it was the most offensive impurity, though it is perfectly harmless, and will easily come away in three or four washings, without  
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the danger of hard rubbing, or the aid of improper, and sometimes very injurious, contrivances. Ointments or greasy substances cannot fail to fill up the little orifices of the pores, and to put a stop to insensible perspiration. Spirits of any kind are still worse, on account of their inflammatory effect. Even GALEN's advice to sprinkle the child's body with salt, that the glutinous matter may be more effectually rubbed off, is at best unnecessary. I have no particular objection to the modern improvement on that hint, which consists in dissolving salt in the warm bath, with a view of giving it the agreeable stimulus, as well as the cleansing and bracing properties of sea-water; but I would not encourage any solicitude in this respect, as the easiest and simplest mode of proceeding will fully answer the desired end.

In the hardy ages of antiquity, we are told that the Germans used to plunge their new-born infants into the freezing

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waters

waters of the Rhine, to inure them sometimes to the severe cold of their native country. I need not take any pains to point out the danger of following such an example in our times, when mothers and nurses are too apt to run into the opposite extreme of unnerving effeminacy. In this, as in every thing else, the golden mean is the line of wisdom—the line to be pursued by rational affection. It would be extremely hazardous to dip the tender body of a child, reeking from the womb, in cold water, and to keep it there during the necessary operation of washing; but the use of the cold bath may be safely brought about by degrees in five or six months after the birth, and will then be found not only one of the best means of promoting health and strength, but of preventing also many of the most distressing complaints to which children are subject. The following method I can confidently recommend, having had frequent opportunities of observing its salutary effects.

The



The temperature of the bath proper for a new-born infant, should approach nearly that of the situation which he has just quitted. It is proper to acquaint those who may not have an instrument to ascertain the degree of heat, that absolute precision in that respect is by no means necessary ; their feelings will inform them with sufficient exactness when the water is rather warmer than new milk : a little solution of soap, as I before observed, is all that is wanted to increase its softness and its purifying effect. The operation of washing should be performed in a vessel large enough to allow room for the expansion of the infant's limbs, and for easily discovering any defect in its structure, or any accident which may have happened to it during labour : either may be often remedied by timely care, but may become incurable through delay or neglect. The child should not be kept in the bath longer than five or six minutes ; and the moment it is taken out, it should be wrapped up in a soft warm

warm blanket, and there kept for a few minutes in a state of gentle motion.

I would not have any difference made, either in the temperature of the bath, or the time of the infant's continuance in it, for the first month. The uncleanness of young children renders frequent washing necessary. It should be the first object of attention in the morning, and the last at night; but it should not be performed with a full stomach, even when the child receives all its supplies from the breast. This is the only caution which need be added to those already given concerning gentleness in the manner of washing, space enough in the bathing-vessel, and strict care to wipe the child dry, and wrap it warm the instant it is taken out of the bath, when exposure to cold would be doubly dangerous, from the natural delicacy of the infant, and from the immediately preceding warmth and the openness of the pores.

After



After the first month, the warmth of the water may be lessened, but almost imperceptibly, so as to guard against the risk of sudden changes, or too rash experiments. The mildness of the weather, and the evident increase of the child's strength, must be taken into consideration; for, though cold water is very serviceable in bracing weak and relaxed habits, yet, if tried too soon, its stimulus on the surface may be too strong, and the powers of re-action within too weak, so that the worst consequences may follow. These will be prevented by a gradual diminution of the temperature of the water, and by close attention to its effects, when reduced nearer and still nearer to a state of coldness. If immersion in the bath be quickly followed by a glow all over the body, and a perceptible liveliness in the child, we may be sure that the water has not been too cold for his constitution, and that we have proceeded with due care. But should it produce chiliness, evident lan-

guor, and depression, we must make the water a little warmer next time, and not venture upon the cold bath till we are encouraged by more favourable appearances.

It would tend rather to increase than to clear up the doubts of mothers and nurses, were I to enter into a detail of all the infirmities and diseases, in which the cold bath would be serviceable or injurious, not only during infancy, but at a more advanced period of life. There are many nice distinctions in a variety of complaints, where the greatest medical skill and experience are necessary, to decide on the propriety or impropriety of resorting to so powerful, but at the same time so hazardous, a remedy. I must, however, forbid its use in complaints of the bowels; affections of the lungs; eruptions on the infant's skin; and in cases of extreme weakness, indicated by the before-mentioned symptoms of chillness and apparent loss of strength  
and



and spirits after immersion. With such restraints on indiscreet rashness, it is hardly possible that a woman can do wrong, in pursuing the plan which I have pointed out, for reducing the warmth of the water by very slow and almost imperceptible degrees, till it can be employed quite cold with safety and benefit.

There is no doubt but a great deal of mischief has resulted from the too early and injudicious use of the cold bath. I perfectly agree with Dr. UNDERWOOD in his equally sensible and humane remark, that "to see a little infant, three or four days old, the offspring perhaps of a delicate mother, who has not strength even to suckle it, washed up to the loins and breast in cold water, exposed for several minutes, perhaps in the midst of winter (when children are more inclined to disease than those born in summer) itself, in one continued scream, and the fond

mother covering her ears under the bed-clothes, that she may not be distressed by its cries, has ever struck me as a piece of unnecessary severity, and favours as little of kindness, as plunging an infant a second or third time into a tub of water, with it's mouth open and gasping for breath, in the old-fashioned mode of cold bathing: both of which often induce cramps and pains in the bowels, and weakness of the lower extremities, but rarely an increase of strength."

I hope the advice which I have given respecting the proper temperature of the bath during the first months of infancy, will operate as a check on the "unnecessary severity" so justly censured in the first part of this observation. But the error pointed out in the "old-fashioned mode of cold bathing" may not be so easily corrected, unless some strong and clear reasons are assigned for discontinuing the dangerous part of that practice.

Women



Women should therefore be informed, that the immediate effect of immersion in cold water, at any age, is a sudden contraction of the pores and blood-vessels of the skin, and a general repulsion or throwing back of the fluids towards the internal parts. The chilling sensation excites the most vigorous efforts of the organs of life, particularly the heart and arteries, to increase the heat within the body, and resist the shock given to the surface. This is what is called action and re-action, the degree of the latter being always in proportion to the violence of the former, and to the strength of the constitution. Hence arises that delightful glow, which follows the first impression of cold; and, so far, the full play of the vital organs is as pleasant as it is salutary. But, as the increased heat soon passes off from the body, if it be continued in the water, or taken out and directly plunged into it again, the animal powers are liable to be exhausted by incessant or repeated

efforts to produce more heat, and to overcome the action of the external cold. Grown persons have often experienced the fatal consequences of too long a stay in the water. What then must the effects of a second and a third dip be, upon the tender and delicate frame of an infant, whose vital power is proportionally feeble? Besides the risk of extinguishing the faint sparks of life, an accumulation of humours in the head, stagnations of the blood in other parts, and convulsion fits, are very likely to take place. But though none of these melancholy circumstances should happen at the moment, a stoppage of growth, and a puniness of habit, must certainly follow so inconsiderate an abuse of the very means best calculated, under proper management, to promote health, expansion, and vigour.

In cases of previous indisposition, or disease, where the cold bath may be prescribed as a remedy, the danger to a

poor



poor infant must be still greater from an injudicious mode of proceeding. I took no small pains, in my "Domestic Medicine," to expose the whims and prejudices of nurses in this respect. They would be objects of ridicule, were they not often attended with the most serious consequences. I should smile, for instance, at the remains of superstitious weakness, in believing that the whole virtue of the water depends upon its being consecrated to a particular saint, were it not that most of those *holy wells*, as they are called, are very unfit for bathing, and, what is worse, that the child is kept too long in the water, and that due attention is not paid to friction and warmth afterwards. Some of those silly women place their confidence in a certain number of dips, as three, seven, or nine, though every dip after the first, at each time of bathing, not only defeats the hope of benefit, but increases the strong probability of much mischief. This may indeed be avoided, by dipping the in-

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fant only once at a time ; but, even in that case, the magical number of dips is very insufficient for any desirable purpose. I have also known nurses who would not dry a child's skin after bathing, lest it should destroy the effects of the water ; others will even put cloths dipt in the water upon the child, and either put it to bed, or suffer it to go about in that condition. This is sometimes done with impunity by grown persons, who resort to the famous spring at Malvern in Gloucestershire, for the cure of particular complaints of the cutaneous class ; but it would be little short of frenzy to make such an experiment upon children.

The only way of securing to an infant all the salutary effects of the cold bath, without the least possibility of harm, is to prepare him for it in the slow and cautious manner before recommended. This may be accomplished, under favourable circumstances, in five or six months. Rain or river water is fitter for  
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purpose of bathing, than pump or spring water; though the latter, in case of necessity, may be used, after having been exposed for some hours to the sun or the atmosphere. The child must not be dipped when its body is hot, or its stomach full, and should be put only once under the water at each time of bathing. All the benefit, as before observed, depends upon the first shock, and the re-action of the system. In order to prevent a sudden and strong determination of the blood to the head, it is always advisable to dip the child with this part foremost, and to be as expeditious as possible in washing away all impurities. I have been already so particular in my directions to have the young bather instantly wiped dry, and wrapped up in a soft warm blanket, that I need not repeat them; but I must add another injunction, which is, not to put the child to bed, but to keep it for some time in gentle motion, and to accompany the whole process with lively singing.

ing. It is of far greater importance than most people may be aware of, to associate in early life the idea of pleasure and cheerfulness with so salutary an operation,

During the use of the lukewarm bath, the whole body is to be immersed in it every night as well as morning. But, when recourse is had to cold bathing, it must be used in the manner above prescribed in the morning only. At night, it will be enough to wash the lower parts; and even for this purpose a little warm water may be added to the cold in severe weather. Every danger will thus be avoided; every benefit will be secured; and the habit of personal cleanliness, being rendered familiar in childhood, will be retained through life, and will contribute very much to its duration and enjoyment.



## SECTION III.

*Of Children's Drefs.*

THERE is not any part of my professional labours which I review with greater pleasure, than my exertions in early life to rescue infants from the cruel tortures of fwathing, of rollers, and of bandages. When I first ventured to take up the subject, about half a century ago, it certainly required the ardour, the courage, the enthusiasm of youth, to animate my opposition, not only to the prevalence of custom and the stubbornness of old prejudices, but to the doctrines of the Faculty themselves. Absurd as we may now think the practice of fwaddling and wrapping up a child, till it was as stiff as a log of wood; the arguments in favour of a loose and easy drefs, which I made use of in my *Inaugural Dissertation* \*,

\* De infantum vitâ conservandâ.

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were vehemently combated by the most eminent men, who at that time taught medicine in the University of Edinburgh. The reform which has since taken place, though not carried to the extent that it ought to be, is an encouragement to use less reserve in condemning the remains of so pernicious a system.

It cannot be deemed a matter of astonishment, while medical men declared themselves advocates for such a mode of clothing, that it should be carried to the most dangerous excess by ignorant, busy, or self-conceited women. They fancied that the shape, beauty, and health of the infant depended wholly on the expertness of the person employed in dressing it. The midwife was to new-mould the head, and to shape every limb, according to her own fancy, and then to retain the parts, in the form she gave them, by close pressure. Her stupid presumption was farther encouraged by the vanity



of parents, who, too often desirous of making a show of the infant as soon as it was born, were ambitious to see it made up in perfect trim, and to have as much finery heaped upon it as possible. Thus it came to be thought as necessary for a midwife to excel in bracing and dressing an infant, as for a surgeon to be expert in applying bandages to a broken limb; and the poor child, as soon as it came into the world, had as many rollers and wrappers applied to its body, as if every bone had been fractured in the birth; while those cruel ligatures were often so tight, as not only to gall and wound its tender frame, but even to obstruct the motion of the heart, lungs, and other organs necessary for life.

In the progress of folly and vice, when the influence of depraved society had extinguished in the breasts of many mothers every spark of natural affection, and had prompted them to abandon  
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their children to the care of hirelings, the mercenary nurse was glad, for the sake of her own ease, to follow what Physicians taught and midwives practised. The infant was kept swathed in the form of an Egyptian mummy, as incapable of motion as the latter, and almost as destitute of every symptom or indication of life, except its unavailing cries. Though dwarfishness, deformity, diseases, or death, must have frequently been the consequence, yet the nurse escaped all blame, as the bandages prevented any limbs from being broken, and the poor victim, bound hand and foot, might be thrown any where, and there left with the utmost indifference, while she attended to her private concerns.

The only thing relating to the dress of infants which seemed to arise from any tenderness, was a regard to its warmth: unfortunately this was carried too far; and children suffered from  
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the quantity, as well as from the tightness, of their clothes. Every child has some degree of fever after the birth; and if it be loaded with too many clothes, the fever must be increased, often to such a degree, from the concurrence of other causes of heat, as to endanger the life of the infant. Even though no fever should be excited, the greatest debility must be the consequence of keeping a child in a state of perpetual waste by excessive perspiration. Besides, in such a condition, a child is liable to catch cold upon exposure to the least breath of air; and its lungs, relaxed by heat, and never sufficiently expanded, are apt to remain weak and flaccid for life, so that every cold will have the most alarming tendency, and probably terminate in an asthma, or a consumption.

All the former evils, arising from the fallacy of medical theories, from the presumption of midwives, the folly of  
 parents,

parents, the unwillingness of some mothers to do their duty in becoming nurses, the selfish views of hirelings, and the quite opposite, though no less fatal suggestions of misguided tenderness, were farther aggravated by the imperious dictates of fashion. Reason, experience, and true taste, would have long since triumphed over silly speculations, ignorance, and caprice, had not every consideration been sacrificed to prevailing forms; so that from the infant in its swaddling-clothes, to its grandmother in her shroud, dress must be wholly regulated by the etiquette of fashion. Against this species of hitherto unshaken tyranny, I shall therefore point the chief force of my arguments; after a few more strictures on the absurdity and perniciousness of the other cause,—of tight and oppressive clothing,—which has really inflicted deeper wounds on population, than famine, pestilence, and the sword.

To



To begin with the error of physicians : it is almost inconceivable, how any set of men, who professed to be the admirers and followers of nature, should have been so totally blind to her obvious mode of proceeding in the preservation of infant life. She forms the body soft and flexible, to facilitate its future growth : she furrounds the *fœtus* in the womb with fluids, to prevent its receiving any injury from unequal pressure, and to defend it against every thing that might in the least cramp or confine its motions : she adapts the same means to the safe delivery of the child, all whose bones are so griftly and elastic as to yield with surprising pliancy to every obstruction in the act of labour, and afterwards to resume their proper form, unless restrained or distorted by the busy interference of man. Yet people of pretended science have been bold enough to assert, that a child, when it comes into the world, is almost a round ball ; and that *it is the nurse's part*

*to assist nature in bringing it to a proper shape.* We should rather say, let the meddling hand be amputated, which dares to offer violence to the works of nature. If, through the inexpertness or impatience of the midwife, any of the child's delicate limbs have been fractured or put out of joint, they will require immediate care and proper bandages: but let not presumptuous folly attempt to mend what nature has made perfect, or perversely confine what was formed for the utmost freedom of motion and expansion.

I have often had occasion to observe, that the instinct of brutes is an unerring guide in whatever regards the preservation of animal life. Do they employ any artificial means to mould the limbs of their young, or to *bring them to a proper shape*? Though many of these are extremely delicate when they come into the world, yet we never find them grow weak or crooked for want of swaddling



dling-bands. Is nature less kind or less attentive to the human species? Surely not: but we take the business out of nature's hands, and are justly punished for our arrogance and temerity.

This argument may be rendered still more unanswerable by an appeal to the conduct of those nations that approach nearest to a state of nature. They have no idea of the necessity of rollers or bandages to strengthen the imaginary weaknesses, or *to bring to a proper shape* the imaginary deformities of their infants. They allow them from their birth the full use of every organ; carry them abroad in the open air; wash their bodies daily in cold water; and give them no other food or physic but the truly medicinal and nutritive fluid, with which the mothers are benignantlly supplied by nature. Such management tends to render their children so strong and hardy, that by the time our puny infants get out of the nurses' arms, theirs

are able to shift for themselves. I reserve some remarks on the perfect shape of those savages for a distinct chapter, in which I mean to contrast it with the dwarfishness and deformity of civilized nations.

Instead of considering a child at its birth as a round ball, which ought to be *brought to a proper shape* by a midwife's or a nurse's assistance, I would have both these descriptions of people look upon its little body as a bundle of soft pipes, replenished with fluids in continual motion, the least stoppage of which is attended with imminent danger. Tight pressure always weakens, and may sometimes suspend, with deadly effect, the action of the heart, the lungs, and all the vital organs; it impedes the circulation of the blood, and the equal distribution of nourishment to the different parts of the body: it distorts the pliant bones, cramps the muscular powers, prevents growth, and renders  
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the whole frame equally feeble and misshapen.

Even were reason silent on those points, and were we unwarned of the bad effects of swathes and fillets by past experience, humanity ought to restrain us from putting a helpless innocent to the most cruel torture, squeezing its tender body into a press at the instant of its release from former confinement, and loading it with chains as the first mark of our attention. I have often been astonished at the insensibility of midwives and nurses to the cries of infants while dressing—cries that seldom ceased till the powers of the poor creatures were exhausted. Yet so far from feeling any emotion of pity, it is usual for the midwife or the nurse to smile at such cries, and to endeavour to persuade the mother, if within hearing, that the violence of the scream is a subject of joy, not of sorrow, as it proclaims the child's health and vigour. I have already explained the cause and impor-

tant purpose of a new-born infant's first cry, to promote respiration and circulation. The loudness of that cry is indeed a proof of the strength of the child's lungs; but every subsequent cry is the language of pain, the expressive tone of irritation and suffering. If you do not instantly attend to it, you may be guilty of murder. Think of the immense number of children that die of convulsions soon after the birth; and be assured, that these are much oftener owing to galling pressure, or some external injury, than to any inward cause. I have known a child seized with convulsion fits soon after the midwife had done swaddling it, and immediately relieved by taking off the rollers and bandages. A loose dress prevented the return of the disease; and though this will not always cure fits produced by tight clothing, as the effect of the injury may continue after the removal of the cause, yet it is one of the necessary means of relief, it being impossible that a patient can recover, as  
long



long as the cause which first gave rise to the disorder continues to act.

It may be proper in this place to give as clear, simple, and concise an account as I can of the nature of convulsions, that midwives and nurses may learn to shudder at the idea of occasioning, by their misconduct, the most fatal, as well as the most frequent diseases incident to childhood. The heads of infants being proportionably larger, and the nervous system more extended, than in grown persons, their nerves are more susceptible of irritation; and convulsion fits are the consequences of keen irritation, however excited. The great Boerhaave was of opinion, that most of the disorders of children might be ranged under the class of convulsions. It is certain that all the different causes of uneasiness to a child form but one general or undistinguishing sensation of pain, which he has also but one way of expressing, namely, by his cries; and if these are not attended to,

and no relief is or can be given, acute and unmitigated pain commonly produces a fit. If any stronger reason need be urged for immediately attending to an infant's cries, it is that they are almost always owing to mismanagement.

I admit, that the most incurable convulsions are those which proceed from some original fault in the structure of the brain itself, whence the nerves issue. But such cases seldom occur, though the brain has unquestionably been often injured, and convulsions occasioned, by a midwife's presumptuous attempts to model the skull of the new-born infant, I have already hinted at this detestable practice, and shall presently make some farther remarks on its baneful prevalence, and its horrid effects,

Children are also subject to convulsions from cutting the teeth with difficulty, or from a feverish irritation of the system at the approach of the small-pox,



measles, and other eruptive diseases. I am far from being disposed to blame nurses for what they cannot prevent; though I believe that the dangerous symptoms, which often attend teething in particular, are chiefly, if not wholly owing to the previous improper and enervating treatment of the child. The other convulsions here alluded to generally go off as soon as the eruptive disease, of which they may be called the forerunners, makes its appearance.

There is another cause of convulsions, for which midwives and nurses flatter themselves that they are not in any sort blameable;—I mean acute pain in the stomach or bowels. But whence does this pain arise? either from the tight pressure of those parts; from the relaxing effect of a hot and impure atmosphere; or from some acrid substance in the shape of food or of physic conveyed into the stomach, and irritating the alimentary canal. If you attend to the directions  
before

before given on the subject of air, washing, and cleanliness ;—if you pour nothing down the infant's throat but the wholesome, unvitiated juice, designed for him by nature ;—if you slacken, instead of bracing your wrappers round his body ; you may depend upon it that his stomach and bowels will never be so disordered as to occasion convulsions.

The only part of an infant's dress or covering which may be applied pretty close, is a broad piece of thin flannel round the navel, to guard against any protrusion there, from the accidental violence of the child's cries. But take care not to make the pressure too tight, or you will not only hurt the bowels, but, perhaps, cause in another place a much worse rupture than that to which your precaution is directed. This is what happens in many similar cases, when people act from narrow or contracted views of the subject, and, in their eagerness to prevent some trifling  
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and merely possible inconvenience, too often occasion irreparable mischief. Again, then, let me caution midwives and nurses against retaining any part of the old system of tight swathing, as the injury it must do is certain, and the good or the convenience, to which it may seem adapted, is imaginary. I am now speaking of its immediate bad effects, in squeezing the infant's delicate body, fretting his tender skin, keeping his little limbs in a state of painful confinement, exciting his cries, and, by all these causes of nervous irritation, throwing him into convulsions. The female who can hear and see these effects of her own folly, and will yet persist in it, after it is pointed out, certainly does not deserve the name of a mother.

But the most censurable part of the usual conduct of midwives and nurses still remains to be minutely examined and reprobated. It is not enough for them to keep up the show of *helping nature,*

*nature*, as they call it, during the process of a labour, though she has been truly said to *disdain and abhor assistance*; but they presume to mend her work after delivery, and to give a more proper form to the heads of new-born infants. The midwife will tell you, that the soft bones of a child's scull are often so displaced and squeezed together in coming into the world, that the head would be shapeless and frightful, were it not for her improving touches. Another reason is assigned by the nurse for *her* meddling. She takes alarm at the imperfect indentation of the bones on the crown of the head, and not only strives to press them closer and to brace them by means of fillets, but is careful to keep the head warmly covered, to prevent the poor baby, as she says, from *catching his death* by the exposure of those open parts to the air. Deformity is the least of the evils that attend such acts of astonishing infatuation. The delicate texture of the brain is peculiarly  
liable



liable to be affected ; and though neither convulsions nor any other perceptible complaint may immediately follow, yet a weakness of understanding, or a diminution of the mental powers, is often the consequence, and defeats all the efforts of the best education afterwards.

The ossification or growing hardness of the bones of a child, and particularly those of the scull, is incomplete in the womb, to favor the purposes of easy and safe delivery. In consequence of their softness and pliancy, they admit of being squeezed together, and even of lapping over without injury, so as to make the head conform to the shape and dimensions of the parts through which it is to be expelled. They will soon resume their proper place, if left to the kind management of nature, and not tampered with by the profane finger of a conceited midwife or a silly nurse.

As to the opening or imperfect indentation of the bones of the scull, it is  
owing

owing to the same cause, and designed for the same important purpose, to facilitate the birth of the infant. The free action of the external air is then necessary to promote the firmness and compactness of those bones, and to make them press into each other, and form sutures for the perfect defence of the brain, not only against blows and bruises, but colds and defluxions. Warm and tight covering directly counteracts all these benignant intentions of nature, and renders the scull a very weak shield for the security of its precious contents.

The curious distinction made by HERODOTUS, in the field of battle, between the sculls of the Egyptians and the Persians, has often been quoted to illustrate and confirm this doctrine. That historian having visited the scene of action, where the slain of those two nations had been separated, says, that on examining their remains, he found the sculls of the Egyptians so firm that the largest stones  
could



could hardly crack them, while those of the Persians were so thin and weak as to be easily fractured by a small pebble. After stating the fact, he accounts for it by observing, that the Egyptians were accustomed from their infancy to go bareheaded ; whereas the Persians, on the contrary, always wore thick tiaras. These were like the heavy turbans which they still use, and which some travellers think the air of the country renders necessary. I believe with ROUSSEAU, that the generality of mothers will pay more regard to the suggestion of such travellers than to the remark of the judicious historian, and will fancy the air of Persia to be universal.

In opposition, however, to silly conceits and prejudices, I must assure my female readers, that there is no part of the human frame which suffers more from heat and pressure than the head, and none of course which ought to be kept cooler and less encumbered. A thin, light

cap, slightly fastened with a bit of tape, should constitute the whole of an infant's head-dress, from the moment of its birth till the increased growth of the hair renders any other protection unnecessary. As soon as nature supplies your child with this best of all coverings, never think of any thing more, even when you take him out into the open air, unless rain or intense heat or cold should make the occasional use of a very light and easy hat advisable. I must also forbid the use of stay-bands to keep the poor infant's head as fixed and immovable as if it were placed in a pillory. One would suppose, that our heads were so badly secured by the Author of our being, that they would fall off if they were not held fast by those pernicious contrivances. It is strange that women should be so blind to the importance of letting the head move freely in every direction, in order to facilitate the discharge of the fluid excretions voided at the mouth !

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It is not necessary to enter into minute details respecting the other parts of an infant's dress. Any nurse of common sense and docility will easily catch the spirit of my former arguments on the subject, and will pay due regard to the following general direction, with the writer's very plain and sensible remarks. "Rational tenderness (says this author) shews itself in making the dress *light, simple, and loose*. By being as light as is consistent with due warmth, it will neither encumber the infant, nor cause any waste of his powers;—in consequence of its simplicity, it will be readily and easily put on, so as to prevent many cries and tears, an object of infinite importance:—and its looseness will leave full room for moving and stretching those little limbs which have been long heaped together, and for the growth and expansion of the entire frame." I before desired the nurse to have always a soft warm blanket in

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readiness to wrap up the infant on being taken out of the bath. In that wrapper the child should be kept for at least ten minutes, in gentle motion, and then dressed. A piece of fine flannel round the navel, a linen or cotton shirt, a flannel petticoat, and a linen or cotton robe, are soon put on; and where fastenings are requisite, they should consist of tape, without the dangerous use of pins. Their punctures and scratches are very irritating; and I believe the fact mentioned in my "Domestic Medicine" is far from being singular or extraordinary, where pins were found sticking above half an inch into the body of a child, after it had died of convulsion fits, which in all probability proceeded from that cause.

No part of an infant's dress should hang down above two or three inches lower than the feet. Long robes and long petticoats serve only to conceal the nurse's inattention to cleanliness, and  
are,



are, even on that account, very improper, as well as cumbersome. The night clothes should be much lighter than those worn by day, from a due regard to the situation of the infant, who should at all times, either in bed or out, experience nearly the same degree of warmth. Every moisture or impurity should be instantly removed, and as those parts of the dress which are next the skin are constantly imbibing perspirable matter, they should be changed frequently. Indeed, the same clothes ought never to be kept on for many days together. Away with finery; but take care that the child is always clean and dry.

I wish I could here close my remarks on dress, without having any just cause to apprehend a stronger resistance to all my precepts from fashion, than from folly, ignorance, and prejudice. Folly may be laughed out of its errors; ignorance may be instructed; and even the

stubbornness of prejudice may be borne down by the irresistible force of argument. But fashion bids defiance to the combined efforts of ridicule and reason. The only favorable circumstance is, that, being fickle as well as imperious, it may, in its changeful whims, sometimes fall in with the dictates of true taste, and give both ease and elegance to the human form. This has been happily the case in the discontinuance of some of the most painful, awkward, and disfiguring articles of female dress; I mean the high-heeled shoe, and the whalebone stays, which, I hope, will never again make their frightful appearance.

But though fashion has lately carried the loose and light attire of our fair countrywomen almost to the extreme of nudity, yet it cruelly and absurdly retains too much of the bracing method in childhood and youth, when the tender and growing frame requires the utmost ease and freedom. It is true, we



no longer see the once familiar spectacle of a mother laying her daughter down upon a carpet, then putting her foot on the girl's back, and breaking half a dozen laces in tightening her stays, to give her a slender waist. But the absurdity of the contrivance is only changed from stays, to diagonal bandages, or ribands, fastened across the breast and shoulders with straining violence, to cause an unnatural prominence before, a frightful indentation behind, and a wtery stiffness in the motions of the pinioned arms. Yet this is called grace and elegance. The poor sufferer in such chains feels no relief from the discontinuance of the whalebone press, when she finds that "filken fetters bind as fast."

The breast and shoulders are not the only parts which are thus corded. The necks of young females seldom escape some ligature, that must impede the free access of the blood to the head, and its return thence. Ribands or other

fastenings of gloves above the elbow, bracelets on the wrists, and garters either above or below the knee, seem as if purposely contrived to obstruct circulation in the upper and lower extremities. The toes also, the motion of which is as free and easy in infancy as that of the fingers, are soon squeezed together, for fear of the young ladies becoming splay-footed. Even this is not enough, without occasionally putting the feet into wooden stocks, to make a child turn out her toes, after all power of motion has been previously destroyed in them!

Boys, indeed, escape some of those partial bandages; but they are subjected to a general pressure no less injurious in the tight hussar dresses before alluded to. Silly mothers are very impatient to strip them of their loose frocks, and to make them look like little men, which is often the cause of a much nearer resemblance to monkeys. It is really astonishing that health and growth should be per-

versely



verfely facrificed to fashionable smartnefs. All that nature requires in drefs, is eafe and comfortable warmth. In the progrefs of fociety to refinement, decency and elegance are united with the former. At length, false tafte becomes difatisfied with natural fimplicity and beauty, and introduces in their ftead fantaftic finery and cumbrous ornaments. The way to reform is plain and eafy, if we have courage enough to fhake off the tyranny of fafhion, and to confult our reafon and our feelings. To mothers fo difpofed, the following details will not appear uninterefting.

The proper drefs of infants has been already defcribed with fufficient minutenefs. Very little alteration need be made for five or fix years, except that of fhortening the frocks and petticoats, when children begin to learn to walk; and foon after fupplying them with eafy fhoes, adapted to the natural fhape of the foot, neither too large,  
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which would cause a shuffling kind of pace, nor too small so as to cramp motion, give present pain, and prepare the parts for greater sufferings. Were this caution respecting the proper form of shoes to be attended to during life, it would not only prevent corns, and the painful consequences of nails growing into the flesh, but many excruciating maladies which may be traced to the tight pressure of the toes, and suspended circulation in the feet. A well-made shoe answers the two-fold purpose of cleanliness, and of defence against external injuries, including cold and moisture. But when fashion is more regarded than ease, we have no reason to wonder at the number of cripples we meet with tottering about, the victims of their own folly. Whatever changes may be thought necessary in the substance or materials of shoes, according to the age of the wearer, the difference of exercise, of weather, or of the ground for which they are intended, the grand principle



principle of having them made easy, and suited to the shape of the foot, should never be lost sight of. The different direction also of the toes on each foot, renders it advisable to have a corresponding difference in the form of each shoe, which should not be afterwards changed from one foot to the other. It may be said, that shoes will thus get a little crooked, and will the sooner wear out on one side; but surely ease and health are infinitely superior to such trifling considerations.

It being of the first importance to keep the feet always clean, dry, and warm, children should wear flannel or worsted socks in cold and wet weather. Besides the other advantages attending this practice, it will be found one of the best preservatives from chilblains, especially if children, when cold, are not permitted to run to the fire, but are accustomed to warm themselves with proper exercise. The socks should be fitted  
to

to the foot, as well as the shoes, and should touch every part with gentle pressure. If too short or too tight, they will produce the effect already described; and if too big, so as to make folds within the shoes, they will gall and irritate the skin. It is farther desirable to have socks and the feet of stockings made with different divisions or spaces, like the fingers of gloves, to absorb the perspirable matter between the toes, and thus prevent the equally unpleasant and unwholesome effect of its settling there. Will the trouble of having the toes as well as the fingers fitted with proper covering, be deemed an objection of any consequence by people who take infinite pains to adapt their dress, in a thousand other instances, to the most inconvenient and unhealthy fashions?

I leave grown persons to be as silly as they please in the covering of their feet and legs, and in pre-disposing those parts for the gout, rheumatism, dropfy, and



and a variety of other complaints. But it is the height of cruelty to make children suffer through the ignorance, folly, or perverseness of their parents. I must therefore insist on the importance of woollen socks, and of woollen stockings, as soon as this additional article of dress shall be found necessary. Silk, cotton, or thread stockings, are far from being so well calculated to promote insensible perspiration in the lower extremities, or to favor the motion of the fluids to the upper parts. They are even injurious in case of sweat, either from exercise, or the nature of any individual's constitution. Instead of suffering the offensive moisture to escape, as worsted would, they retain it in close contact with the skin, increase its putrescent tendency, and not only check all farther perspiration, but cause a re-absorption of a part of the matter already perspired. Worsted stockings may be worn thicker or thinner according to the state of the weather; and if the  
 show

show of greater finery be thought indispensable for young gentlemen or young ladies in their *teens*, a pair of silk stockings may be drawn over the woollen ones, to gratify parental vanity. Instead of garters, the bad effect of which I have already noticed, stockings may be easily kept up by slips of tape fastened to the band that encircles the waist in the dress of either sex.

My former remarks on the tight huffar dresses of little boys, who ought to be kept much longer in petticoats, and on the diagonal braces of young ladies, who are thus cramped and distorted, preclude the necessity of any farther observations concerning the due degree of ease which should always be consulted in the body-clothes of both sexes. But it is proper to say something of the changes in point of warmth, which may be requisite in different states of the weather. I have met with several plausible arguments in favour of an uniformity



formity of drefs in all feafons ; and the example of the great NEWTON has been urged, to induce us, like him, to wear camlet in winter as well as in fummer. But though that illuftrious philofopher made himfelf immortal by his amazing difcoveries, yet his natural life did not exceed the ordinary period of threefcore years and ten. He cannot therefore be mentioned as a remarkable inftance of longevity ; and even had he lived many years longer, the number of his days might be more reasonably afcribed to his temperance, his regularity, the habitual fweetnefs of his difpofition, and the exquisite pleafure arifing from his fuccefsful refearches, than to the unvarying famenefs of his drefs.

It does not therefore imply the fmalleft diminution of our reverence for the great NEWTON, if we look upon nature as a more unerring guide than any philofopher. Obferve how kindly ſhe varies the covering of animals, according to the  
tem-

temperature of the climate, and the difference of seasons. Their hairy coat is longer and thicker in cold countries than in hot; and its growth and warmth are evidently increased, at the approach of winter, in the chilly regions of the north. Her care of the feathered race is displayed in a different manner. She gives the instinctive impulse that makes them anticipate the rigours of winter, and wing their way to milder climates. Though men cannot shift their places of abode at every season with the facility of birds of passage, they can profit by the example of nature's kind protection of other animals, and can accommodate their clothing to the sensible changes of the season and weather.

Let it not be supposed that I am for recommending those periodical fashions of dress which are regulated by the dates of an almanack, in such a country as ours, where the weather is so changeable,—where the close of autumn is frequently  
severe,



severe,—and where, not only in the spring, but even after the commencement of the summer months, we may say, in the words of the poet,

That winter oft at eve resumes the breeze,  
Chills the pale morn, and bids his driving fleets  
Deform the day delightfuls.

I should be still less inclined to encourage a ridiculous attention to every little change of the air and weather, as indicated by barometers and thermometers. Our senses will afford us all necessary information on this head, without the aid of mathematical instruments. It is only in case of considerable transitions from heat to cold, or the contrary, that our feelings will direct us to guard against danger, by suitable changes of apparel. Poor nervous, delicate beings are, indeed, affected by a passing cloud, or a shifting breath of wind. But my rules are intended for healthy children, habituated to the cold bath every morning, and thus prepared to bear  
without

without uneasiness or injury, any slight variations of the weather which may take place in the course of the day. Yet even such children are not to be exposed in thin cottons to the keen action of the winter's cold, nor smothered with woollens in the sultry heat of summer. Both those manufactures, which are carried to great perfection in England, are well suited to the different seasons. But I must observe, that fine linen is at all times the most proper covering next the skin on every part, except the feet and legs, for the reasons before mentioned: it sufficiently increases internal warmth, without any unnecessary stimulus, or disagreeable friction. Particular infirmities, or a defective perspiration natural in old age, may render flannel or fleecy hosiery advisable; but linen next the skin is best suited to early life, and requires little trouble to keep it always clean.

The upper parts of the human frame do not stand in need of much covering.

Nature



Nature takes care of the head ; so that even the thin cap, recommended at an infant's birth, becomes wholly unnecessary, either by day or by night, in three or four months. When children are taken out, according to my former intimation, a light, easy hat, made of straw or beaver-fur, is very proper; and if the under-side of the brim be dyed green, it will afford a pleasing relief to the eyes, and prevent the injurious effects of too glaring a light. The pink or vivid colours, sometimes used by females in the linings of their hats or bonnets, may give for the moment a seeming freshness to the cheek, but must very much impair the sight by their dazzling brilliancy.

We should not apply any covering whatever to the necks of young persons of either sex. When they grow up, in order to avoid being pointed at for singularity, they may preserve some little show of conforming to fashion, but with-

out checking the circulation in so dangerous a part. Females must never be induced to wear tight necklaces; nor must males brace their collars, or use any stiffening in their stocks or cravats, through weak compliance with the whim of the day. Even keeping the neck very warm, though without any close pressure, increases its delicacy, or rather its sensibility, and renders it susceptible of cold upon the least exposure.

The sleeves of frocks, gowns, and coats, should be made loose, to leave the motion of the arms perfectly free and unconfined. Though gloves are unnecessary except in very cold weather, yet I have not any strong objection to their use, provided they slip on easily, and are made of porous materials, to facilitate the evaporation of the perspirable matter. Leather is of all substances the least adapted to this important purpose.

I shall



I shall conclude these observations on dress, with a picture of fashionable absurdities given in the last edition of my "Domestic Medicine." It is not from an over-weening fondness for my own remarks, that I occasionally refer to, or make extracts from that work; but as some of the points there touched upon are here more fully discussed, it would be the effect of false delicacy on my part, to suppress now any thing useful or pertinent which then occurred to me.

After having applauded the judicious reformers of female dress, for their attention to health, simplicity, and real elegance, I expressed some concern at not being able to pay my own sex the same compliment. "An affectation," I observed, "of what is called military smartness, seems to have converted their whole apparel into a system of bandages. The hat is as tight as if it was intended for a helmet, or to defy the fury of a hurricane. Its form also being by no means

means suited to the natural shape of the head, it must be worn for a considerable time, with very painful and unequal pressure, before it can be made to fit its new block. The neck is bolstered up and swathed with the most unnatural stiffness. Easy motion without, and free circulation within, are alike obstructed. Blotches and eruptions in the face, head-achs, apoplexies, and sudden deaths, may be often traced to this cause; and if we view its effects in another light, we shall not be surprised at any inconsistency in the language or conduct of people, who take so much pains to suspend all intercourse between the head and the heart."

"The close pressure," I added, "of the other articles of dress is equally reprehensible. Narrow sleeves are a great check upon the muscular exercise of the arms. The waistcoat, in its present form, may be very properly termed a *strait* one; and no doubt is, in many instances,



instances, an indication of some mental derangement. The wrists and knees, but more particularly the latter, are braced with ligatures or tight buttoning; and the legs, which require the utmost freedom of motion, are screwed into leathern cases, as if to convey an idea that the wearer is sometimes mounted on horseback. To complete the whole, and in order that the feet may be kept in as tight a press as the head, when shoes are to be worn, the shape of the foot and the easy expansion of the toes are never consulted, but fashion regulates the form of the shoe, sometimes square-toed, more frequently pointed, and always sure to produce cramps and corns, the keen, the sensible announcers of every change of the weather. I have so long employed serious argument upon these subjects in vain, that I am now accustomed to view them with pleasantry; and when I meet with such figures, disguised, and rendered truly awkward both in their mo-

tions and appearance, I cannot help thinking with SHAKESPEARE, "*that some of Nature's journeymen had made them, and not made them well, they imitate humanity so abominably !*"

#### SECTION IV.

*Of the Injury done to Children by the too early and unnecessary Use of Medicines.*

OF all the absurdities that prevail in the treatment of infants, there is none so grossly repugnant to common sense, as the frenzy of giving them physic before we give them food. They scarcely begin to breathe, when some purgative stop is forced down their throats, and the tender stomach and bowels are thrown into a state of the most unnatural irritation. It often appeared to me very strange, how people came to think that the first thing given to a child should be drugs; but after duly considering the matter, I perceived it to be



the effect of superficial knowledge. The more I examined this point, the more I was struck with the truth of the philosopher's remark, *that mere ignorance hath never done any material injury; that error alone is destructive; and that we do not err in things we are professedly ignorant of, but in those which we conceive we know.* To begin with medicines at the birth, is a strong illustration of the mischief of conceited skill.

It would never enter into the minds of persons wholly unacquainted with medical science, that evacuations ought to precede the first supplies of nourishment. But a little smattering of physic gave rise to the idea of cleansing the first passages as soon as possible, in order to bring away the black, viscid, syrup-like substance contained in the intestines of a new-born infant. The fallacy of such a suggestion can only appear upon a more accurate and comprehensive view of the subject.

In the first place, the *meconium*, as it is called, generally passes soon after the birth, without any excitement but the mere effort of nature. When this does not take place, every desirable purpose is sure to be effected by the thin, watery, and purgative quality of the mother's milk. Do you suppose that any chemical process can equal this? Or do you imagine that the retention of the *meconium* for a few hours, can do half as much mischief, as your oils and your syrups, your indigestible or your acrimonious trash, must occasion? But it was enough for midwives and nurses to hear physicians, who knew very little more of the matter than themselves, prescribing things of an opening nature to purge off the remains of the *meconium*. This acquisition of imaginary science was too flattering to female vanity, not to be displayed upon every occasion; and many a severe twinge have poor infants suffered, from a midwife's desire to shew her profound skill in physic.

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I was once sent for by an intimate friend, to look at a new-born infant who appeared to be in great agony. I soon discovered that the complaint was the belly-ache, caused by some injudicious purgative. As the midwife was present, I remonstrated with her on the rashness of thus tampering with an infant's delicate constitution. She replied in a tone of self-sufficiency and surprise, "Good God! Doctor, I only gave the proper physic to bring away the *economy*." I should have smiled at her affectation of medical cant, and her ridiculous attempt to catch at the sound of the word *meconium*, had not the serious mischief she had done suppressed every emotion of laughter. I reprimanded her in very pointed terms, and made her feel the burning blushes of confusion, when I shewed that poison was as likely to be used for physic, as *economy* for the word *meconium*, from the same impulse of conceited folly.

But

But the whole blame in such cases is not, as I have already intimated, to be laid to the charge of midwives and nurses: the faculty themselves have paid too little attention to the medical treatment of children; and, in consequence of their superficial knowledge of these important subjects, have sanctioned errors of the most fatal tendency. I once heard a medical professor of great celebrity say, that he had met with a case, where the *meconium* was not brought away for three months after the child's birth, and then only by means of strong drastic purges. Though one of the first anatomists in Europe, he was led into this mistake by the blackish colour of the child's stools, which, for want of practical observation and experience, he could not account for but by ascribing it to the supposed remains of the *mecconium*. There is nothing so absurd, says an ancient writer, which has not been uttered by some philosopher. I am  
 sorry



sorry to add, that a similar assertion might be made with still greater truth concerning the professors of physic.

It would be well, however, if the idea of the necessity of giving medicines to children, was confined to one opening dose to purge off the *meconium*. Unfortunately, the error committed at the birth is repeated again and again; and seldom ceases but with the poor creature's life. Opiates are deemed necessary to make it sleep; carminatives to expel wind, or to cure the gripes; laxatives and emetics to cleanse the stomach; and ten thousand other unavailing and pernicious contrivances to relieve complaints, which are entirely the effects of bad nursing, and which admit of no remedy but by a complete reform in that department.

When a medical man is sent for to attend an infant, his first duty is to inquire into the conduct of the nurse; and  
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if there are faults, to have them rectified. He will seldom find occasion to prescribe any thing else. There cannot be a greater error than to suppose that the faults of nurses may be repaired by drugs. Medicine, however skilfully administered, cannot supply the place of proper nursing; and when given without skill, which I fear is too often the case, it must be productive of much mischief. The following facts will place this matter in the clearest light.

About forty years ago, when I undertook the charge of a large branch of the Foundling Hospital at Ackworth in Yorkshire, I found that the children at nurse had till then been attended by the country apothecaries, who, sure of being paid for their drugs, always took care to exhibit them with a liberal hand. Every cupboard and every shelf in the house was filled with phials and gallipots. Under such treatment, half the children died annually. As it was evident to me, that  
this



this mortality could not be natural, I suggested to the governors, that the children had little or no occasion for medicines, and that with proper care they would thrive and do well. A new arrangement took place. The nurses were forbidden, at their peril, to give any medicine but what should be ordered by me; and were advised to rely more on the faithful discharge of their duty than on doses of physic. The consequence was, that the expence for drugs did not amount to a hundredth part of what it had been before, and that not above one in fifty of the children died annually. An opportunity of making experiments on so extensive a scale seldom occurs. I had at that time the sole superintendence of an immense number of children spread over a fine healthy country, where the nurses found it their interest to do in every respect what I desired, as they lost their appointment in case of the least neglect. The happy result of the plan left no doubt of its

propriety. It was theory verified by practice.

A little reflection would soon satisfy an attentive observer of nature, that she never designed the young of any species to be brought up by the aid of medicine. Other animals, following the guidance of instinct, never fail in this important business: but man becomes in all things the creature of art, and is misled by it. I have frequently met with instances of families, who had lost every child while they trusted to physic and employed the faculty, but who at length becoming wise through despair, and considering that their offspring could only die, left off the use of medicine altogether, and from that time never lost a single child. If we wish for a more general illustration of the effects of those two different modes of treatment, we shall find it in that part of the island where I was born (North Britain), and where the common people have a strong and very just aversion to giving



giving their children medicines. The fruits of their good sense are displayed in a numerous and healthy progeny. But puniness, sickness, and death, find their way, in company with the doctor, into the houses of parents of higher rank. As the children of the latter are often observed not to thrive, the common remark is, *No wonder! they gave the poor things physic.*

It is indeed possible, that cases may occur to justify the use of medicines; but this very seldom happens when children are properly nursed, unless the poor creatures may have inherited debility from the enervated constitutions of their parents. I may go farther and assert, that even when the frequent or continued use of medicines is deemed necessary, a child kept in existence by the help of drugs has little reason to thank its parents for preserving its life. It lives only to be a burthen to society; and never can be said to enjoy life so much

much as to render the possession of it a blessing. In all other cases of slight and accidental indisposition, I do not hesitate to give a decided opinion, that medicines do injury at least twenty times for once that they do good.

A late writer on the management of children (NELSON) thinks it a matter of regret that they can seldom be brought to take physic without force. When I consider the almost infinite number of young martyrs to medicine, instead of lamenting the circumstance here stated, I rejoice at it, from the fullest conviction, that if children had no reluctance to swallow drugs, we should lose a great many more of them. I know it is a common practice with many mothers, to lay a child on its back, to stop its nose, and force the medicine down its throat. This is adding the danger of suffocation, and the certainty of disgust, to the hazard of a dose too often in its own nature injurious. Bribing and coaxing



coaxing children, as soon as they become susceptible of such impressions, are almost equally bad. Telling a child, that, if it will take its physic, it shall have a reward, is informing it beforehand, that the potion is unpleasant; and, after that, the child is sure to refuse it, be it rendered ever so palatable. Where medicine is absolutely necessary, which, as I said before, is very seldom the case, it may be so contrived as to make a part of the child's food. Besides, a child should be accustomed very early to refuse nothing; and it will not refuse to take medicine. It will act from habitual submission to authority,—not from the cruel impulse of force, or the pernicious allurements of a bribe.

I could here point out many easy contrivances to make children take physic, were I not assured that they are already too often poisoned by it. If drugs do not directly produce infirmity, diseases, or death, these are sure to be  
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ultimately the consequences of substituting medicine in the place of proper nursing, and foolishly supposing that the former can supply the defects of the latter. Art opens all her resources in vain ; nor can the greatest efforts of human ingenuity make amends for the want of good air, cleanliness, healthy breast-milk, wholesome food, and proper exercise. The neglect of any of these essential points is attended with irreparable mischief ; and, on the contrary, a due attention to these precludes the necessity of any medical aid. Yet so strangely addicted are some women to drench infants with drugs, that, when I employed nurses in my own family, it was with difficulty I could prevent them from giving medicines privately to the children. I hope that fathers will profit by this hint, to exert their utmost vigilance and authority in the like situation.

There is not any notion which I have found it more difficult to root out of  
the



the minds of mothers, than that children abound with ill-humours, and that these can be carried off only by purging medicines. If a spot appear on the skin, the child must have his guts scoured out, to make the offensive pimple vanish, and to *sweeten his blood*, as the mothers call it. They little know, and can hardly be made to conceive, that all purgatives, however mild in their operation, throw the stomach into immediate disorder, weaken its digestive powers, vitiate the juices designed for the solution of food, and thus prevent the due preparation of the chyle whence the blood is formed. This is the sure way to generate noxious humours, instead of expelling them; and to taint or impoverish the vital stream, instead of purifying it.

The other medicines, which the fears and follies of mothers have introduced into the nursery, are almost as pernicious. Had I leisure to make out the



long list of them, with a description of their effects at an early age, it would appear that they ought to be more properly denominated poisons than remedies. They always do some injury; they cannot do any good: they are administered either frivolously, or for the relief of complaints which are caused by bad nursing, and which do not admit of a *medical* cure. To trust to physic for what physic cannot effect, is aggravating the evil of former errors by a still greater one, and quickening a poor infant's career to the grave. Were a law to be made and strictly enforced, which should absolutely prohibit the administering of drugs to children, I am sure it would save the lives of thousands every year in this metropolis alone.

I have elsewhere made a few remarks on the usual conduct of London mothers, whose faith in medicine does not seem in the least abated by the most striking



striking and the most lamentable proofs, not merely of its inefficacy, but of its perniciousness. Whenever any of their children appear indisposed, or do not seem to thrive, which must be frequently the case where they are so badly nursed, away the mothers run to the apothecary. His candor is too often checked, and even his judgment is liable to be biased by his immediate interest. He derives his support from the sale of his drugs, and will seldom resist the temptation to send large supplies where he knows the parents are in a condition to pay. Physic, in a variety of forms, is substituted for the only rational means of restoring the child's health, some necessary change of air, exercise, clothing, or diet: the mischief begun by the nurse is completed by the doctor; and death comes sooner or later to put an end to the sufferings of the tortured victim.

It gives me pain to write any strictures on the interested views and reprehensible



henfible practice of even the lower orders of the faculty; but the evil is of fuch magnitude, and fo truly alarming, that it cannot be paffed over in filence, nor mentioned without burfts of ftrong indignation. The weaknefs and the fears of mothers bring in the apothecary; and it requires an effort, to which not one in a thoufand is equal, to get him out again. A bold bufy man of that profeffion wants only a few timid mothers to make his fortune. But, mercy on the poor babes, who, to make his chariot roll, muft fwallow drugs every day! Yet, fuch is the infatuation of mothers, that, if this be not done, they think their children neglected, and difmifs one apothecary to make way for another, who adminifters medicines with a more liberal, or rather a more deftructive hand.

If the apothecary be a dangerous man, the quack is ftill more fo. Yet I hardly ever knew a mother or nurse who had not by her the noftrum of fome quack, with



with which she every now and then kept dosing the infant. Were the boasted specific, like the anodyne necklace, a mere chip in porridge, it would do no harm to the child, and would serve only to amuse the mother, and to levy a contribution on her credulity. But it is very often made up of active ingredients, which ought to be administered with the greatest circumspection. Most of the nostrums given to children are strong opiates or purgatives, of a nature very different from the innocent efficacy of a good nurse's lullabies. They may quiet or compose the infant, and seem to give it ease for a time, but they never fail to destroy the powers of digestion, and to induce universal debility, with all its baneful consequences.

There is, however, another class or description of quack medicines, which, though they cannot kill with greater ultimate certainty than the former, are



more sudden and violent in their fatal mode of operation, I mean the cakes and powders, and various other compositions, which are advertised for the pretended cure of worms. A child's pale looks frighten the mother into a belief that worms are the cause; and she goes immediately to the *worm-doctor*, who administers his drastic doses, without the least regard to the delicacy of the patient's constitution. His sole aim is to expel worms; and, if any appear, he triumphs in the show of success, though always attended with great danger, and sometimes with death. I have known a nostrum of this kind to kill in twenty-four hours:—but that was nothing to the quack; he had sold his medicine; and he gave himself little concern about the injury it might do in particular cases.

I would not have said so much of this shocking indifference to murder, had I not seen proofs of it, and in some too, who



who pretended to eminence in that line. I once told a lady, that her daughter was in a deep consumption, and that she ought to go into the country, to take exercise on horseback, drink asses' milk, and use a light restorative diet. But, instead of following this advice, she took her daughter to a very celebrated worm-doctor, who soon relieved her from all her trouble.

Here I cannot help lamenting that confidence in worm-powders or worm-cakes is not confined to the weakest of the fair sex, but is discovered even in men of rank and talents. I have seen, though with heart-felt concern, names of the first respectability subscribed to certificates of the efficacy of some of those nostrums. I am far from questioning the integrity of the persons who signed such papers; but they certainly knew not what they did. They fancied they were only attesting a plain matter of fact, though the thing was far beyond



beyond the possible reach of their judgment or knowledge. They had seen a quack medicine given to a child, and had also seen worms afterwards voided by that child. What then? As the same effect might be produced by very dangerous poisons, how could people, wholly ignorant of the ingredients, tell whether the operation ascribed to them was not at the risk of the child's constitution, or of it's life? Even supposing that some apparent good and no *perceptible* mischief attended the experiment in one or two cases, are they sufficient grounds for the general recommendation of any *secret* medicine, to which the lives of thousands of children yet unborn may be sacrificed? I hope these remarks will prevent men of character from rashly giving a sanction to the possible deceptions of quackery, and will also lessen the respect which individuals or the public at large may feel for such inconsiderate testimonials.

To



To resume now my detail of various instances of maternal weakness ; I have to observe, that the strangest, and not the least mischievous infatuation of all, consists in giving medicines to children in good health, with the silly view of preventing diseases. The spring and fall are the periods consecrated to physic in the calendar of mothers and nurses. At those seasons, if children are ever so well, they must have a dose or two of what is falsely called an innocent purge, to keep them pure and hearty. Thus they are made really sick, for fear they should become so ; and their constitutions are enfeebled by the perverse means employed to strengthen them. I have already said so much of the bad consequences which must result from the use of laxatives, especially in childhood, that no farther dissuaves against so absurd a practice seem necessary, except this one remark ; that purging, like bleeding, induces a habit which cannot be left off with safety.



safety. Every purge paves the way for another, till the bowels are destroyed. Such medicines, therefore, should never be administered but in cases of actual illness, and to expel some greater poison than themselves.

As this is a point which cannot be too strongly enforced, I shall lay before the reader Mr. Locke's sentiments on the same subject. They derive double weight from his medical skill, and from the extraordinary precision of his manner of reasoning upon any topic. As he was regularly bred to physic, he is exempt from the suspicion incurred by some later philosophers, of having written under the influence of prejudice against the faculty. "Perhaps," says he, "it will be expected that I should give some directions of physic, *to prevent diseases*; for which I have only *this one, very sacredly to be observed*, NEVER TO GIVE CHILDREN ANY PHYSIC FOR PREVENTION. The observation of what I have



I have already advised will, I suppose, do that better, than the *ladies' diet-drinks*, or *apothecaries' medicines*. Have a great care of tampering that way, lest, instead of *preventing*, you *draw on* diseases. Nor even upon every little indisposition is physic to be given, or the physician to be called to children, especially if he be a *busy man*, that will presently fill their windows with gallipots, and their stomachs with drugs. It is safer *to leave them wholly to nature*, than to put them into the hands of one forward to tamper, or that thinks children are to be cured, in ordinary distempers, by any thing but diet, or a method very little different from it; it seeming suitable both to my reason and experience, that the tender constitutions of children should have as little done to them as is possible, and as the absolute necessity of the case requires."

To add any thing by way of comment or illustration to language at once  
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so clear and so forcible, would betray the greatest weakness. It is enough for me to quote so unexceptionable an authority in support of my favourite doctrine. The chief design of the present treatise is to supersede the use of medicines in early life, and to shew how health may be effectually preserved by good nursing alone. An attention to the rules here laid down is the only method of preventing diseases, with which I am acquainted. A child used to the cold bath, and to the full enjoyment of fresh air, cannot be liable to coughs, colds, sore eyes, or defluxions. A clean dry skin, never relaxed by foulness or heat, will favour the escape of noxious or redundant humours, while exercise will not suffer the seeds of corruption to lurk in any part of the frame. Instead of baneful physic, let your infant have the aliment prepared for him by nature; and you may be sure that the milk of a healthy, temperate nurse, will never give him the gripes or the  
cholic;



cholic ; it will nourish, but not inflame him ; it will keep the habit pure, the action of the blood regular, and the surface of the whole body free from blotches or eruptions. Indeed, I know of no disease against which a child may not be secured by the rational conduct of his nurse. The pre-disposing causes of all the complaints of infants, are the weakness of the digestive powers, and the irritability of the nervous system. Both are obviated by the method I propose. The stomach is supplied, but not overcharged, with such food as is suited to its strength ; and every thing that may irritate the nerves, or give rise to convulsions, is averted with all possible care. Even in the midst of contagion, or of epidemical distempers, the purity of a well-nursed child's habit will correct the malignity of the infection, and disarm it of its usual terrors.

The earnestness with which I have recommended inoculation in another work,

work, may seem a little inconsistent with the doctrine here laid down : but it is because very few children are nursed according to my plan, that I think it advisable to guard them all against the possible danger of catching the small-pox by accident. Besides, it is of importance to be able to command time, place, and circumstances ; particularly as I have shewn in my “ Domestic Medicine,” with what ease and safety the operation may be performed by mothers and nurses, without the least occasion for any farther medical advice or assistance.

## SECTION V.

*Of the Food proper for Children.*

THE pernicious folly of making physic precede food at an infant's birth is, I hope, sufficiently exposed in the former section ; and notice is there taken of the admirable manner, in which the thin, diluted,



diluted, and gently opening properties of the mother's milk, are adapted to every medicinal as well as alimentary purpose. Nature does not afford, nor can art contrive, any effectual substitute for that delicious fluid. By degrees the milk acquires consistence, and affords greater nourishment to the child, as he becomes more capable of digesting it. At length, his bodily strength increasing, and his teeth bursting through the gums, he can take more solid and substantial food, which requires still greater powers of digestion. These changes are so obvious, that they cannot be mistaken. Ignorance is pleaded in vain, and the least deviation from so plain a road to health, is punished with lasting injury. The infant, after having derived its whole sustenance and growth, while in the womb, from the mother's juices, cannot without the greatest danger have its supplies totally altered at its birth. It must still be fed from the same congenial source, or the shock of

a sudden and unnatural change will prove very trying to its tender constitution.

In my advice to mothers at the time of lying-in, I endeavoured to convince them of the imminent danger to their own health, which would arise from their neglect of the most sacred of all duties, that of suckling their children. It is an obligation so strongly enforced by nature, that no woman can evade the performance of it with impunity. But cheerful obedience to this sovereign law is attended with the sweetest pleasure of which the human heart is susceptible. The thrilling sensations, as before observed, that accompany the act of giving suck, can be conceived only by those who have felt them, while the mental raptures of a fond mother at such moments are far beyond the powers of description or fancy. She thus also ensures the fulfilment of the promises made by the best writers on this sub-



ject—speedy recovery from childbed, the firm establishment of good health, the exquisite sense of wedded joys, the capacity of bearing more children, the steady attachment of her husband, the esteem and respect of the public, the warm returns of affection and gratitude from the objects of her tender care, and, after all, the satisfaction to see her daughters follow her example, and recommend it to others.

Though I expressed myself pretty fully on this head in the place above referred to, yet when I reconsider it, new ideas arise in my mind, and I am more and more impressed with a sense of its importance. People have been often amused with illusions of universal remedies. Long experience has almost destroyed my faith in the efficacy of even the best specifics. But were I called upon to point out any one remedy for the greatest part, not only of the diseases, but of the vices also of society, I would

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declare

declare it to be the strict attention of mothers to the nursing and rearing of their children. "Would you have mankind return all to their natural duties," says the eloquent ROUSSEAU, in one of his fine fallies of sentimental enthusiasm, "begin with mothers of families: you will be astonished at the change this will produce. Almost every kind of depravation flows successively from this source: the moral order of things is broken, and nature quite subverted in our hearts: home is less cheerful and engaging: the affecting sight of a rising family no more attaches the husband, nor attracts the eyes of the stranger: the mother is less truly respectable, whose children are not about her: families are no longer places of residence: habit no longer enforces the ties of blood: there are no fathers, nor mothers, children, brethren, nor sisters: they hardly know, how should they love, each other? each cares for no one but himself; and when home affords only a melancholy solitude,



tude, it is natural to seek diversion elsewhere.

“ But,” continues he, “ *should mothers again condescend to NURSE THEIR CHILDREN*, manners would form themselves: the sentiments of nature would revive in our hearts: the state would be re-peopled: this principal point, this alone would re-unite every thing. A taste for the charms of a domestic life, is the best antidote against corruption of manners. The noise and bustle of children, which is generally thought troublesome, becomes hence agreeable: they render parents more necessary, more dear to each other, and strengthen the ties of conjugal affection. When a family is all lively and animated, domestic concerns afford the most delightful occupation to a woman, and the most agreeable amusement to a man. Hence, from the correction of this one abuse, will soon result a general reformation: nature will quickly re-assume all her rights: let

wives but once again become mothers ; and the men will presently again become fathers and husbands."

To this sketch, drawn by the pencil of so great a master, I shall only add, that the happy consequences of such a reform would be no less striking in a medical than in a moral point of view. A stop would be put to the cruel ravages of death in early life. The long catalogue of infantile afflictions would almost become a blank, or contain nothing to excite alarm. Every child, invigorated by his mother's milk, would, like the young HERCULES, have force sufficient to strangle in his cradle any serpents that might assail him. Occasional illness would be to him only part of a necessary course of discipline, to enure him by times to bear pain with manly fortitude. In short, health, strength, and beauty, would take place of puniness, deformity, and disease ; society would be renovated ; and man, instead  
of



of dwindling away, as he now does, by a gradual degeneracy, would soon rise to the original perfection of his nature.

If you entertain any doubt of the truth of what is here advanced, look at other parts of the animated creation, and your doubts will immediately vanish. Wild animals never degenerate: they bring forth and rear their young with undiminished strength. And why? Because the females, obedient in every thing to the impulses of nature, nurse their offspring, and watch over them with the most tender sollicitude, till they can provide for themselves. Not only the inhabitants of the howling wilderness, the she-wolf and the fell tigress, but even the monsters of the great deep, draw out the breast, and give suck to their young. Will woman then suffer herself to be stigmatised as the only unfeeling monster that can desert the issue of her own womb, and abandon it to the care of another? Will she alone entail the curse

of her unnatural conduct on her hapless posterity?

But let me vindicate the female character from so foul a reproach. It is not so much the fault of the women, as of what is improperly called civilized society. In its ruder state, this never happened. It never happens now among savage nations. I have already mentioned some remarkable instances of their parental tenderness. The influence of so strong a principle can be weakened only by the prevalence of vice, and of artificial refinement. Wherever an innocent simplicity of manners prevails, the children are not brought up by proxy: the women are not satisfied to be mothers by halves, as an old writer expresses it,—to bring forth, and then to cast off their offspring. They think with him, that nothing can be more contrary to nature, than such an imperfect sort of mother, who, after having nourished in her womb, and  
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with her blood, something which she did not see, refuses now her breast-milk to what she sees living, become a human creature, and imploring the assistance of its parent !

In the polished, or rather the depraved circles of social life, those sentiments are either unfelt, or disregarded. Women, enervated by luxury, allured by a false taste for mistaken pleasures, and encouraged by shameless example, are eager to get rid of their children as soon as born, in order to spend the time thus gained from the discharge of their duty in dissipation or indolence. Let not husbands be deceived : let them not expect attachment from wives, who, in neglecting to suckle their children, rend asunder the strongest ties in nature. Neither conjugal love, fidelity, modesty, chastity, nor any other virtue, can take deep root in the breast of a female that is callous to the feelings of a mother. I am aware of the little tricks that are so often played

played off by new-married women to keep up the show of a wish to nurse their children, while every engine is secretly employed to make the deluded husband conjure her to relinquish her design, for fear of the injury it might do her constitution. If she has not injured her health by vice, nursing will not lessen, but increase her strength; and if any constitutional defect renders her wholly unfit for suckling her child, she ought to abstain from procreation. The woman who cannot discharge the duties of a mother, ought again and again to be told, that she has no right to become a wife.

In cases of accidental injury or disease, where it may be impossible for the mother, or highly improper on her part, to give the child the breast, she is to be pitied in being thus deprived of the greatest pleasure of life, the pleasure of feeding and of rearing her own offspring. But the number of those women who  
really



really *cannot* suckle is very small, compared with those who *will not*. The latter excite our indignation—not our pity: they stifle every emotion of tenderness; they are deaf to the voice of nature; they sacrifice the most important duty to vicious pursuits; and madly barter joys that will please on every reflection, for such as never can bear to be recalled.

Little do those dissipated mothers think of what their poor infants are likely to suffer, when committed to the care of hirelings. Ought they not to consider, that the woman who parts with her own babe to suckle one of theirs, unless she is impelled by the keenest distress, gives a proof in the first instance of her not being a good mother? How then is it to be expected that she should become a good nurse? Even should she acquire, in time and from habit, a tender affection for her foster-child, ought not a mother of

of any fenfibility to take alarm at the idea of having that child's love transferred from herfelf to a ftranger? Indeed, the claims of the nurse who does her duty faithfully, are greatly fuperior to thofe of the parent who neglects her's. It was a faying of SCIPIO AFRICANUS, *that he took her to be more his mother, who had nurfed him for two years, though ſhe had not brought him forth, than her who, after ſhe had brought him into the world, deserted and abandoned him.* But I am ftill better pleaſed with the anecdote related by VAN SWIETEN, of a Queen of France, who gave her fon fuck, and would not deſiſt from ſo doing even when ſhe was taken ill of an intermitting fever. It happened during one of the fits, that another matron gave her breaf to the thirſty and crying child; at which the queen was ſo much diſpleaſed, that ſhe thruſt her finger into the child's mouth, in order to excite a vomiting, being unwilling that another ſhould perform any part of a mother's office.

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I shall not enlarge any farther on this subject. I hope I have said enough to excite good mothers to the most assiduous observance of their duty, and to warn others of the evils inseparable from the neglect of it. Such as may resolve to obey the dictates of nature and reason, will find the following directions of some use in the prosecution of so laudable a purpose.

The mother, after delivery, should be indulged with a few hours' sleep, to recover from the fatigue which she has lately undergone, and to allow due time for the secretion of the milk, before the infant is put to the breast. The child can suffer no inconvenience from this delay. Being replete with blood and juices, he has not the least occasion for any fresh supply of nutriment, till the mother is prepared by necessary repose to give him the grateful and spontaneous beverage. I before pointed out the means to be employed when the  
nipples

nipples are not sufficiently prominent to afford a proper hold. But whatever the form of the nipples may be, they should be washed with a little warm milk and water, in order to remove the bitter viscid substance, which is furnished round them to defend the tender parts from excoriation. I would also advise the mother, during the whole time of her nursing, to wash the nipples, immediately after giving suck, in warm water, whenever this can be conveniently procured; and, in case the supplies of the nutritive fluid are very copious, or seem to exceed the infant's wants, she may always press out a little of the milk before the child is put again to the breast, as the first drops issuing from the fountain at every treat are the most liable to sourness and putrescency.

I need not urge a fond mother freely to give her child what nature freely produces. The only check in this respect is not to suffer the infant to sleep at the breast,



breast, or to suck till vomiting ensues. But any attempts to entice the baby to the use of spoon-meat are still more improper. This is a common practice, not only with hired nurses, but even with affectionate mothers, from a foolish though prevalent idea of lessening the demands on the breast, or of strengthening the child with additional nourishment. If the nurse be not irregular in her own manner of living, she need not fear having a plentiful supply for the infant; and she may rest assured that her milk is far better suited to his young stomach, and will afford a greater quantity of nutritious chyle, than any preparation which art can devise.

Another error no less prevalent, and more injurious than the former, is the idea that a woman, when nursing, cannot eat and drink too *heartily*, as it is termed, to support her own strength and that of the infant. On the contrary, the tainted stream of intemperance must enfeeble

enfeeble and disorder the child, while the nurse really lessens her own power of giving suck, and invites the attacks of a fever by her thoughtless indulgence. The cooling regimen before recommended must be strictly complied with for the first week after delivery; and though a more liberal diet may then be allowed, yet this allowance must not extend to gross meats or heating liquids. A pint of porter or ale twice a day for at least a fortnight more, will be quite sufficient, and animal food should be very sparingly used for a much longer period. Indeed, it would be happy for the children, as well as for their nurses, if the latter could confine themselves, without any painful restraint, to the salutary varieties of a milk and vegetable diet. It is a great mistake to suppose, that a nurse is better fitted for her office by living on animal substances: the very reverse is the truth. The milk of women who live wholly on vegetables, is more abundant in quantity, will keep longer,



longer, and is far sweeter and more wholesome than what is prepared from animal food, which, beside its inflammatory tendency, must subject the children to gripes and worms.

These remarks are merely designed to correct some vulgar errors respecting the quantity and quality of the aliment most proper for nurses, but not to impose upon any woman the necessity of a total change from her former and usual manner of living. I would have her continue the temperate use of what she has found by experience to be most conducive to her health; and that will also agree best with her child. Her natural appetite may be safely indulged; but gluttony must be repressed, and a depraved taste for spirituous liquors, or high-seasoned food, must never be gratified.

It has been just hinted that the breast-milk of a woman in good health is abundantly

dantly sufficient for an infant's support. Nothing else should enter his lips for at least three or four months after the birth. A little thin pap or panada may then be occasionally introduced, with a view of familiarising it to the child's taste, and thereby lessening the difficulty and danger of a complete and sudden alteration at the time of weaning. But no spices, no wine, no sugar, should at any time be mixed with his food or drink. These and the like contrivances of silly women to make an infant's spoon-meat what they call palatable and nourishing, are sure to vitiate his natural taste, to inflame his blood, and to fill the stomach with slime and acidities. Sugar, in particular, has another very bad effect : its frequent use not only gives children a disrelish for wholesome simplicity, but entices them to swallow more than they otherwise would, or than they want, and thus makes gluttons of them even before they can be strictly said to eat.



Infants are commonly deprived of the breast too soon. What people call solid food is supposed to contribute more to their growth and health. But, in the first place, milk, though a fluid, is immediately converted into a solid substance in the stomach, where it is soon after digested, and then affords the best nutriment possible. It also appears contrary to nature to put solid substances into the mouth of a child, before it is furnished with teeth to chew them. I should therefore look upon the previous cutting of the teeth as the surest indication of the proper time for weaning children. I do not mean to lay this down as an invariable rule. The state of the nurse's health, as well as of the child's, should be duly considered. It seems only that the cutting of the teeth gives a sort of hint of the use to which they may be applied. It is farther remarkable that, during the continuance of this usually sharp and painful operation, children, as it were instinctively,

carry every thing that is put into their hands up to their mouths. Give them on such occasions crusts of bread, pieces of biscuit, dried fruits, or fresh liquorice-root, which they may suck and chew. Corals, glafs, and the like hard bodies, are very improper, as they will either bruise the gums and cause an inflammation, or make them hard and callous by continual rubbing, so as to render the cutting of the teeth still more difficult, and the pain more acute and lasting.

A few weeks before the intended time of weaning, that is to say, in the interval between the first symptoms of cutting the teeth and the appearance of at least four of them, spoon-meat should be given more frequently, and in greater quantity, reducing in the like degree the proportion of breast-milk, till the gradual increase of the one and diminution of the other render the change almost imperceptible. The best spoon-  
meat



meat that I know consists of bread and milk, prepared in the manner pointed out in my Domestic Medicine; that is, first boiling the bread in water, afterwards pouring the water off, and then mixing with the bread a proper quantity of new milk unboiled. I there observed, that milk used this way was more wholesome and nourishing than when boiled, and was less liable to occasion costiveness.

It is not necessary, however, to confine children, after they are weaned, to one particular sort of food. The bill of fare may be gradually enlarged with the child's growth, provided always that it consist of an innocent variety. He may have bread and milk at one time, bread pudding at another, and bread sliced in broth, or in the gravy of roast meat, diluted with water, now and then, till at length his teeth being properly grown, and fit to chew meat itself, he may be allowed a little of it at dinner, with a

due proportion of bread and of wholesome vegetables. But I must forbid in the most positive manner any artificial sweetening of his food, all spices or seasoning, except salt, all sorts of pastry, butter in every form, unripe fruits, and fermented liquors.

As I have great reliance on the discretion of good mothers, when well informed of their duty, I should be sorry to tire them by too many details, or to fetter them by unnecessary restraints; I shall therefore only add one caution more on this part of the subject, and that is, not to adopt the pernicious custom of giving food or drink to children during the night. Even in the course of the day, they should not be crammed every hour, and trained up in habits of early gluttony. Temperance is that sure preservative of health, which they cannot be taught to practise too soon. Let them eat freely at proper intervals; and the longer they are kept from  
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the things already forbidden, the more rapidly will they thrive, and the greater number of diseases will they escape.

As I have admitted that cases may occur, in which it would be impossible or improper for a mother to suckle her own child, I shall suggest a few hints on the choice of a nurse, and the remaining duties of the parent. From what I have said of the admirable manner in which the milk of a woman newly delivered is adapted to the various wants of a child newly born, it will be easily inferred, that when the mother cannot discharge that important duty, a nurse who has just lain in ought to be preferred. Otherwise the milk will not have the purgative qualities proper to bring away any remains of the *meconium*, nor will it be exactly suited to the infant's weak powers of digestion. Inconveniencies always arise the moment we oppose the intentions of nature. This is what obliges us to have recourse to

the precarious aid of art. When there is a difference of more than a week in the time of delivery between the mother and the nurse, some opening medicine may be necessary to cleanse the first passages: A table-spoonful of whey or water, with the addition of a little honey or raw sugar, will commonly answer the purpose. But the infant's stomach cannot be so easily reconciled to foreign sustenance, or made strong enough to digest the thick milk prepared for an older child.

On the other hand, many difficulties must attend the very expedient which I propose. It will not be easy, except in cities like London where there are several lying-in hospitals, to get nurses newly delivered for new-born infants. Then as the nurse cannot be removed to the child, the latter must be taken to the nurse, and must remain with her till she can go to the parent's house. If an exact coincidence as to the time of delivery be made the leading consideration,  
an



an improper person may be fixed upon from that circumstance alone, though unqualified in all other respects. Thus, as I before hinted, whatever course we take, when we deviate from nature, we shall find numberless perplexities and obstacles in our way.

Almost every body is a judge of the other requisites in a nurse, such as health, plenty of breast-milk, the thriving state of her own child, cleanliness, and good temper. This last quality, though of very great importance, is seldom inquired into. Parents are commonly satisfied with the healthy appearance of the nurse and her child, or with a midwife's favourable account of her milk; and seem to forget that a good disposition is as essential as a good constitution. I do not say that an infant will suck in the vices of his nurse; but he will certainly suffer from them. They are doubly injurious in spoiling her milk, and lessening her tender care of the child  
that

that is at her mercy. The twin founders of the Roman empire were said to have been suckled by a she-wolf; I should think it much more unlikely that an infant could be properly nursed by a passionate or ill-tempered woman.

The mother is not to suppose herself relieved from all trouble by the choice of even a good nurse. The latter may give the child the breast; but she should be directed and zealously assisted by the former in the discharge of every other duty. This will render her labour easy, and her situation comfortable. She should also have every indulgence consistent with good sense and with the rules before laid down. She should not be debarred from the occasional company of her husband: a rigorous chastity, or a total abstinence from wedded joys, is often as hurtful to the nurse and child as immoderate gratification. It is by humouring her that you will engage her  
to



to humour you in the strict observance of all your reasonable injunctions.

The child's father also should pay very assiduous attention to the proper treatment of his offspring. His advice, his encouragement, his superintending care, will have the happiest effect. Is not our admiration of CATO's character increased, when we read in PLUTARCH, that the man, who governed in Rome with so much glory, would quit every business in order to be present when the nurse washed and rubbed his child? Such instances are seldom to be met with in our times; we think ourselves far above all the trifling concerns of the nursery. Yet, according to the remark I made on the same subject in another work, it is not so with the kennel or the stables: people of the first rank are not ashamed to visit these places, and to see their orders for the management of their dogs and their horses obeyed; though any of those sportsmen would blush

blush were he surpris'd in performing the same office for that being who derived its existence from himself, who is the heir of his fortunes, and the future hope of his country.

If CATO's wisdom and parental affection could be heightened by contrast, I might easily point to a noble duke who is more attentive to the breed of dogs than to that of the human species, and who has laid out more money upon the magnificence of a kennel, than he ever expended for the relief of poverty. I am told, that his grace is very particular in the choice of skilful nurses to wait upon the females of his canine family, when they are sick, or *in the straw*. I do not blame his tenderness for brute animals; but I am sorry it should be confined to them, when a more natural sphere lies open for the exercise of his humanity. This hint will be taken by those for whom it is intended; *qui facit ille capit*.



## SECTION VI.

*Of Exercise and Rest during Infancy.*

I MADE use of the plainest reasoning I could in the first Chapter of my "Domestic Medicine," to shew how much the health, the growth, and the strength of children, depended on exercise; and to warn parents of the melancholy effects of inaction, and of sedentary employments in early life. It does not appear to me that any new arguments on that subject are necessary; but it may be of service to mothers and nurses to be informed how the principles there laid down should be reduced to practice during infancy. They are otherwise apt to fall into great errors, not considering that as much mischief may often arise from untimely and violent exercise, as from the neglect of it when most essential.

It

It has been justly observed, that children require no exercise for the first and second months after their birth, but a gentle motion somewhat like that to which they had been accustomed in the mother's womb. A frequent change of posture, however, is advisable, lest by always laying them on the same side, or carrying them on the same arm, their soft limbs may be moulded into an improper shape. But violent agitations of any sort may do them much greater injury, by deranging the fine structure of the brain, and giving rise to the incurable evils of intellectual or nervous weakness.

Other parts of the body, as well as the brain, are exposed to great danger by tossing infants on high, or rapidly *dancing them*, as it is called, before their little limbs have gained some degree of firmness. A great deal of the spine is griftly, and the breast entirely so. Consider then what may be the effect



effect of the grasp or strong pressure of your hands against those places, in order to prevent the child from falling. As he advances in age, his bones acquire solidity, and his whole body becomes able to endure a little shock. Brisk, lively, and frequent exercise, will then be of the greatest service to him; and you run no risk of laying the foundations of any disease, or of destroying any part of that admirable symmetry in the human frame on which health and beauty alike depend.

In the course of a few months, a well-nursed child, unfettered by any check on the free motion of his limbs, will be able to exercise himself, and to gather strength from every new effort. When you take him into the fields, which you should do every day in fine weather, let him roll upon the dry grass; and, when in the nursery, upon the carpet. He will soon learn the use of his legs, without the least possibility of making them

crooked by the pressure of so light a body. When he begins to walk, you must help him a little in his first experiments : lead him about with the support of your hands, and then by the finger only, till you perceive he can do without your assistance. Go-carts and leading-strings not only retard the increase of a child's activity, and produce an awkwardness of gait very hard to be corrected afterwards, but often affect the chest, lungs, and bowels, in such a manner as to pave the way for habitual indigestion or costiveness, and for asthmatic or consumptive complaints.

Nothing can be more ridiculous than the numberless contrivances of mothers to teach their children to walk, as if it was a thing to be learned by their instruction ; and to keep them propped up by wooden machines, or suspended by back-strings, as if their lives and limbs were to be endangered by the least tumble. They are too near the ground and  
too



too light to hurt themselves by falling. Besides, the oftener they fall, the sooner they will learn, when down, to get up again; and the only way to make them sure-footed, is to accustom them betimes to trust more to the proper management of their own legs, than to any artificial support.

As to the best time for exercise during infancy, it admits of a very simple regulation. That sort of passive exercise, which consists of agreeable motion in a nurse's arms, must never be omitted after the use of the bath in the morning, and cannot be too often repeated in the course of the day. But when the child is able to take exercise himself, it will be easy to manage matters so as to let him have as much as he likes before meals, and never to rouse him into action upon a full stomach. If left to himself, or to nature, he will then be more inclined to stillness and repose.

The subject of rest requires some farther consideration. A healthy, thriving child sleeps more than two-thirds of his time for a few weeks after his birth. So strong a propensity must be indulged by day as well as by night ; but, with judicious management, he will be gradually brought to want and to enjoy repose by night only. This is evidently the order of nature ; and such a habit, begun in childhood, and continued through life, will contribute more to its enjoyment and duration, than any one maxim or rule of health ever yet laid down by human wisdom.

Nurses, indeed, are too apt, for their own ease, or to gain time for other concerns, to cherish the sleepy disposition of infants, and to increase it by various things of a stupefactive quality. All these are extremely pernicious. I would not suffer opiates, under the name of cordials or carminatives, or in any shape or form whatever, to be given to a child  
in



in health. The only composing means, which art may at any time be allowed to employ, are gentle motion and soft lullabies. I very much approve of the little *cots* now in fashion, which, being suspended by cords, are easily moved from side to side, and promote the desired end, without the danger which violent *rocking* was often attended with. Those swinging cots are in exact conformity to the suggestions of the best medical writers, ancient and modern. GALEN mentions the propriety of placing children to sleep in *lectulis pendentibus*, or *hanging little beds*; and the reason for such a contrivance is thus explained, with great clearness and simplicity, by VAN SWIETEN:

“As the *fætus*,” says this accurate observer of nature, “hanging from the navel-string in the womb, is easily shaken this way and that, while the mother moves her body; hence it has been reasonably presumed, that new-born in-

fants delight in fuch a vibrating motion. They have therefore been laid in cradles, that they might enjoy this gentle exercise, and be more and more strengthened. Daily experience teaches us, that the worst-tempered children are soothed by this motion, and at last sink into a sweet sleep. But the shaking of the cradle should be gentle and uniform; on which account, *those cradles that hang by cords are the best of all*, as they may by a slight force be moved equably, and without any noise. At the same time, the motion communicated to these cradles is imperceptibly diminished, and at last ceases without any shock."

In England, as well as in most other parts of Europe, cradles fixed upon wooden *rockers*, have been in use from time immemorial. No evil could arise from their continuance, while in the hands of careful and affectionate mothers; but, when left to the management of impatient nurses, or of giddy boys



boys and girls, the delicate texture of an infant's brain would often be exposed to great danger. The agitation of a cradle by such persons has been compared to the jolting of a stage-coach basket; and I believe that a poor child would suffer as much from the one as from the other, were he not a little more confined in the former. Is it possible to conceive a more shocking object than an ill-tempered nurse, who, instead of soothing the accidental uneasiness or indisposition to sleep of her baby, when laid down to rest, is often worked up to the highest pitch of rage; and, in the excess of her folly and brutality, endeavours, by loud, harsh threats, and the impetuous rattle of the cradle, to drown the infant's cries, and to force him into slumber!—She may sometimes gain her point, but never till the poor victim's strength is exhausted.

To guard against this evil, the transition from rocking cradles to fixed beds was not necessary. The gentle motion before described, at once so natural and so pleasing to infants, may be given them with ease and safety in little baskets suspended by cords, as used in the Highlands of Scotland under the name of *creels*, or in the more elegant contrivances of *swinging cots*, which are now coming into fashion. I am sorry to see any of the latter surrounded with close curtains, which have almost as bad an effect as confining the infant in a room of the same dimensions. One green curtain may be hung at some distance from his face, so as to intercept the light in the daytime but not to obstruct the free communication of air, or to reverberate the exhalations from his lungs and body. Green window-blinds in the sleeping-room will answer the same purpose. Care should also be taken not to ex-



pose infants either in bed or out of bed to an oblique light, or they will become squint-eyed. They should be kept facing it, when up, and exactly the reverse, when laid down to rest. If the light come upon them from one side, their eyes will take that direction, and thus they will get the habit of looking crossways.

It is of still greater moment to pay strict attention to their bedding. Nothing can have a more relaxing tendency, or be at the same time more unfavourable to cleanliness, than beds and pillows stuffed with feathers. These absorb and retain the perspirable matter, as well as every other impurity, so that the child who sleeps upon them must inhale the most noxious vapour, while its action on the surface of his body must destroy the energy of the skin, and render his whole frame, both within and without, the ready receiver of disease. Horse-hair cushions and mattresses

treffes are far preferable ; but if soft bran were used instead of hair for the stuffing of children's beds and pillows, these would more readily let any moisture pass through them, would never be too much heated, and might be frequently changed or renewed without any great trouble or expence. My former hints concerning a child's dress are equally applicable to his bed-clothes, which should be loose, easy, and as light as may be consistent with due warmth. I say the less on the subject of cold, as most mothers are too apt to run into the opposite extreme.



## CHAP. V.

## OF DWARFISHNESS AND DEFORMITY.

THE chief causes of defects in the size and form of children, have been occasionally touched upon in the preceding chapters; but the prevalence of such evils, and the lamentable consequences with which they are followed, require to be more fully and distinctly considered. I must not weaken the influence of important truths, by suppressing any part of them, or by leaving them too widely scattered. I must shake off the restraints of false delicacy, and, by candidly pointing out the grand source of so many private and public calamities, endeavour to prevail on parents to adopt the most effectual remedy. Let not the fairest part of the creation be offended with me for saying, that, in all cases of  
dwarfish-

dwarfishness and deformity, ninety-nine out of a hundred are owing to the folly, misconduct, or neglect of mothers. The following remarks are not written in the spirit of reproach, but with a view to the most desirable reform.

It would be difficult to mention anything in which society is so deeply interested, as in the proper union of the sexes. This has often engaged the attention of legislators, and marriages have been prohibited in various diseases and personal disqualifications. We have even an instance upon record, where the community interposed, when degeneracy in the royal line was likely to be the consequence of their king's injudicious choice of a wife. History tells us, that the Lacedæmonians condemned their king Archidamus for having married a weak, puny woman; "because," said they, "instead of propagating a race of heroes, you will fill the throne with a progeny of changelings."

I am



I am aware that any checks on the liberty of individuals in their matrimonial contracts, would be deemed inconsistent with the freedom of the British constitution; and, indeed, it is strange that laws should be necessary to convince men, that health and form are, or ought to be, powerful considerations in the choice of a wife. Every part of animated nature proclaims aloud, that *like begets like*; and though a puny, dwarfish, or distorted woman, may become a mother, it will often be at the risk of her own life, and always with a certainty of transmitting some of her infirmities to her innocent and ill-fated offspring.

But the inheritance of parental weakness and deformity is one of those curses which argument or expostulation cannot avert. The voice of reason is disregarded, and objects of natural desire are overlooked, by avarice and pride. I shall therefore confine my observations  
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to such evils as may be presumed to admit of a cure, because they arise rather from error and folly, than from depravity or wilful perverseness.

It seems to be the natural wish of every pregnant woman to bring forth stout, healthy, and beautiful infants. Yet Mr. Locke did not hesitate to assert, that, if mothers had the formation of their own children in the womb, we should see nothing any where but deformity. The *fœtus* is happily placed in better hands, and under the guardian care of nature. But though it cannot be new-moulded, altered in its shape, or disfigured by the mere fancies and capricious desires of the mother, it may suffer no less injury from her ignorance, her folly, or misconduct. I hope I made it sufficiently evident in my cautions to women during pregnancy, that the *fœtus* may not only be checked in its growth, but marked also and distorted by tight or heavy pressure on the womb,



womb,—by stays, girdles, or the like improper ligatures. In vain does nature provide for the easy and gradual enlargement of the embryo, if her benignant purposes are counteracted by the bracing restraints of a silly mother's dress.

After the birth, as I before observed, still greater danger awaits the infant from attempts to mend his shape,—to keep his head and limbs in proper form,—and to secure him against accidents. The worst accident that can befall him is far less alarming than the certain consequences of such presumptuous improvements and ill-directed care. He becomes puny, stunted, deformed, diseased; and, though perhaps cast “in nature's happiest mould,” is sure to be spoiled by the disfiguring touch of man.

I have already explained the fatal effects of meddling with the soft bones of an infant's skull at the birth; of confin-

ing them by any check ; or covering them too warmly. I shewed how wonderfully the pliancy of those bones was contrived to yield to obstructions, for the purpose of promoting easy and safe delivery, and afterwards to resume of themselves their proper place and form, if they had been squeezed together in the act of parturition. I also insisted on the importance of a thin and light cap, that the air may act upon them freely, to render them hard and compact, and of course fitter to defend the brain from cold or any external injury. But while midwives and nurses are suffered to pursue a contrary plan, we need not wonder at meeting with so many instances of early convulsions, of idiotism, and of heads misshapen, infirm, or susceptible of cold upon exposure to the least breath of air.

I was no less earnest in my cautions against the use of bandages, or of oppressive covering for any other part of  
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the tender frame. I did not magnify the danger, but simply stated the result of frequent observation. I never knew a single instance of a child's attainment to full size and vigour, after having been cruelly confined during infancy in swathes and swaddling-clothes. How, indeed, is it possible, when the action of the heart, the lungs, the arteries, and of all the vital organs, is cramped and enfeebled ;—when the free circulation of the blood and secretion of the humours are prevented ;—and when the impatience of restraint urges the infant to waste all his strength in continual but unavailing efforts to burst his fetters.

As I knew that external objects were more likely to make some impression on the minds of my female readers, than arguments drawn from the structure of the human frame, I endeavoured to fix their attention first on the young of brute animals, many of which, as kittens,  
puppies,

puppies, &c. though very delicate when brought into the world, never want to be strengthened, kept in due form, or preserved from accidents, by means of swaddling-bands. Children have as little occasion for any such defence against danger. In reply to the idle objections of mothers and nurses, founded on the difference in point of alertness between kittens and infants, it has been admitted, that the latter are certainly heavier than the former, but they are more feeble in the same proportion: they are incapable of moving with sufficient force to hurt themselves; and if their limbs get into a wrong situation, the uneasiness they feel soon induces them to change it. Is it not absurd to put them to real pain by galling ligatures, for fear of imaginary bruises; and to distort their tender bodies effectually by squeezing them into a press, lest they should grow distorted from being left at liberty to stir?

While



While I was writing on this part of the subject last autumn, I could not help being struck with another illustration of it, which presented itself every day to my view. Above three hundred cattle were grazing in a field before my window, all of them nearly of the same size, well-formed and vigorous, without the least mark of feebleness or distortion. They had not been kept panting, when young, in tight and cumbersome wrappers, nor had they been stunted in their growth by improper management. They might be truly called the offspring of nature, reared and brought up in conformity to her laws. How painful and humiliating did I feel the contrast, when I compared them with the foster-children of art,—with bipeds of various shapes and sizes,—with the hunch-backed, crooked-legged, lame, rickety, diminutive, and deformed human beings, whom I often saw walking through the same field!

Should it be alleged, that inferences drawn from a species so different from our own are not conclusive, let us next turn our eyes to what takes place in savage nations, who are all known to be tall, robust, and well-proportioned. Indeed, any instance to the contrary is so very rare and extraordinary among them, that it was vulgarly believed they put all their puny and mis-shapen children to death. The fact is, that they have not any such, because they never thwart the purposes of nature, or disobey her dictates in the treatment of their infant progeny.

The perfect form of the North American savages will be more clearly conceived from the following anecdote of the late president of the Royal Academy, than from a whole volume of travels. This justly admired painter, who is a native of America, having displayed in his youth strong proofs of uncommon talents, was sent to Italy, at  
that



that time the grand school for the imitative arts. Upon his first seeing the *Apollo Belvidere*, he is said to have exclaimed, "Oh! what a fine *Mohawk* Indian!" Almost every body has at least heard, that the *Apollo Belvidere* is one of the most beautiful and exquisite pieces of statuary in the world.

I must not here omit BUFFON's account of the method of bringing up their young pursued by other unpollished nations, as we proudly call them. "The ancient Peruvians," says he, "in loosely swathing their children, left their arms at full liberty. When they threw aside this dress, they placed them at freedom in a little hollow, dug in the earth, and lined with clothes. Here their children, unable to get out and crawl into danger, had their arms quite loose, and could move their heads and bend their bodies, without the risk of falling or hurting themselves. As soon as they were able to stand, the nipple

was shewn them at a distance, and thus they were enticed to learn to walk."

The same writer observes, "that the young negroes are often in a situation in which it is with more difficulty they come at the breast. They cling round the hip of the mother with their knees and feet, and by that means stick so close, that they stand in no need of being supported, while they reach the breast with their hands, and thus continue to suck, without letting go their hold, or being in any danger of falling, notwithstanding the various motions of the mother, who all the while is employed in her usual labour. These children begin to walk at the end of the second month, or rather to shuffle along on their hands and knees; an exercise that gives them ever afterwards a facility of running almost as swift in that manner as on their feet."

To this very interesting description, I can add, upon the testimony of a friend  
of



of mine who had been feveral years on the coaft of Africa, that the natives neither put any clothes on their children, nor apply to their bodies bandages of any kind, but lay them on a pallet, and fuffer them to tumble about at pleafure. Yet they are all ftraight, and feldom have any complaint. Good health, as well as a good fhape, is the confequence of their free, unconfined motion during infancy: while, among us, on the contrary, restraint, or, what is the fame thing, tight preffure, checks growth, diftorts the frame, and renders it at once diminutive, unfightly, and infirm. There is always a clofe and very natural connection between deformity, weaknefs, and difeafe.

The more we enlarge our furvey of the human fpecies in various parts of the world, the lefs doubt fhall we entertain of the principal caufe of dwarfhnefs and deformity. We fhall find that mankind are ftunted and diftorted in

proportion to their degree of civilization;—that people who go almost naked from their birth, and live in a state of nature, are well-shaped, strong, and healthy;—and that among others who boast of higher refinements, the greater attention is paid to dress, the nearer are the approaches to the stature and to the weakness of pygmies.

STERNE, who knew so well how to enliven the most serious subjects, represents himself as struck with the number of dwarfs he saw at Paris.

I am very sorry to observe, that we need not go so far as Paris to be convinced of the lamentable effects of tight clothes, bad nursing, and confined impure air. Many of these matters are not much better ordered in the English metropolis: every narrow lane in London swarms with ricketty children; and though we cannot say of the people  
whom



whom we meet with in the streets, that every third man is a pigmy, yet we may with strict truth assert, that many of the women are evidently stunted in their growth, and, both in size and robustness, are below the standard of mediocrity. With regard to females, indeed, born and bred in this city, as more attention is unfortunately paid to the tightness of their dress, and to the artificial moulding or pretended improvement of their shape when young, the far greater part of them must be of a diminutive stature, and numbers are distorted either in body or limbs.

## CHAP. VI.

BANEFUL EFFECTS OF PARENTAL TENDERNESS, OR OF WHAT MAY BE CALLED AN EXTREMELY DELICATE AND ENERVATING EDUCATION.

HAVING repeatedly taken occasion to point out the evils that must arise from the inattention of mothers to any part of their duty, and especially from abandoning their children to the management of hired nurses, I shall now proceed to explain the bad consequences of the opposite extreme. Too much care operates in the same manner as too little, and produces similar effects. A case or two, selected from many which have occurred to me in the course of practice, will sufficiently illustrate the truth of this assertion.

The grand rule of life, which reason and experience concur to recommend,



is always to pursue the *golden mean* ; to steer a middle course between dangerous extremes ; and to take care, in avoiding any one vice or folly, not to run into its opposite. Mothers are too apt to forget this admirable lesson, in nursing and rearing their children. They do not seem to know the proper medium between cruel neglect or indifference on the one hand, and the fatal excesses of anxiety and fondness on the other. In giving way to the strong impulses of natural affection, they commonly go too far, and do as much mischief to their offspring by misguided tenderness, as by total insensibility.

It is not my intention to combat those fine feelings of mothers, without which the human race would soon be extinct. I only wish to see them kept a little more under the control of reason. I wish to see the most amiable of all passions, maternal love, displayed in promoting the health and fortifying the  
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constitutions of children,—not in relaxing them by every species of softness and effeminacy. When this passion is carried beyond the proper bounds, it ceases to be love: it becomes a sort of blind infatuation, always injures, and often destroys the object of its regard. Mothers should never forget the fable of the monkey snatching up one of its young in a moment of alarm, and, in order to save it from danger, squeezing it with so close an embrace as to occasion its death. What a just picture of darling children so frequently *killed by kindness* !

Nature provides for the helpless state of infancy in the strong attachment of parents. A child comes into the world, chiefly dependent on the mother's care for the preservation of its being. She is tremblingly alive to all its wants. Every tender office she performs increases her fond solicitude, till at length it gains the full possession of her affections, and her  
sole



sole wish is to make it happy. What a lamentable thing it is that she should so frequently mistake the means!

Indeed there cannot be a greater mistake than to imagine that extreme tenderness or delicacy of treatment will promote the health, the growth, the present or the future happiness of a child. It must have quite a contrary effect. Instead of supplying the real calls of nature, it creates a thousand artificial wants: instead of guarding the infant from pain and disease, it renders him much more susceptible of both, and less capable of enduring either: instead of happiness, it ensures misery in every stage of his existence, as the infirmities of body and mind, which are contracted in the cradle, will follow him with incurable obstinacy to the grave.

The writer, whom I quoted on the subject of suckling, is no less forcible in his censure of maternal fondness. He  
says,

says, the obvious paths of nature are alike forsaken by the woman who gives up the care of her infant to a hireling, or, in other words, who neglects the duties of a mother; and by her who carries these duties to excess,—“ who makes an idol of her child; increases his weakness, by preventing his sense of it; and, as if she could emancipate him from the laws of nature, hinders every approach of pain or distress; without thinking that, for the sake of preserving him at present from a few trifling inconveniencies, she is accumulating on his head a distant load of anxieties and misfortunes;—without thinking, that it is a barbarous precaution to enervate and indulge the child at the expence of the man.”

He then begs of mothers to attend to nature, and follow the track she has delineated:—“ she continually exercises her children, and fortifies their constitution by experiments of every kind; inuring



inuring them betimes to grief and pain. In cutting their teeth, they experience the fever; griping colics throw them into convulsions; the whooping-cough suffocates, and worms torment them; surfeits corrupt their blood; and the various fermentations to which their humours are subject, cover them with troublesome eruptions: almost the whole period of childhood is sickness and danger. But, in passing through this course of experiments, the child gathers strength and fortitude; and, as soon as he is capable of living, the principles of life become less precarious.

“This,” he adds, “is the law of nature. Why should you act contrary to it? Do you not see that, by endeavouring to correct her work, you spoil it, and prevent the execution of her designs? Act you from without, as she does within. This, according to you, would increase the danger: on the contrary,

trary, it will create a diversion, and lessen it. Experience shews, that children delicately educated die in a greater proportion than others. Provided you do not make them exert themselves beyond their powers, less risk is run in exercising, than indulging them in ease. Inure them therefore by degrees to those inconveniencies which they must one day suffer. Harden their bodies to the intemperature of the seasons, climates, and elements;—to hunger, thirst, and fatigue.”

As the philosopher was aware that the latter part of his advice would stir up all the fears and alarms of fond mothers, he takes some pains to convince them that it may be followed with perfect safety. He very justly observes, that, “before the body has acquired a settled habit, we may give it any we please, without danger; though, when it is once arrived at full growth and consistence, every alteration is hazardous. A



child will bear those vicissitudes, which to a man would be insupportable. The soft and pliant fibres of the former readily yield to impression: those of the latter are more rigid, and are reduced only by violence to recede from the forms they have assumed. We may therefore," he concludes, "bring up a child robust and hearty, without endangering either its life or health; and though even some risk were run in this respect, it would not afford sufficient cause of hesitation. Since they are risks inseparable from human life, can we do better, than to run them during that period of it wherein we take them at the least disadvantage?"—I leave this question to be duly considered by every mother who is not blind to the clearest evidence of truth, or wilfully deaf to the most commanding tones of eloquence and argument.

The familiarity of any object lessens our surprise at it, or there are few instances

stances of human folly which would astonish us more, than that of a fond mother, who, in order to protect her child from a little pain or uneasiness while he is young, multiplies his sufferings when he comes to maturity. Strange infatuation ! to sacrifice the man to the infant, and, through over-solicitude for a year or two after his entrance into life, to shorten its natural extent, and to fill up that contracted span of existence with weakness, irritability, and disease ! Did any body ever think of rearing an oak plant in a hot-house, thence to be removed to the bleak mountain ? And is the puny, enervated nursling better prepared to endure the transition from the lap of softness to all the accidents of a rugged and a stormy world ?

As strong examples often make some impression where other modes of reasoning fail, I shall here beg leave to introduce the history of a young gentleman, whom I attended at a very early period of



of my practice, and who fell a victim to the excessive fondness of an indulgent mother. With every wish to promote her son's health and happiness, she was, as far as respected intention, the *innocent* but absolute cause of totally destroying both. She brought on relaxation and debility, by her misguided endeavours to avert pain; and while she hoped to prolong the life of an only son, the means which she made use of for that purpose, not only abridged its duration, but precluded his power of enjoying it. Though he was buried at the age of twenty-one, he might be said to have died in his cradle; for life has been well defined, not to consist in merely breathing,—but in making a proper use of our organs, our senses, our faculties, and of all those parts of the human frame which contribute to the consciousness of our existence. That he never attained to this state of being, will fully appear from the following narrative.

T

EDWARD

EDWARD WATKINSON was the only son of a country clergyman, of amiable manners and sound learning, but of a recluse turn of mind. The mother was the daughter of a London tradesman, and had been educated with extreme delicacy. She naturally pursued the same line of conduct towards her own child; and her fond husband was too much under the influence of the like fatal weakness. Many a child is spoiled by the indulgence of one parent: in the case now before us, both concurred to produce that enervating effect.

For some time after his birth, master NEDDY was reckoned a promising boy. When I first saw him, he was about eighteen years of age; but, to judge by his look, one would have supposed him to be at least eighty. His face was long, pale, and deeply furrowed with wrinkles—his eyes were sunk in their sockets—his teeth quite decayed—his nose and chin almost touched each other—his



breast narrow and prominent—his body twisted—his legs like spindles—his hands and fingers approaching nearly to the form of a bird's claws—in short, his whole figure exhibited the truly pitiable appearance of a very old man, sinking under the weight of years and infirmities into the grave.

It was at Midsummer I paid my first visit. I then found him wrapped up in clothing sufficient for the rigours of a Lapland winter, and so closely muffled that one could hardly see the tip of his nose. He wore several pair of stockings: his gloves were double, and reached his elbows; and, to complete the absurdity of his dress, he was tightly laced in stays. Though armed in this manner at all points, he seldom peeped out of doors except in the dog-days, and then ventured no farther than the church, which was only forty paces from his father's house. I believe this was the most distant excursion he ever made; and the

extraordinary attempt was always accompanied with peculiar care, and many additional preservatives from cold.

The eye of his parents might be truly said to watch over him not only by day, but by night also, as he slept in the same bed with them, having never been permitted to lie alone, lest he should throw the clothes off, or feel the want of any immediate assistance. It did not once occur to his father or mother, that all the inconveniencies which they so much dreaded, could not be half so injurious as the relaxing atmosphere of a warm bed, furrounded by close curtains, and impregnated with the noxious effluvia from their lungs and bodies.

His food and his drink were of the weakest quality, always administered warm, and by weight and measure. When I recommended a more nourishing diet, and a little generous wine, I was told that the strongest thing master

NEDDY



NEDDY had ever taken was *chicken water*, and that they durst not venture on wine or animal food for fear of a fever. Thus was the poor lad reduced almost to a skeleton, through the silly apprehension of a disease, of which he was not susceptible. Nature was in him too weak to spread a hectic flush even for a moment over his countenance, which had acquired the colour of a parboiled chicken. All his vital powers were languid; and even his speech resembled the squeaking of a bird, more than the voice of a man.

When I spoke of exercise, I was told he took a walk every fine day in the hall, and that was deemed sufficient for one of his delicate constitution. I mentioned a horse—the mother was frightened at the very name of so dangerous an animal. On telling her, that I owed the firmness and vigour of my own constitution to riding every day, she began to think there might be some-

thing specific in it; and she therefore consented to the purchase of a little horse. But tame as the creature was, it did not quiet the mother's alarms. Master NEDDY, though placed upon the poney's back, was not entrusted with the reins. These were given in charge to a maid-servant, who led the horse round the orchard, while the cautious rider fastened both hands on the pommel of the saddle; and the father walking on one side, and the mother on the other, held him fast by the legs, lest he might be brought to the ground by any sudden start of his high-mettled racer. This exhibition was too ridiculous not to excite the laughter of the neighbours, which soon put an end to master NEDDY's equestrian exercise.

The timidity of a youth thus brought up is more easily conceived than described. Fearful of every thing, he would run from the most inoffensive animal, as if he had been pursued by a lion or a tiger.



a tiger. His weakness in this respect being known to the village boys, it was a common practice with them, whenever they saw him peeping through his father's gate, to frighten him into the house by calling to the pigs to bite him. This sportive alarm had the same effect as the sudden rush of a mad bullock.

With such excessive weakness both of mind and body, master NEDDY had some good points about him. His parents represented him as a perfect model of morality; and I had no right to doubt the truth of their representation, though I did not give him quite so much credit on that score, because he did not possess sufficient force of constitution to be capable of any kind of vice. But I viewed, with mixed emotions of admiration and pity, some proofs of learning and abilities which he left behind him. I was the more surprised, as the incessant care bestowed on his person seemed

to leave very little time for any mental acquirements.

Improper food, tight or oppressive clothing, and want of fresh air and exercise, have in their turn proved destructive to thousands. This young man fell a victim to them all; and it would have been a miracle indeed, had he survived their combined influence. He died without a groan, or any mark of disease except premature old age, the machine being fairly worn out before he completed his twenty-first year. His death proved fatal to both his parents, whose lives were closely *bound up in that of the lad.*

The father had perceived his own error, but not before it was too late. On reading my inaugural dissertation, which was then published in Latin, under the title already mentioned, he sent for me, and begged I would endeavour to save his son. The youth, alas! was far



beyond the reach of my most zealous efforts: I could only witness the certainty of his fate. Medicine was of as little use to him, as consolation to his afflicted parents. The bitterness of their grief was increased by self-reproach; and friendship exerted her soothing voice in vain. The father on his death-bed conjured me to translate my dissertation into English, as he thought it might be of infinite service to mankind. My compliance with his request gave rise to the "Domestic Medicine," of which that essay on the means of preserving the lives of children, constitutes the first, and, in my opinion, the best chapter.

The above relation may to some appear romantic; but did I suppose any one capable of questioning my veracity, I could name several persons of the first respectability, who know, that, so far from its being heightened, it falls short of the truth. Indeed I might go farther,

ther, and assert, from my own too frequent observation, that a master NEDDY is not so singular a phenomenon in many other families, and that the evils of parental folly are much oftener entailed upon favourite heirs, than the power of fully enjoying the estates which descend to them.

But it is in the female world, more especially, that maternal fondness spreads its fatal ravages. Girls remain longer than boys under the immediate and almost exclusive care of their mothers; and when the latter are more guided by love than reason, by the impulses of a tender heart instead of the dictates of an enlightened mind, the former are doomed to weakness and misery. I shall not offend my fair readers by a repetition of the remarks already made on the acquired defects and infirmities of too many of our young women; nor shall I attempt to describe the long train and almost endless variety of nervous diseases,  
from



from which so few of them are exempt : I shall now confine myself to a single instance of the effects of extreme delicacy in the education of a daughter, as the counterpart of my story of a son cut off by the like means.

ISABELLA WILSON was in early life a very promising child, and the object of her mother's idolatry. This good woman had no idea that health and beauty were more likely to be destroyed than improved or preserved by excessive care. In the choice of diet, clothes, exercise, &c. the delicacy of her sweet girl was always the ruling idea. It is easy, indeed, to render the human frame more delicate ; but to make it more robust, requires a very different mode of proceeding. As the child did not seem afflicted with any particular complaint, the doting mother exulted at the happy effects of her own management, and never thought that the taper form, the fine limbs, and the languishing softness, which

which she so much admired, were the sure symptoms of debility and of latent disease.

ISABELLA's mental improvement, in which she surpassed many other young girls of her age at the same school, was no less flattering to her mistaken parents. But she had scarcely attained her fourteenth year before the fond illusion vanished, and the regular functions of both mind and body were suspended by a fit of the most extraordinary nature. I cannot avoid making one remark here, which may be of great practical utility. It is, that fits, though they go by different names, and are ascribed to a great variety of causes, may all be ranked under the general appellation of nervous affections, and are almost always the consequence of bad nursing or injudicious treatment in childhood. Few children, properly nursed, have fits; and of those who are improperly managed, few escape them. Poor

BELL



BELL WILSON was one of the unfortunate class.

On my being sent for to attend this young woman, who was then sixteen, I was informed that she had been subject to fits for about three years, and had taken a great deal of medicine by the advice of several of the faculty, but without having experienced any benefit. Though the person who gave me this account made use of the word *fits*, I soon found that, strictly speaking, it was only *one fit*, that assumed two different forms or states, which followed one another in constant succession during the whole of the above period.

In order to give a precise idea of this singular kind of fit, I shall call its first state active, and the second passive. During the former, the young woman made use of the most violent exertions, springing up, throwing her arms about, and striking them against every thing  
which

which came within her reach. At the same time, she uttered a sort of noise, consisting of three notes, which was more like the cry of some wild beast than any thing human.

An universal spasm succeeded those strange agitations, and every limb became as stiff and inflexible as if it had been suddenly petrified. Her whole appearance was that of a statue made of Parian marble. In this state of rigidity she continued sometimes for one hour, sometimes two, and often three or four; but the moment it was over, she began with the cry and motion above described.

The active convulsion never lasted so long as the rigid state; but it was the only time at which any thing could be got down her throat. As she would not admit substances of the least solidity into her mouth, the little nutriment which she received was always  
given



given in a fluid form, and chiefly consisted of small-beer, or wine and water. Her evacuations, either by stool or urine, were of course very trifling, and she was wholly insensible of both. Notwithstanding the thinness of her diet, she did not appear emaciated or ghastly; on the contrary, she was tolerably well in flesh, and her countenance, though quite void of colour, was rather pleasing. Her figure was exquisitely fine, the disease did not seem to have prevented her growth in height, though it had in strength, and in bulk or expansion; she was very slender, but as tall as most young women of the same age. Such were the most striking peculiarities of her situation when I paid my first visit.

As all the voluntary motions were suspended, and the involuntary alone took place, I thought that by exciting the former I might suppress the latter, which had so long agitated the system.

But

But before I had recourse to stimulants, I was induced, by the tone of confidence with which I had often heard anodynes and antispasmodics spoken of by professional men of eminence, to try them first ; but the experiment, though fairly made and duly persevered in, was not attended with the least success. And here I must observe, that, after forty years' farther practice, I have never found the effect of antispasmodics in such cases to correspond with the high reputation which they long retained in the medical world. I know it has been the usual method, when the actions of the system appeared to be inverted, to employ this class of medicines, in order to restore regularity and to take off the supposed spasm. I am far from being inclined to question the veracity of the favourable reports made by others of the issue of their experiments,—I candidly state the result of my own, which has wholly destroyed my reliance on that mode of proceeding.

After



After the failure of the above attempts, in which I was more guided by the example of others than by the dictates of my own mind, I resolved to try the effect of irritation on the most sensible parts, which were often rubbed with æther, and other volatile spirits. I prescribed at the same time the internal use of tonics, particularly chalybeated wine, and the compound tincture of bark\*. Appearances soon became favourable: but as the change for the better was slow, the parents were persuaded by somebody to try the cold bath; and this rash step proved almost fatal to my hopes, and to their fondest wishes.

The reader should be informed, that the astonishing singularity of the girl's disorder had filled the minds of the

\* I have here omitted the detail of doses and effects, usually given in medical cases, as I am not writing instructions for the treatment of diseases, but cautions to mothers concerning the nursing of their children.

country people all round with the wildest and most superstitious conjectures. The general opinion was, that the complaint must be owing to evil spirits, and that the girl was certainly possessed. Some were for putting her into water, where they were sure she would swim. Others said that, if she was laid upon the fire, she would undoubtedly fly up the chimney. One bold captain of horse, a man of more resolution than intellect, declared his readiness to expel the foul fiend by shooting the girl, if the parents would give him leave. Her mother, who was not deficient in natural good sense, though in the education of her daughter she had suffered her fondness to get the better of her understanding, paid no regard to such absurd and ridiculous proposals; but she yielded to the importunities of a friend, who had described to her with great earnestness and plausibility the wonderful effects of the cold bath.

A single



A single immersion convinced the parents of their dangerous error. All the symptoms were aggravated in the most alarming manner. The duration of the rigid state of the body was extended from a few hours to eleven days. She would then have been buried, had I not positively forbidden her mother, whatever might happen, to have her interred, till I should give my assent. At the time of this last attack, I was upon a journey to a distant part of the country. On my return home, I was told that my patient was dead; but that her burial had been delayed till I should see her. When I called, I found her to all appearance what the people had described her, a lifeless corpse. On examining the body, however, I thought I perceived some degree of warmth about the region of the heart. This confirmed me in my previous design to make every attempt to restore animation. It was a considerable time before any symptoms of life appeared: at length, the girl set up  
 U 2 her

her old cry, and began to throw her arms about as usual.

After having so far succeeded, the parents implicitly followed my farther directions, and did not throw any new obstacle in the way of a cure. I again had recourse to the tonics before mentioned, with such nourishment as the girl could be brought to swallow. The violence of the convulsive motions gradually abated, and the duration of the rigid state of the fit grew shorter and shorter; till, in about six months, the whole ceased, and the regular and natural actions of the system returned.

The state of this girl's mind, as well as of her body, on her recovery, was as extraordinary as her disease. It is common to all persons, who fall into fits, to have no remembrance of what happens during the paroxysm. This young woman not only was insensible of every occurrence and of the progress of time during her long fit, but her malady had  
com-



completely blotted out all recollection of every event before that period, and even the traces of all knowledge which she had acquired from the moment of her birth till her illness. I have indeed known a single fit of twenty-four hours' duration to destroy the powers of the mind, and produce absolute idiotism; but that was not the case here. The mental faculties, after a total suspension for four years, were not destroyed, but reduced to an infant state; and, though void of knowledge, were as capable of acquiring it as ever.

It was just the same with regard to speech, and to the proper management of the legs and arms, of which she knew as little at the time of her recovery as at the instant of her birth. Nothing could be more curious than to hear her lisping for some months the *namby pamby* of a child, and to trace her progress in the imitation of sounds and the use of language. As soon as she could converse,

she was told how long she had been ill, she cried, but could not believe it. When some books, which she had written at school, were shewn to her, she thought it impossible they could be her's, and was positive that the whole must be a mockery. In the course of time, she yielded to the concurrent testimony of others; but she remained unconscious of any former state of existence.

Her new attempts to walk were as awkward as her attempts to speak; and she required nearly as much time to recover the perfect use of her legs as of her tongue. Even after she had acquired a considerable degree of strength, she wanted expertness in her motions, and was obliged to be led about by the arms like a baby. Whenever I called to see her, I made a point of taking her into the garden to walk with me; but it was with great difficulty that I could prevent her from falling. We often lament the  
weak-



weakness of infancy: yet were we to come full grown into the world, we should not only be as long in learning to walk as infants are, but our first essays would be infinitely more dangerous.

It is unnecessary to trace any farther the steps by which this young woman advanced to the full re-establishment of her health, and to the perfect use of all her mental and corporeal faculties. These great ends were gained by a mode of treatment the very reverse of the enervating plan which had been the cause of her long sufferings, but which, happily for her, was not afterwards resumed. I shall leave tender parents to make their own reflections on this case, and shall now only urge it as a farther caution against the too hasty interment of persons who may seem to expire in a fit. Unequivocal proofs of death should always be waited for, and every advisable means of resuscitation persevered in,

when we consider how long appearances may be deceitful, and how unexpectedly the latent sparks of life may be re-kindled.

Besides the uncommon instance of this young woman's re-animation, as it may be called, I have heard of a young lady in Holland, who was restored to her desponding friends, after she had been for nine days apparently in a state of death. The day before her proposed interment, her doctor called to take his final leave of her; but fancying that he perceived some vital symptom, he renewed his before hopeless efforts, and had the happiness to succeed. This girl's case differed from that of my patient in one very remarkable particular: I am told that, in her seemingly inanimate state, she was all the while perfectly conscious of being alive, though she could not stir, nor speak, and that her only terror was lest she should be buried alive.



## CHAP. VII.

OF EMPLOYMENTS UNFAVOURABLE TO  
THE GROWTH AND HEALTH OF  
CHILDREN.

THOUGH my remarks on air and exercise render it less necessary to be very minute in my detail of occupations which preclude the full enjoyment of those essential requisites, yet some little illustration in a few instances may have its use. The children of the rich and of the poor are alike sacrificed to the mistaken views of their parents, the former by confinement at home or at school, for the sake of some trifling attainments, and the latter, by premature endeavours to get a livelihood. There is, however, a very material difference between both, as the error in one case, arising from fashion or caprice, is infinitely less pardonable than the other, which is too often occasioned by want.

It is strange that mothers in the higher ranks of life, who must have felt or frequently observed the debilitating effects of fashionable modes of education, should persist in making their own daughters sit for hours together at a tambour-frame, or at the needle in learning fancy works, which can never be of the least service, but must do their health and their form irreparable injury. The very postures, in which they are thus employed, not only tend to distort their pliant limbs and bodies, but to impede the action of the principal organs of life, which require above all things an expanded chest for the easy performance of their respective functions. I cannot too often repeat that personal deformities, pale complexions, head-achs, pains of the stomach, loss of appetite, indigestion, consumptions, and numberless other enemies of youth and beauty, are the sure consequences of long continuance in a sitting or inclining attitude. What so many young ladies suffer at a



critical time of life, and the still greater danger which often awaits them when they become wives and mothers, are chiefly owing to the same cause,—early confinement in sedentary pursuits, and the want of frequent exercise in the open air.

To fetter the active motions of children, as soon as they get the use of their limbs, is a barbarous opposition to nature; and to do so, under a pretence of improvement, is an insult upon common sense. It may, indeed, be the way to train up enervated puppets, but never to form accomplished men or women. I always behold, with much heart-felt concern, poor little creatures of ten or twelve years of age, and sometimes younger, who are exhibited by their silly parents as prodigies of learning, or distinguished for their extraordinary proficiency in languages, in elocution, in music, in drawing, or even in some frivolous acquirement. The strength of the mind as well as of the body is exhausted,

hausted, and the natural growth of both is checked by such untimely exertions. I am not for discouraging the early introduction of youth into the sweet society of the Muses and the Graces ; but I would have them pay their court also to the Goddess of Health, and spend a considerable part of their time, during the above period at least, in her enlivening sports and gambols.

It would be foreign to my immediate purpose to say any thing farther of the literary pursuits of boys, than that more frequent intervals between the hours of study than are now usual, should be allowed for recreation and active exercises. But a much greater reform is wanted in female education, the whole of which appears to be upon a wrong basis. I leave to others the moral part of this business, and shall only take a medical view of the subject. It grieves me to see health impaired by a close application to objects of very little consequence, while



while the most important qualifications are disregarded. Every girl should be brought up with a view of being a wife and a mother; or, whatever her other accomplishments may be, she will prove totally unfit for the discharge of those duties, on which the affections of her husband, the well-being of her progeny, and her own happiness, must depend. If she herself is languid and indolent, how can she hope to bring forth active and vigorous children; and if she knows nothing of the proper management of them, must she not have recourse to hirelings, and trust entirely to their care, to their skill, and to their fidelity, in the dearest concerns of life?

It is common to see women, who are supposed to have had a very genteel education, so ignorant, when they come to have children, of every thing with which a mother ought to be acquainted, that the infant itself is as wise in these matters as its parent. Had the time spent by  
such

such females in the acquisition of what can never be of any service to them, been employed under the eye of a sagacious matron in learning domestic virtues and the art of rearing children, they would have secured the attachment of their husbands, made their sons and daughters useful members of society, and been themselves an example and an ornament to the sex.

If a young man be intended for the army or navy, he is sent to an academy to be instructed in those branches of science which are deemed necessary for his making a figure in the proposed department. But a young woman, who has got a more difficult part to act, has no such opportunities afforded her. She is supposed to require no previous course of training,—to need no assistance but that of nature, to fit her for the discharge of her duties when she comes to be a mother. Did she live in a state of nature, that idea would not be far wrong; but,



but, in society, every thing is artificial, and must be learned as an art.

The art in question, however, can neither be learned from books, nor from conversation. These may have their use, but they will not make an accomplished nurse. Indeed, nothing can form this first of characters, but practice; and if such practice is not acquired under some experienced matron, it will cost many lives to learn it any where else. A mother may blunder on, as most of them do, till she has killed a number of children, before she is capable of rearing one. At last, perhaps, she succeeds. It is in this way we find many wealthy citizens, who have had several children, yet die without any, or leave only one to enjoy their ample fortune.

All practical things are the most difficult to learn, because they can only be learned from observation and experiment. Thus I have known a girl, whose  
mother

mother had eighteen children, take one of them and bring it up by the hand, merely from the force of example and imitation. Had this girl studied the art under the ablest medical instructors, or read the best books that ever were written on the subject, she could not have done what she effected with the utmost ease, because she had so often seen it succeed under her mother's management.

The inference is very plain: that acquirements of little value, or merely ornamental, ought not to be assiduously cultivated at the expence of health, or to the neglect of things of the first importance; and that a great part of the time inconsiderately spent by young ladies in fancy works, and in learning to draw, to paint, or to play upon some musical instrument, of which they will never feel the want, or which at best will afford them only a momentary gratification, had much better be employed  
in



in practical lessons on the duties of wives and mothers, which they will be soon called upon to discharge, and their ignorance of which will cost them many an aching heart.

As to the other evil before hinted at, which is owing to poverty, and which consists in putting young children to sedentary or unwholesome employments, in order to get their bread, it is a matter of the most painful consideration, when viewed either by the eye of humanity or of policy. The source of the sweetest pleasures is thus embittered to the parent; and society loses the valuable services of the man, through the feeble, untimely, and exhausting efforts of the child. In vain do we look for the full grown fruits of autumn, after a too early expansion of the buds of spring; and we never see a colt, if put too soon to hard labour, turn out a strong and active horse.

When I touched upon this subject in the first chapter of my "Domestic Medicine," I thought I could not urge a stronger proof of my assertion, that the constitutions of children were ruined by such premature endeavours to earn a livelihood, than the immense number of rickety, scrophulous, and diminutive creatures, that swarm in all our manufacturing towns. There the infants suffer severely in the very first stage of life, for want of proper exercise and proper nursing, while the distressed mothers are busy at other work. The next step, almost as soon as they feel the use of their legs and arms, is to employ them in some of the subordinate or preparatory parts of the manufactures, which are the more injurious to growth and health for requiring constant confinement rather than active exertion. Very few of those poor objects attain to maturity, and fewer still to manly vigour. Most of them die very young, and the rest are weak and sickly all their lives, so that

inca-



incapacity of labour at an advanced age is the sure consequence of the sorry earnings of childhood.

But there is another set of devoted beings more pitiable still than those which I have now described—I mean the children that are bound apprentices to chimney-sweepers. If any creature can exist in a state of greater wretchedness, or is a juster object of commiseration than a boy who is forced to clean chimneys in this country, I am very much mistaken. Half naked in the most bitter cold, he creeps along the streets by break of day—the ice cutting through his feet—his legs bent—and his body twisted. In this state, he is compelled to work his way up those dirty noisome passages, many of which are almost too narrow for a cat to climb. In order to subdue the terror which he must feel in his first attempts, his savage master often lights up some wet straw in the fireplace, which leaves the poor creature no

alternative but that of certain suffocation, or of instantly getting to the top. I have witnessed still greater cruelty: I have more than once seen a boy, when the chimney was all in a blaze, forced down the vent, like a bundle of wet rags, to extinguish the flame.

On the very day (the twenty-second of last October) when I was come to this part of my subject, an indictment for cruelty to a young chimney-sweeper happened to be tried at the Westminster sessions. The wretched sufferer had been decoyed into the house of a woman who carried on this horrid business, but who promised to employ him only as an errand-boy. He had not been long there, however, before he was put to learn the trade, as it is called. Some domestic lessons were deemed necessary to prepare him for public exhibition. The child, not being able to climb with the readiness expected, used to be stripped naked by the foreman, and whipped round the



room with birch rods. His body, legs, and arms were severely bruised by the beatings he had received. This was not all. Though his knees and elbows had been rendered sore by repeated trials, yet when the poor creature could not mount quick enough, his cruel instructor used to goad him (while in the chimney) in the legs and thighs, by a needle put into the end of a stick.

It also came out in the course of the evidence, that unfortunate children of this sort are taught to climb by being taken to the porch of St. George's church, where, at the risk of their lives, they are obliged to mount the perpendicular wall. I am always happy to see justice tempered with mercy, especially when the punishment is at the discretion of the judge or magistrate; but after a culprit had been fully convicted of those atrocious acts, I could not help thinking that lenity towards him was carried too far in sentencing

him only to fix months' imprisonment. I am still more grieved to think, that any business which requires such dreadful modes of training, should be tolerated.

Perhaps I shall be told, that boys so trained are necessary. I deny the assertion. Chimneys are kept clean, without such cruel and dangerous means, not only in many countries on the continent, but even in some parts of our own island, where the houses are much higher than in London. In North Britain, for instance, a bunch of furze or of broom answers the purpose, and does the business cheaper and better. One man stands at the top and another at the bottom of the chimney, when a rope is let down by means of a ball; and the bunch of furze or of broom, being properly fastened on, is pulled up and down till the chimney is quite cleaned. The little trouble and expence attending the operation are the strongest incitements



ments to repeat it so often as to preclude the possibility of a chimney's ever taking fire. Is this the case in London, though hundreds of lives are every year sacrificed to the most barbarous method of preventing danger? How vain shall we find the boasts that are made of mighty improvements in the metropolis of the British empire, if we fairly consider that it is at least a century behind the meanest village in the kingdom, in almost every thing that regards the preservation of human life!

I have often heard the plea of necessity urged to justify doing wrong, but never more absurdly than in the employment of boys to clean chimneys. Experience clearly proves that it can be much better done without them; and shall we, in perverse opposition to reason and humanity, continue a practice which is equally forbidden by both? The abolition of the slave-trade has of late years become a very popular topic

among us ; and the cause of the poor Africans has been pleaded with lips of fire in our senate. But while our pride is flattered by the idea of relieving slaves abroad, we make a set of our fellow-subjects at home infinitely greater slaves, and far more miserable ! This is something like the fashionable chimera of universal philanthropy, which pretends to be alive to the sufferings of the distant Hottentots, but in reality steels the heart against spectacles of much keener wretchedness in our own streets.

My late worthy friend, JONAS HANWAY, who literally *went about, doing good*, used all his influence to ameliorate the condition of those unhappy creatures ; which, in a certain degree, he effected. But there are some customs, that can be thoroughly mended, only by being completely abolished. While boys are forced up chimneys, they must be miserable, whatever laws are made for their relief. A law prohibiting the practice



tice altogether, would be at once laying the axe to the root of the tree; and the evil admits of no other remedy.

Had Mr. HANWAY taken up the matter upon this ground, he had spirit and perseverance sufficient to have carried it through, and to have obtained an act of parliament for the effectual relief of the most wretched beings on the face of the earth. He confined his benevolent exertions to a partial alleviation of their miseries, because it had never occurred to him, that the *climbing boys*, as he calls them, were wholly unnecessary. What a pity that he did not carry his views a little farther, as, in that case, he certainly would not have remained satisfied with any thing short of their total emancipation from such cruel and useless bondage!

The situation of those children of misery is now become more hopeless, in consequence of the death of Lady MONT-

AGUE,

TAGUE, who used to make such of them as could go to her house, happy for at least one day in the long and lingering year. I often wished to see her well-known talents exerted in their favour: they could not have had an abler or a better advocate. The amiableness of her character would have given additional force to the impressive productions of her pen; and the legislature might have been induced to interpose its authority in suppressing an employment at once so destructive and so degrading to the human species.

But surely there is humanity enough in both houses of parliament to take up this subject, without any other appeal to their feelings than a bare representation of facts.

Many touches more would be necessary to finish the melancholy picture of the wretchedness of young chimney-sweepers. It is enough for me to sketch  
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the principal outlines, in hopes that some person more at leisure may be induced to lay on the internal colouring. In addition, however, to the miseries already described, I must not omit the malignity of the disorders, with which those poor creatures, if they live long enough, are almost sure to be afflicted. They are not only deformed and stunted in their growth, but, in consequence of having their pores clogged, and the surface of their bodies continually covered with a coat of dirt composed of soot, sweat, &c. they are subject to various maladies unknown to the rest of mankind.

I need only give an instance of one of those diseases, which is called by the sufferers the *soot-wart*, but which the late Mr. POTT has very properly named the *Chimney-sweepers' cancer*. He describes it as a ragged, ill-looking sore, with hard and rising edges,—rapid in its progress, painful in all its attacks,

and most certainly destructive in its event. Extirpation by the knife, on its first appearance, and the immediate removal of the part affected, he looks upon as the only chance of putting a stop to, or preventing the fatal issue of the disease. His reflection on the subject does equal honour to his heart and to his understanding. “The fate of these people,” says he, “seems singularly hard. In their early infancy, they are most frequently treated with great brutality, and almost starved with cold and hunger. They are thrust up narrow, and sometimes hot chimneys, where they are bruised, burned, and almost suffocated; and when they get to puberty, they become peculiarly liable to a most noisome, painful, and fatal disease.”



## CHAP. VIII.

## OF ACCIDENTS.

CHILDREN are not only lamed and maimed, but they often lose their lives by accidents, owing to the carelessness or inconsiderate neglect of nurses and mothers. A child should never be left alone in a place of danger, or in any situation where he may, through his own want of experience, be exposed to the destructive elements of fire and water. We daily hear of children that have been burned to death, in consequence of their clothes having caught fire ; and even grown people often lose their lives by similar accidents.

Afflicting events of this kind often take place even under the mother's eye ; and, what is surprising, their frequency does not prepare women for the most effectual method of extinguishing the fire. Distracted by the frightful scene, and  
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the cries of the sufferer, they rush to tear off the burning clothes. But, before this can be effected, the mischief is done. The attempt, therefore, should never be made. The clothing, instead of being torn off, ought to be pressed close to the body, and whatever is at hand wrapped over it, so as to exclude the air, upon which the blaze will go out. It is the action of the air that keeps it alive, and increases its vehemence. A carpet, a table-cloth, a blanket, any close wrapper, will instantly extinguish it. Ladies, whose dress is so very liable to catch fire, should in such a case have recourse to these means, and be their own preservers, instead of running out of the room, fanning the flame, and uselessly screaming for help, which comes too late to save them from tortures and from death.

Our newspapers frequently contain accounts of persons, who, by running about, not only accelerate their own destruc-



destruction, but frighten others into an absolute incapacity of affording them any assistance. A case nearly of this sort very lately fell under my own observation. A beautiful woman, with her clothes in a blaze, had been suffered to run out into the street, before any body ventured to approach her. A hackney-coachman, seeing her in this situation, jumped off his box, and, wrapping his coat round her, extinguished the flames. Though her life was saved, no remedy could be found for the cruel ravages of the fire on her person. She lost the use of some of her limbs, and was most shockingly disfigured. Few people are ignorant of what ought to be done to extinguish flame; but presence of mind or courage is wanting in the moment of sudden danger, and the consequences are of course deplorable.

I admire the practical philosophy of the good women in North Britain, who are employed in spinning flax, or *tow* as they

they call it. Whenever the flax round their distaff catches fire by any accident, they immediately wrap their apron about it, and it is out in an instant. But where the fire affects an animated being, especially a darling child, I am afraid few mothers would have the resolution to act in the same manner. Nor is this the case with mothers only. I have known a father stand by, and see his darling daughter burned to death, without any immediate and rational effort for her relief: the powers both of his mind and body were suspended by the shock; and he remained like a statue at the very crisis of the alarming catastrophe. Nay, I have known children carried into the street, that the air might extinguish the flame.

It must be evident enough, from what I have said of excessive care in the treatment of children, that I would not have mothers or nurses over-solicitous about trifles. But where exposure to danger  
may



may be attended with irreparable mischief, it cannot be too cautiously guarded against. I would therefore have the upper garments of children, when they can run about, made of woollen materials, which do not so readily catch fire as manufactures of flax and cotton. I would also have children taught very early to dread the fire ; and I think that the best way of impressing their minds with the danger of coming too near it, is to suffer them to burn their fingers slightly, yet so as to give them some pain. This would have more effect than a thousand admonitions.

When children are cold, they are very apt to get close to the fire ; by which means they not only run the risk of being burned, but of inducing whitloes or other inflammatory disorders of the extremities. In these cases, however, I would not have the preventive care of the nurses or parents carried too far. The actual experience of the tingling

gling effect will operate more powerfully than any thing which can be said to young people to make them avoid it : when they have once felt the smart, a few words to remind them of the cause will be quite sufficient ; and they will easily acquire the habit of rubbing their hands and running about, rather than going to the fire to warm themselves, after having been out in the cold.

I have always been glad to find those semicircular irons, called *guards*, fixed up round fire-places in nurseries, and in all the apartments to which children had access. It gives me still greater pleasure to see wire-fenders, two or three feet in height, now frequently made use of even in parlours and drawing-rooms. They are excellent preservatives from the danger to which grown persons, particularly ladies, as well as giddy boys and girls, may be exposed, when standing or sitting by the fire.

Children



Children are very fond of roasting things, such as chefnuts, potatoes, &c. in the fire. I knew a lady, who had nearly lost her life by an accident arising from a circumstance of this sort. A little boy was poking in the fire for a potatoe, which he had put in to roast; his clothes caught the flame, and, though his mother was standing by, he was dreadfully burned. She, being a nurse at the time, held an infant in her arms, which rendered her less capable of assisting the other child. The effect of the shock on herself was seriously alarming; it dried up her breast-milk, and produced a fever, the violence of which left little hopes of her recovery for three weeks: she was then seized with a convulsion fit, which came on critically, like that which often precedes the eruption of the small-pox in infants, and is far from being an unfavourable symptom. Her fit proved equally salutary; it abated the force of the fever, and she grew better every day after. This

lady was attended by my excellent friend the late Dr. John Gregory and myself, who had both despaired of her recovery.

The accidents from scalding are still more numerous. Children are in continual danger where victuals are cooking; and, among the lower and middle ranks, the kitchen is the nursery. One of the finest boys I ever saw, lost his life in this manner. He was dancing round the kitchen, when a pot full of food for some domestic animals, which had been just taken off the fire, stood in his way: he fell backwards, and was so scalded, that, in spite of all my best endeavours, he died.

Nothing hot should ever be left within a child's reach; otherwise he will very probably pull it over him: in which case, before the clothes can be got off, he may be scalded to death. Children are also apt to carry every thing to the mouth; and a very small quantity



quantity of any liquid, boiling hot, will occasion death, if taken into the stomach. A melancholy proof of this occurred not long since. A child put the spout of a tea-kettle to its mouth, and drank a little of the boiling water, which proved almost instantly fatal. Numberless instances have come to my knowledge, of children having pulled off the table dishes full of hot victuals, with which they were scalded in a terrible manner. Indeed, victuals, or any thick substances, in a burning hot state, are much worse than fluids, as they adhere more closely to the skin.

Perhaps there is not a more painful death, than that which is the consequence of scalding or burning. When instantaneous, it is nothing; but, when lingering, it is dreadful beyond imagination. We can only form some imperfect idea of it from the intense pain occasioned by scalds or burns, though not of deadly effect. I once had a pa-

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tient,

tient, about one half of whose skin was scalded, by falling into a boiler. Though this man recovered, yet so great was his agony, that, every time he was dressed, he used to beg and pray to be put to death.

Accidents by *cold* water, though not so frequent in early life as those occasioned by fire, ought nevertheless to be guarded against with due precaution. Children, who have no idea that these elements are hostile to life, are often dead before they know their danger. Wells and pieces of water near houses are frequently left open, or without any fence round them, as if they were designed for traps to lure the unwary to destruction. Is it not well known, that young people are fond of looking into the water, especially when they can see their own image or likeness? And, is it an uncommon thing for them, when viewing themselves in the watery mirror, to tumble in, and to be drowned?

Even



Even to this day I shudder at the recollection of a draw-well in my father's garden, without the least railing to keep children at a proper distance. A thousand times, in playful mood, have I sported on the margin of the abyss, and cannot now conceive how I escaped a fatal slip. It is a weak security against the danger of open wells, or ponds, or pits, or the like cavities, to tell a child to take care. The effect of such a silly piece of advice is well exposed in GAY's fable of the old hen and the young cock ; of which the moral is—

“ Restrain your child—you'll soon believe

“ The text which says, we sprung from Eve.”

But it is not only in yards and gardens that the least slip may sometimes be fatal to children ; they are often exposed to almost as much danger within doors, by falls in various situations. I shall first mention the dark and winding stair-cases, which remain in all old houses, especially in that part of Lon-

don which is called the *City*. Children must be endued with a degree of precaution far beyond their years, to avoid tumbling upon those stairs; and, if they do make a false step, they often roll from the top to the bottom. As, from the usual lightness of a child, a leg or an arm is seldom broken by such an accident, little notice is taken of it at the time; but although it may not seem to do much hurt for the present, it often lays the foundation of future maladies. The fine organization or structure of the brain may receive a dangerous shock; and there is reason to believe that the *hydrocephalus internus* is sometimes the consequence of bruises, or blows, or other injuries done to the head. I lost a most promising boy, through an affection of his brain, which I thought was owing to a fall from a kitchen-dresser.

All children have an inclination to climb, and to get upon stools, chairs, tables,



tables, &c. A fall from one of these is more dangerous than mothers and nurses are apt to imagine. A child's head is large, and, being specifically heavier than the body, is the part most liable to strike the ground, and thus to cause a concussion of the brain, which may be attended with fatal consequences. All the furniture of a nursery should be low, so as to preclude at once the desire of climbing and the danger of falling. The tables should also be made without corners, as these sharp projections often do mischief. I have already declared myself a warm advocate for indulging the restless activity of children, on which their growth and health very much depend; but, till they acquire reason and experience to guide them, it is the business of their parents to take care, that they move about, and always remain in a sphere of perfect safety.

For the same reason, nurses should never leave any deadly weapon within  
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the reach of children. Knives and sharp instruments, with which they may cut or wound themselves, are very improper playthings. Yet I remember to have read in some newspaper a curious story, of several lives having been saved by a knife in the hand of an infant. It happened near one of those extensive woods on the continent, whence hungry wolves often sallied forth in quest of prey. The wife of a peasant, who lived in a cottage at no great distance, was gone out upon some business, leaving an infant in the cradle, under the care of three or four more of her young family, one of whom gave a knife to the baby to amuse it. During the mother's absence, a wolf, impelled by hunger, rushed into the cottage, and made its first snap at the infant's arm, which, being extended with the knife in a playful manner, it entered the throat of the ravenous animal, and proved its death. As the women in our happy island have no occasion to arm their children against such enemies, I  
do



do not suppose that they will be tempted, by the desire of hearing their infants cried up as heroes, to intrust them with weapons, which are far more likely to hurt than to defend them.

But to return to more serious and necessary precautions: I must next take notice of some fatal accidents which frequently occur, though they may be easily guarded against. We daily hear of children falling from windows and being killed: this must be owing to the want of proper preservatives; a few bars fixed across the windows of the nursery, or of any high apartments where children are suffered to play about, would prevent such disasters. Yet easy as the remedy is, we find it too often neglected. How frequently have I seen, with much alarm, children hanging out of windows in a state of imminent danger, and no regard paid to them by any person within! This is peculiarly the case with the children of  
the

the poor in London, who commonly live in the upper stories, and seldom or never have their windows secured by bars. To keep such windows constantly shut would exclude the fresh air, so necessary to health, and even to existence; while, on the other hand, having them open, without the guard or defence here recommended, is exposing the giddy and thoughtless to certain mischief. On the least noise in the street, a child is apt to run to the window, and, leaning forward in eager gaze, is often dashed against the pavement.

In my former remarks on *hanging cots*, my chief aim was to shew how much safer and more conducive to sleep their gentle motion was, than the violent and dangerous rocking of a cradle. I have now an observation of greater extent to make on beds in general, which is, that they often prove fatal to children, instead of being places of easy and secure repose. It is too customary for mothers  
and



and nurfes to take infants into bed with them for the whole night. This is always relaxing, and fometimes attended with the melancholy effect of fuffocation. Either in France or in Holland, I am not now pofitive which, there is a prohibitory law againft putting any child to fleep in the fame bed with its mother or nurfe. Though we have no fuch law in England, maternal care ought to fupply the want of it, efpecially as it is not an extraordinary, or a very uncommon thing, to hear of a child's being fmothered by the accidental rolling or prefure a grown perfon during fleep.

The ufe of *turn-up* bedfteads is not lefs noxious or dangerous. They exclude the air from the bedclothes all day, and render them frowzy and unwholefome. Children may alfo be inadvertently killed in them. The fervant, or perhaps the mother, turns up the bed in a hurry, without examining whether the child is in it or not : the infant, incapable of

making any noise in this situation, is smothered before the mistake is found out; and tears flow in vain to remedy what a little caution might have prevented, or what could never have happened in a proper bed.

Children suffocated in this manner, as well as those accidentally overlaid, might be sometimes restored to life. Yet I do not recollect any instances, except the one mentioned in my "Domestic Medicine," of its having been done; though it must be as practicable as in cases of drowning, of fits, and various other casualties, attended with a suspension or seeming extinction of all the vital powers. It is not my business, however, to suggest the use of very precarious restoratives, when the means of prevention are so easy and certain.

I should never have done, were I to engage in a particular description of all the dangers to which children are exposed



posed in our streets, partly through the want of a good medical police, and partly through the negligence of their parents. The importance and the necessity of the former, I may take some other opportunity to enlarge upon ; my present wish is, to excite the attention of mothers to the perils which await their children at almost every corner, when they are suffered to run about by themselves, or intrusted to young people who have neither sufficient strength nor experience to protect them. It always gives me great uneasiness to see infants dandled by girls who are hardly able to hold them up, or led about by others whose giddiness is more likely to plunge them into danger than to keep them out of it. At least half the accidents that befall children, both within doors and without, are owing to the folly, the cruelty, I had almost said the murderous criminality of leaving one child to the care of another, who, though a little older,

older, is not less in want of a mother's or a nurse's vigilance.

Let me ask any parent of common sense and tender feelings, whether it can be fairly considered as much short of murder, to let a little girl of seven or eight years of age take an infant out in her arms, or lead about younger children than herself, in such a city as London, where carts and carriages of every description are rattling along—where horses are galloping—bullocks furiously driven—and crowds of people constantly rushing with thoughtless impetuosity? Is it a wonder, then, to hear every day of children run over, their legs or arms broken, their brains dashed out, or their bodies crushed to atoms, in the midst of those dangers to which they are so inconsiderately exposed? Though the immediate authors of such disasters deserve in most cases to be hanged, yet I do not know how any jury could conscientiously  
acquit



acquit the negligent parent of some participation in the crime.

Let me therefore conjure mothers, in particular, never to permit their young children to go alone into the streets, and never to rely upon one child's protection of another. It is also a mother's duty to make her children, as soon as they are capable of it, aware of danger, and to instruct them how to avoid the numberless enemies that beset them on all sides, and too often prove fatal to infant life. A good police would certainly go a great way towards the prevention of many of those disasters which so frequently occur in our streets, but no laws can ever be made that will supersede the mother's care and attention in watching over the health and safety of her children.

## CHAP. IX.

OF FOUNDLING HOSPITALS, AND OTHER  
CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS FOR THE  
REARING OF POOR OR DESERTED  
CHILDREN.

THE proper qualifications and indispensable duties of mothers having so far engaged our attention, I am not without hopes that the remarks which have been made on those important subjects, will be of some service in the middling and higher ranks of life. But it gives me pain to think, that there are great numbers of poor women, who do not want so much to be *taught*, as to be *enabled* to discharge their duty. They would willingly devote all their time and care to the nursing of their children; but the want of common necessaries  
forces



forces them to be otherwise employed. They see their infants languish ; but the dread of famine is an object of still keener concern. They are not dead to the impulses of natural affection ; but its warm emotions in their hearts are soon chilled by distress. It is poverty, whose icy hand congeals the streams of maternal comfort, and whose withering breath blasts some of the fairest buds of human life.

Vanity is more gratified than reason, by the acknowledgment that there is not any country in the known world which is so much distinguished as England for its charitable institutions. How mortifying it is to add, that there is not any country in which charity is so much abused and perverted ! When I look at such a building as the Foundling Hospital, much more like a palace than a nursery for poor children ;—when I consider the vast sums laid out in raising that structure, and the still greater sums

which have since been expended and continue to be expended upon the most pompous and less useful parts of the establishment;—I cannot help crying out with ROCHEFOUCAULT, *that virtue or charity would never go so far, if pride did not keep her company.*

It is much to be lamented, that the plans for the relief both of the old and the young, in every pitiable situation, which at different times have been encouraged by the people of England, should all be connected with superb buildings, profitable jobs, and a train of offices and employments, which prey upon the funds, and render their use to the public very small, in comparison to what it might otherwise have been. This gross misapplication—this waste of charitable contributions, is not the only thing to be found fault with in the management of the Foundling Hospital. Never did any institution hold out fairer claims to the support of the benevolent and humane,



mane, and never was any more liberally patronized; yet, from ignorance and inexperience, instead of preserving the lives of children, it has too frequently accelerated their death.

The first suggestion of a Foundling Hospital was certainly very plausible: its professed object was to rescue from misery and destruction the innocent victims that would otherwise be doomed to both by the desertion of their parents. Thus many valuable lives would be saved to society, and such a resource would be opened to unfortunate mothers, as would remove, or considerably weaken, any temptation to the commission of the most unnatural acts. The prude, the bigot, and the canting hypocrite, might, indeed, condemn such a supposed encouragement to the illicit union of the sexes; but humanity can never look upon the preservation of a human being as a crime.

An undertaking, therefore, of so specious a tendency, could not fail to meet with the most generous support. Independently of all private contributions, sixty thousand pounds a year out of the public money were for several years appropriated by parliament to so laudable a purpose. A palace, as I before observed, instead of a nursery, soon reared its head. The doors were thrown open for the admission of deserted children from all parts, not to be nursed and educated there, but to be sent down to the distant counties, and in their conveyance numbers of the poor infants perished. I am not here making a vague or an imaginary calculation ; I am stating what fell under my own notice, when I was physician to a very considerable branch of the Foundling Hospital. I have elsewhere described the mortality which was occasioned by the improper use of medicines among those who had survived the fatigues of the journey. I have also explained the very easy means



I made use of to put a stop to such afflicting ravages, while the children and their nurses were under my inspection and control. But all my remonstrances against having them dragged away from those nurses too soon, crowded into hospitals, confined in schools, or put out to unhealthy employments, were unavailing. I was told, that the established rules and customs of the hospital could not be deviated from, though their evident effect was to destroy health, and to enfeeble the minds as well as the bodies of the unfortunate victims.

I have often viewed with indignation the fallacious reports of the numbers of children said to be brought up and provided for at such places. I am very confident, that were an accurate list made out of those who perished through unseasonable removals, improper treatment, bad nursing, diseases occasioned

by too early confinement in schools, as well as by infection in hospitals, and, lastly, through what I call murderous occupations, it would appear that not one in ten of the infants received there ever lived to become a useful member of society.

But, besides the evils here hinted at, there is a fundamental error in the plan itself, not only of the Foundling Hospital, but of all parochial and other charitable institutions for the maintenance and education of poor children. Every scheme which tends to separate the parent from the child, whatever imposing appearance it may wear, is a bad one, and will eventually be found to do mischief. It is flying in the face of nature, a thing that never can be done with impunity: it is rending asunder the first and the strongest bonds of society—parental and filial affection: it is perverfely attempting to blunt and destroy  
that



that finest feeling of the heart, motherly love, without which the human species could not long exist. All nature points out the mother for the nurse of every thing that is brought forth alive; nor can her place be supplied by any institution. Those who make the experiment will soon be convinced of their temerity and folly.

A few years ago, I met with a letter addressed to lord FITZWILLIAM, then viceroy of Ireland, on the subject of the protestant charity schools in that country. As the author's sentiments agree with mine in many points, and particularly with respect to the pernicious effects of separating children from their parents for the sake of education, I shall here give them in his own words. Some people may think the language too strong; but the nature of the subject required the most pointed energy.

“ My Lord, I do request that you will take the trouble of reading the account of this inveterately illiberal institution in any common almanac; and every line will, I think, carry its own reprobation to an ingenuous mind. The children, as it is regulated in their unnatural system, are all placed in schools remote from their former abodes; or, in other words, they are torn from all the sweet associations that attend the interesting idea of home. This is, indeed, a charity which thrives on the extinction of all the other charities of life; *and the feelings of nature must be eradicated, before they can become nurslings of the state.* They are banished from their vicinage to a remote quarter of the kingdom, where all the traces and ties of kindred are lost and cut off; all habits of the heart smothered in the cradle; and, when sent into the world, they know not the spot which gave them birth, the mother that bore them, nor the blood that flows in their veins. I think



think of the speech of LOGAN, the Indian chief, when all his kindred were murdered—*There remains not a drop of my blood in the veins of any living creature.*”

The writer here takes occasion to direct his remarks to the heart, as well as to the head ;—to exert all his powers of pathetic, as well as of argumentative eloquence. “ It is,” says he, “ a cold, cheerless, and forlorn feeling of this nature, which must freeze the young blood, and, placing the mind in a state of swollen insulation, makes its re-action upon society rather dangerous than beneficial. The ties of kindred operate as a sort of external conscience upon the conduct of men, deterring them from the commission of great crimes, for fear of the disgrace which would be reflected on their relations. There is a family pride, a domestic honour, among the very poorest and lowest of the community, that guards, and sanctions, and is  
a sort

a fort of God for the little household. Even the highest have such workings of nature. Lady MACBETH exclaims, *had he not resembled my father when he slept, I had done it.* The imagined countenance of her father was the only conscience left, and came between her and murder. But charter-school policy makes a fort of massacre of all those domestic moralities which operate upon character and conduct, without being able to put a higher and nobler principle of action in their place; and thus, I fear, the same policy has bred up many victims for the laws, while they only thought of making profelytes to a religion."

Though the subject is here considered only in a moral light, yet I could not resist the temptation to make a short extract from such a masterly letter; and I do not think that any of my readers will be displeased at the perusal of it. But I have still less occasion to make  
any



any apology for stating the author's opinion of the most effectual means of remedying the evil, as the leading feature of his plan of reform exactly corresponds with what I recommended above thirty years ago. I was then lamenting, that poverty often obliged mothers to neglect their offspring, in order to procure the necessaries of life. I observed, that, in such cases, it became the interest as well as the duty of the public to assist them; but I contended that ten thousand times more benefit would accrue to the state, by enabling the poor to bring up their own children, than from all the hospitals that ever could be erected with that view. In a subsequent edition of those remarks, I added, that, if it were made the interest of the poor to keep their children alive, we should lose very few of them; and that a small premium given annually to each poor family, for every child they had alive at the year's end, would save more infant lives than  
if

if the whole revenue of the crown were expended on hospitals for this purpose.

It gave me great pleasure to find, that the writer just now quoted had reasoned in the same manner on the hundreds of thousands which had been expended, merely, he says, *to create foundlings*; the tenth part of which, if properly employed, would have been of infinitely more service to society. The proper mode of employing charitable contributions, he thinks, should consist chiefly in giving premiums to such parents as have shewn most zeal and capacity in educating their children. Thus, notwithstanding the different points of view in which we examined the abuse of so important a part of public charities, the very means which I advised for saving the lives, and promoting the bodily health of infants, appeared to him the most conducive also to their intellectual and moral improvement.

The



The prejudices in favour of old institutions must be strong, indeed, when they can resist the clearest evidence of facts, and the plain deductions of fair argument. Yet, in the question before us, how the public, or the state, may most effectually contribute to the nursing and rearing of poor infants, one would suppose that no appeal to past experience, nor any great depth of reasoning, were necessary to demonstrate the impropriety of separating children from their parents. Nature forms the chain that binds them; and, if possible, it should never be broken. I have shewn how the lives of the mother and child are entwined, not only during pregnancy, but after delivery. To part them, is to endanger the health and the existence of both. They are equally necessary to each other's well-being; and the longer they are kept together, the more sensible they become of the duties they owe to one another, which, when faithfully discharged, tend greatly to increase the sum of human happiness.

But



But how are we to expect that any regard will be paid to this doctrine by narrow-minded unfeeling overseers of the poor, who make a greater merit of saving a shilling to their parish, than of saving fifty lives to the community? We now and then hear of instances of such persons being dragged into our courts of justice, to answer for their cruelty to pregnant women; but no account is kept, and of course no cognizance can be taken, of the immense number of infants that are torn, in our parochial receptacles, from the arms of their distressed mothers, and are consigned to an untimely death, or to certain debility and protracted wretchedness. Even the show of humanity in some of those places, serves only to excite our stronger indignation. It is a cobweb, through which the penetrating eye can easily see written up in letters of blood, CHILDREN MURDERED HERE UNDER THE SANCTION OF CHARITY

Are



Are we not always shocked at reading or hearing any accounts of the barbarous policy that prevails in China, where avaricious as well as distressed parents are encouraged by the permission of the law, and by the force of example, to destroy their female children, in order to avoid the expence of rearing them? And is there a father or a mother in Great Britain, who would not join in a general outcry against an act of parliament for the immediate drowning of all infants taken to parish workhouses? Yet, humanity itself must acknowledge, that instant death is infinitely preferable to a lingering existence in a state of pain, of misery, of continual suffering and disease. I do not, therefore, hesitate to assert, that such policy as that of the Chinese, or such an act of parliament as I have now mentioned, would, in reality, be an act of mercy, contrasted with the present most barbarous, most inhuman, and most detestable method of taking care, as it is falsely called,



of poor infants thrown upon the parish.

Nothing was left undone by the late JONAS HANWAY to probe this sore to the bottom. He spared neither time, pains, nor expence, to procure the fullest information on the subject, before he published his "Plea for mercy to the Children of the Poor." He there states, as the result of his inquiries and calculations, that not more than one in seventy of the children consigned to the parish, ever attained to mature age; and that even that one seldom became an useful member of the community. Among many instances of the most horrid nature, he takes notice of a memorandum he met with in the books of a certain parish, where the names of particular nurses were inserted, with the remark of their being "*excellent killing nurses.*" This testimonial of their expertness in murder, was deemed by the overseers, who had tried them, the  
\* 7 strongest



strongest recommendation to constant employment.

Let it not be supposed, that I mean to involve all overseers of the poor in one general charge of infanticide. I know several of them to be very amiable and tender-hearted men, who would do every thing in their power to promote the ends of true charity and the real interests of humanity, were they not tied down by the established rules of their office. That part of the institution which relates to the nursing and rearing of children, being radically wrong, the most zealous exertions of any individual, during his short continuance in office, will operate but as a temporary palliative of an evil in its own nature incurable. It is not a partial reform, but a total change of system, that can in such cases be productive of any good effect.

The supporters of Foundling Hospitals may imagine, that a justification of their plan is implied even in my cen-



tures of parochial establishments for poor children. They may say, that the laudable end of their charity is not to separate infants from their mothers, but to provide for those from whom cruel and unnatural mothers have separated themselves. I before paid the just tribute of applause to the spirit of such an institution, and to its professed objects; but I lamented the abuses which had arisen out of it, or rather, which were inseparably connected with the execution of the scheme. Its obvious tendency and its actual effect have been *to create foundlings*,—to encourage the desertion of young children, whom many of their parents would never have consigned to a receptacle of that sort, but from cruel necessity, and from a vain hope that due care would be taken of the poor creatures. I have shewn the extent of that care, the dreadful sweep of mortality which accompanied it, and its consequent insufficiency to promote the desired end.

I would



I would not however have Foundling Hospitals entirely abolished. I would endeavour, in the first place, to render them less necessary, by a method which I shall fully explain in the next chapter, and of which the great object will be to take away from poor mothers all temptation to abandon their children. But as some women may be prompted, by other motives than that of want, to destroy their young, let there be a receptacle ever open for the rescue of such victims, and for the prevention of such unnatural crimes. If my plan for the relief of poverty, above hinted at, be carried into full effect, the number of foundlings of the latter description will always be small, and will not require any very expensive establishment. There will be no occasion for showy buildings—no room for lucrative jobs, offices, or appointments. Two or three trustees, without salary or emolument, and actuated solely by humane and charitable motives, will be sufficient to receive the



money, and to lay it out according to well-regulated and maturely-considered instructions. The present abuses are very great and very flagrant; but the reform is very easy, if it be zealously undertaken and persevered in by men of talents and virtue. I take it for granted that such persons will also possess dignity of mind enough to despise the wretched suggestions of ignorance, of prejudice, of envy, malignity, fordid interest, and disappointed vanity.

The foregoing remarks are purposely confined to some of our most popular establishments for the nursing and rearing of children. It would lead me too far to enter into a detail of all the schemes which have assumed the like name of charitable institutions in the neighbourhood of London alone. The former have at least the merit of having been well intended; but most of the latter are founded in fraud, and have no other aim but to enrich some artful projector,



projector, at the expence of public credulity. This is an inexhaustible fund for any man who can invent a quack medicine, a new mode of faith, or the plan of some specious charity. We have seen footmen in the first department, coal-heavers in the second, and swindlers in the third, driving their chariots with rival splendor and success. But the victims of the last deception are most to be pitied, because they are poor, innocent, and helpless children; while the dupes of the two first, being people of mature years and experience, cannot lay claim to any compassion for suffering not only their purses, but their very souls and bodies, to be sported with by ignorant and audacious impostors.

## CHAP. X.

## SKETCH OF A PLAN FOR THE PRESERVATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE HUMAN SPECIES.

WERE this subject to be discussed with a degree of extent suited to its importance, it would require a large volume. But I mean to touch only upon a few of the principal points, merely with the hope of exciting more general attention to a matter, which, though of the highest concern, has hitherto been very slightly considered. I shall not dwell upon truths which are obvious to almost every person of common understanding, that the resources and stability of a state depend upon the number, vigour, and industry of its subjects; and, on the contrary, that where little value is set on the increase of population, on the growth, health, or life of man, the

political



political fabric, however showy, stands on a rotten foundation, and must sooner or later sink into an abyfs dug out of its own inhumanity. It is enough to mention these truths, in order to fecure the ready affent of all thinking people; but the practical inferences to be drawn from them may admit of a great diversity of opinions. The plan which I am about to propofe, whether approved of or not, may be productive of one good effect at leaft, that of exercifing the ingenuity of others, and perhaps of directing public and private charity to more useful purpofes than thofe to which they are now applied.

I hope I need not go over the old ground again, or repeat my former arguments, to prove that there is not any law of nature fo clear, fo forcible, or fo facred as that which ordains every mother to be the nurfe of her own young. The well-being of both, as I before obferved, depends on the faithful difcharge  
of



of this duty. Every attempt to divert the breast-milk from its proper channels, endangers the mother's life; and it is beyond the power of wealth to procure, or of art to devise, any nutriment so congenial to the constitution of the infant, as the very juices of which it is composed, and which have so long sustained it in the womb. It is equally impossible to supply the tender care and unwearied attention of a parent; and the rich, who trust to hirelings, find by woe-ful experience, that half their children perish in early life. Is it a wonder, then, that a far greater mortality should await the poor infants thrown upon the parish, or consigned to an hospital, where no individual is interested in their preservation? I have faithfully stated, as a matter which came within the sphere of my own knowledge, that nine out of ten of the deserted foundlings died before they attained to maturity; and it appears from Mr. HANWAY'S unquestionable account, that sixty-nine out of seventy



seventy of the poor parish children perish in the same untimely manner. Can it therefore be called charity to persevere in measures which are so destructive to the population of the country?

I before suggested what appeared to me the best substitute for a Foundling Hospital, confined in its objects to the preservation of such children as might otherwise perish by neglect, and of such as may be deprived of their mothers at an early age by the "hand of fate." Poor orphans and deserted infants being in the same predicament, though from different causes, must be reared by strangers. The only expedient in these unavoidable deviations from nature, is to place the children under the care of nurses of unexceptionable character, in a healthy part of the country, and not to take them away till of age to be put apprentices. This very circumstance will prompt every nurse to use her best endeavours to rear a child  
who



who is to stay with her, if he thrives and does well, till he is fourteen years of age. It is the only chance of making a stranger acquire in time a maternal affection for her nursling. It is also the only chance of a poor child's acquiring a good constitution, and that kind of early education which is best suited to rural employments.

But, for the relief of poor women, who in pregnancy may be exposed to numberless afflictions, and who, after delivery, may often be forced to part with their children, I would not recommend either hospitals or parish work-houses. These receptacles are little better than half-way houses, or conductors, to the grave. In their room, I would have a fund established to afford indigent mothers every necessary comfort and assistance at their own habitations, during pregnancy as well as in childbed, and afterwards to enable them to nurse and bring up their infants themselves.

By



By these means more lives would be preserved than by all the charitable institutions now existing in this country, without costing one half of the money, or alienating the hearts of children from their parents.

It is impossible, without heart-felt sorrow, to think of the immense numbers of fine children that are lost for want of a little timely aid to mothers. How many of these poor women pine with their offspring in obscurity, and in unavailing struggles for their support! The dread of ill-treatment, of diseases, of death, and (what is still more terrible to a delicate mind) the dread of shame, keeps them from workhouses and hospitals. Their groans are unheard—their wants unpitied—and they pass like silent shadows to the grave!

How many others, no less tenderly attached to their young, are driven by extreme distress to leave them to the  
very



very uncertain care of others, and to hire out their own breasts, and their own distracted, attention, to a stranger! When a mother abandons her child, to suckle that of another woman, one of the infants is almost sure to die; and it frequently happens that both share the same fate.

There is a third class of truly pitiable objects, though too often regarded with cruel indifference and contempt; I mean the poor women whom we daily see begging with two, three, or more children, and entirely dependant on so precarious a resource for a morsel of bread. While these can lie under hedges, and get scraps of food, they may live; but should a severe winter overtake them, when they must cling to the rock for shelter, they will all be lost. It is not unlikely that many of those poor infants may be the issue of men who have fought for their country; and that they were turned out of house and harbour, lest they should



should become troublesome to the parish.

Can public or private charity be better employed than in preserving so many lives to the state? And how are they to be preserved? Not by tearing the poor children from the arms of their mothers, and sending them to hospitals and workhouses, to be put under the care of "*excellent killing nurses*;"—but by enabling the mothers to nurse them agreeably to the designs of nature, and thus rendering fertility, not what it now is, a curse to the poor, but the source of the sweetest pleasures, and the greatest of all possible blessings. A very small part of the vast sums collected in this kingdom by taxes, under the title of poor rates, and by voluntary contributions, would be fully sufficient for the proposed fund; and I am persuaded that the wisdom and humanity of parliament and of government could not be better exerted, than in preparing and  
carrying



carrying into effect either this, or some other more advisable plan, for saving the lives of such an incalculable number of devoted victims.

Vanity, as I before observed, has a very great share in the erection and support of alms-houses; or the rich and the truly humane would readily discover, in the hints now given, a much more useful as well as a more charitable method of employing their superfluous wealth. I hope, however, that the conscious pleasure of doing real good, will induce many ladies, blessed with affluence, to assist poor women to nurse and rear their children in their own little huts or habitations, though not inscribed on the outside with any vain compliment to the pride of a patroness or a founder. Is not the sight of a rising family, who are indebted to you for health, and even for existence, a thousand times more gratifying to the human heart, than the silly ostentation or parade of a public charity?

It



It would imply a very unbecoming doubt of the good sense and natural feelings of my readers, to dwell any longer on this head ; but many of them may think the other part of my plan, expressed in the title of the present chapter, and having for its avowed object *the improvement of the human species*, a little romantic. Yet, I flatter myself that I shall be able to prove, that there is nothing of fanciful or impracticable theory in the suggestion ; and that the improvement, as well as the preservation of the human species, may be effectually promoted by the same means—well-timed assistance, and proper encouragement to mothers.

In the first chapter of this work I threw out some hints on the proper choice of wives and of husbands, with a view to the procreation of a healthy and vigorous issue ; and I lamented, that the impulses of natural inclination were too often checked in civilized society by the meaner passions of avarice



and false pride. I also took notice of cases in which marriage had been forbidden by the legislators of different countries. But though it would be difficult to frame, and to enforce any complete system of laws for regulating the union of the sexes; and though such legal restraints on marriages would be incompatible with the liberty of individuals in a free government like ours, yet it is in the power of every state to encourage the rearing of fine children, by granting to every mother a premium annually, in proportion to the age and number of the healthy children she brought up. The prospect of a liberal and honourable reward at the end of every year, would encourage mothers to exert all their skill, and use every endeavour to rear a numerous and healthy offspring. It would excite a general emulation among mothers; and the object of the virtuous struggle would be, who should have the finest children. The name of CORNELIA, that famous Roman mother, would no longer stand



alone on the records of maternal affection; but English women, when requested to shew their jewels or their brightest ornaments, would throw open the nursery, and exhibit a lovely family to the spectator's admiring gaze.

Let it not be frivolously objected, that a fond mother cannot want, or cannot feel a stronger stimulus, than natural affection, to make her take care of her child. Poor women are forced by keen distress to neglect their infants, in order to earn a bit of bread. They require therefore present supplies, and the assurance of a future reward; not merely to induce them, but in fact to enable them to bestow more time and attention upon this one important object. Again, then, I must assert, that a part of the public money, as well as of private charitable contributions, cannot be applied to a better purpose, than to the establishment of a fund for the support and encouragement of such mothers. The good effects of this plan would far ex-

ceed any present conjecture or calculation. The population of the country would increase with almost inconceivable rapidity. Instead of puniness, deformity, diseases, and early deaths, the rising generation would be distinguished for their health, beauty, and vigour; and we should soon see a stout and hardy race spring up, to repay with usury, in valuable services to the state, the sums expended in nursing and rearing them. I do not know any one institution upon earth, in which humanity and enlightened policy would be found more happily united.

The effects of premiums have been proved in a variety of other instances, such as the culture of vegetables, the growth of flax, of hemp, of potatoes, the planting of trees, and the improvement of the breed of cattle. Is it not a matter of just surprise that no attention of this sort should ever have been paid to the personal or bodily improvement of the human species? We know that the most



tender plant is not more susceptible of any shape or form than infant man. We know that his strength and figure are certainly as improvable as those of any other animal, were proper methods pursued for the accomplishment of such desirable purposes. Yet the breed of men is alone neglected, while every effort of ingenuity is called forth, and the resources of wealth are exhausted, in experiments to improve the breed of sheep, of horses, and of oxen !

I never met with more than one man who took up this subject on a serious ground. His plan was a good one had he possessed sufficient means to carry it into execution. He proposed to purchase a small island, and to plant it with as many people of both sexes as it would very comfortably maintain, Of these, he meant to superintend the diet, occupations, marriages, and the management of their children, with a view to try how far the breed might be improved. It was a speculation worthy



of an enlarged mind. Were every person of landed property in the kingdom of this gentleman's way of thinking, and could our country squires in particular be induced to pay half as much attention to the breed of men, as to that of dogs, horses, and cattle, the progress of the human species to perfection would become more rapid, and more astonishing, than the degeneracy so often complained of in every successive age.

Nor would this progressive improvement of man be confined to the body only; it would extend itself also to the mind. Every thing great or good in future life, must be the effect of early impressions; and by whom are those impressions to be made but by mothers, who are most interested in the consequences? Their instructions and example will have a lasting influence, and of course, will go farther to form the morals, than all the eloquence of the pulpit, the efforts of schoolmasters, or the corrective power of the civil magistrate,

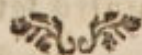


trate, who may, indeed, punish crimes, but cannot implant the seeds of virtue. If these are not sown in childhood, they will never take deep root; and where they are not found to grow, every vice will spring up with baneful luxuriance.

In this view of the subject I could easily find a thousand arguments to enforce the political importance of the plan which I have suggested; but I undertook only to shew, that perfect health and growth, that personal beauty and vigour, were most likely to be the fruits of the well-directed and well-encouraged care of mothers in the nursing and rearing of their children. Other authors have enlarged on the culture of the heart and the understanding, the first and chief part of which they all acknowledge to be the incontestible province of mothers. The eloquent writer whom I have repeatedly quoted, and who has taken some pains to illustrate this point, argues with great justness, that, if the early part of education,



which concerns us most, had been designed for fathers, the Author of nature would doubtless have furnished them with milk for the nourishment of their children. It is in concurrence with his opinion, that I have addressed this little book of instructions to females ; and as he has very beautifully compared infant man to a shrub exposed to numberless injuries in the highway of life, I shall join him in calling on the tender and provident mother, to preserve the rising shrub from the shocks of human prejudice. I shall say to her, almost in his words, *Cultivate, water the young plant before it die ; so shall its fruit be hereafter delicious to your taste. Erect an early fence round the disposition of your child ; others may delineate its extent ; but it remains with you only to raise the barrier.*





## APPENDIX.

WHEN I first turned my attention to the nursing and management of children, the late Dr. CADOGAN's pamphlet on that subject fell into my hands. I perused it with great pleasure, but soon lost it: and though I have been in quest of it for above forty years, I never could set my eyes upon it till within these few days; which makes me conclude that it is out of print. That so valuable a fragment may not be lost, I shall insert the principal part of it in this Appendix; and I hope it will render the book more extensively useful, and, at the same time, tend to corroborate my sentiments concerning mothers,

“In my opinion,” says the ingenious writer whom I am now quoting, “the business of nursing has been too long fatally left to the management of women, who cannot be supposed to have proper knowledge to fit them for such a task, notwithstanding they look upon it to be their own province. What I mean is, a philosophic knowledge



ledge of nature, to be acquired only by learned observation and experience, and which therefore the unlearned must be incapable of. They may presume upon the examples and transmitted customs of their great grandmothers, who were taught by the physicians of their unenlightened days; when physicians, as appears by late discoveries, were mistaken in many things, being led away by hypothetical reasonings to entertain very wild conceits, in which they were greatly bewildered themselves, and misled others to believe I know not what strange unaccountable powers in certain herbs, roots, and drugs; and also in some superstitious practices and ceremonies; for all which notions there being no real foundation in nature, they ought to be looked upon as the effects of ignorance, or the artifices of designing quacks, who found their account by pretending to great knowledge in these occult qualities, and imposing upon the credulous. The art of physic has been much improved within this last century: by observing and following nature more closely, many useful discoveries have been made, which help us to account for things in a natural way, that before seemed mysterious and magical, and which have consequently made the practice of it more conformable to reason and good sense. This being the case, there is great room to fear, that those nurses, who yet retain many of these traditional prejudices,



prejudices, are capitally mistaken in their management of children in general, and, fancying that nature has left a great deal to their skill and contrivance, often do much harm where they intend to do good. Of this I shall endeavour to convince them, by shewing how I think children may be clothed, fed, and managed, with much less trouble to their nurses, and infinitely greater ease, comfort, and safety, to the little ones.

\* \* \* \* \*

“ When a man takes upon him to contradict received opinions and prejudices sanctified by time, it is expected he should bring valid proof of what he advances. The truth of what I say, that the treatment of children in general is wrong, unreasonable, and unnatural, will in a great measure appear, if we but consider what a puny valetudinary race most of our people of condition are, chiefly owing to bad nursing, and bad habits contracted early. But let any one who would be fully convinced of this matter, look over the Bills of Mortality. There he may observe, that almost half the number of those who fill up that black list, die under five years of age: so that half the people that come into the world, go out of it again before they become of the least use to it, or themselves. To me this seems to deserve serious consideration; and yet  
I can-



I cannot find, that any one man of sense and public spirit has ever attended to it at all; notwithstanding the maxim in every one's mouth, that a multitude of inhabitants is the greatest strength and best support of a commonwealth. The misconduct, to which I must impute a great part of the calamity, is too common and obvious to engage the idle and speculative, who are to be caught only by very refined researches; and the busy part of mankind, where their immediate interest is not concerned, will always overlook what they see daily: it may be thought a natural evil, and so is submitted to without examination. But this is by no means the case; and where it is entirely owing to mismanagement, and possibly may admit of a remedy, it is ridiculous to charge it upon nature, and suppose that infants are more subject to disease and death, than grown persons; on the contrary, they bear pain and disease much better, fevers especially (as is plain in the case of the small-pox, generally most favourable to children), and for the same reason that a twig is less hurt by a storm than an oak. In all the other productions of nature, we see the greatest vigour and luxuriance of health, the nearer they are to the egg or the bud; they are indeed then most sensible of injury, and it is injury only that destroys them. When was there a lamb, a bird, or a tree, that died because it was young? These are under the immediate nursing



nursing of unerring nature, and they thrive accordingly. Ought it not therefore to be the care of every nurse and every parent, not only to protect their nurslings from injury, but to be well assured that their own officious services be not the greatest the helpless creatures can suffer?

“ In the lower class of mankind, especially in the country, disease and mortality are not so frequent, either among the adult or their children. Health and posterity are the portion of the poor, I mean the laborious. The want of superfluity confines them more within the limits of nature : hence they enjoy blessings they feel not, and are ignorant of their cause. The mother, who has only a few rags to cover her child loosely, and little more than her own breast to feed it, sees it healthy and strong, and very soon able to shift for itself; while the puny insect, the heir and hope of a rich family, lies languishing under a load of finery that overpowers his limbs, abhorring and rejecting the dainties he is crammed with, till he dies a victim to the mistaken care and tenderness of his fond mother. In the course of my practice, I have had frequent occasion to be fully satisfied of this ; and have often heard a mother anxiously say, *the child has not been well ever since it has done puking and crying.* These complaints, though not attended to,  
point



point very plainly to their cause. Is it not very evident when a child rids its stomach several times in a day, that it has been overloaded?—When it cries, from the incumbrance and confinement of its cloaths, that it is hurt by them? While the natural strength lasts, (as every child is born with more health and strength than is generally imagined,) it cries at or rejects the superfluous load, and *thrives apace*; that is, grows very fat, bloated, and distended beyond measure, like a house-lamb. But in time, the same oppressive cause continuing, the natural powers are overcome, being no longer able to throw off the unequal weight; the child, now not able to cry any more, languishes and is quiet. The misfortune is, these complaints are not understood; it is swaddled and crammed on, till, after gripes, purging, &c. it sinks under both burdens into a convulsion-fit, and escapes any farther torture. This would be the case with the lamb, were it not killed when full fat.

“That the present mode of nursing is wrong, one would think needed no other proof than the frequent miscarriages attending it, the death of many, and ill health of those that survive. \*\*\*\*  
What I am going to complain of is, that children in general are over-clothed and over-fed; and fed and clothed improperly. To these causes I impute almost all their diseases. But to  
be



be a little more explicit. The first great mistake is, that they think a new-born infant cannot be kept too warm: from this prejudice they load and bind it with flannels, wrappers, swathes, stays, &c. which all together are almost equal to its own weight; by which means a healthy child in a month's time is made so tender and chilly, it cannot bear the external air; and if, by any accident of a door or a window left carelessly open too long, a refreshing breeze be admitted into the suffocating atmosphere of the lying-in bed-chamber, the child and mother sometimes catch irrecoverable colds: but, what is worse than this, at the end of the month, if things go on apparently well, this hot-bed plant is sent out into the country to be reared in a leaky house, that lets in wind and rain from every quarter. Is it any wonder the child never thrives afterwards? The truth is, a new-born child cannot well be too cool and loose in its dress: it wants less cloathing than a grown person in proportion, because it is naturally warmer, as appears by the thermometer, and would therefore bear the cold of a winter's night much better than any adult person whatever. There are many instances, both ancient and modern, of infants exposed and deserted, that have lived several days; as it was the practice in ancient times, in many parts of the world, to expose all those whom the parents did not care to be encumbered with; that  
were



were deformed, or born under evil stars; not to mention the many foundlings picked up in London streets. These instances may serve to shew, that nature has made children able to bear even great hardships, before they are made weak and sickly by their mistaken nurses. But, besides the mischief arising from the weight and heat of these swadding-cloaths, they are put on so tight, and the child is so cramped by them, that its bowels have not room, nor the limbs any liberty, to act and exert themselves in the free easy manner they ought. This is a very hurtful circumstance; for limbs that are not used will never be strong, and such tender bodies cannot bear much pressure: the circulation restrained by the compression of any one part, must produce unnatural swellings in some other, especially as the fibres of infants are so easily distended. To which, doubtless, are owing the many distortions and deformities we meet with every where; chiefly among women, who suffer more in this particular than the men.

“ If nurses were capable of making just observations, they might see and take notice of that particular happiness, which a child shews by all its powers of expression, when it is newly undressed. How pleased, how delighted it is with this new liberty, when indulged for a few minutes with the free use of its legs and arms!

But



But this is not to last long : it is swaddled up as before, notwithstanding its cries and complaints.

“ I would recommend the following dress : a little flannel waistcoat, without sleeves, made to fit the body, and tie loosely behind ; to which there should be a petticoat sewed, and over this a kind of gown of the same material, or any other that is light, thin, and flimsy. The petticoat should not be quite so long as the child, the gown a few inches longer ; with one cap only on the head, which may be made double, if it be thought not warm enough. What I mean is, that the whole coiffure should be so contrived, that it might be put on at once, and neither bind nor press the head at all : the linen as usual. This I think would be abundantly sufficient for the day ; laying aside all those swathes, bandages, stays, and contrivances, that are most ridiculously used to close and keep the head in its place, and support the body. As if nature, exact nature, had produced her chief work, a human creature, so carelessly unfinished as to want those idle aids to make it perfect. Shoes and stockings are very needless incumbrances, besides that they keep the legs wet and nasty if they are not changed every hour, and often cramp and hurt the feet : a child would stand firmer, and learn to walk much sooner, without  
them.



them. I think they cannot be necessary till it runs out in the dirt. There should be a thin flannel shirt for the night, which ought to be every way quite loose. Children in this simple, pleasant dress, which may be readily put on and off without teasing them, would find themselves perfectly easy and happy, enjoying the free use of their limbs and faculties, which they would very soon begin to employ when thus left at liberty. I would have them put into it as soon as they are born, and continued in it till they are three years old; when it may be changed for any other more genteel and fashionable: though I could wish it was not the custom to wear stays at all; not because I see no beauty in the sugar-loaf shape, but that I am apprehensive it is often procured at the expence of the health and strength of the body. There is an odd notion enough entertained about change, and the keeping of children clean. Some imagine that clean linen and fresh clothes draw, and rob them of their nourishing juices; I cannot see that they do any thing more than imbibe a little of that moisture which their bodies exhale. Were it, as is supposed, it would be of service to them; since they are always too abundantly supplied, and therefore I think they cannot be changed too often, and would have them clean every day; as it would free them from stinks and founesses, which are not only offensive, but very prejudicial to the tender state of infancy.

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“ The feeding of children properly, is of much greater importance to them than their clothing. We ought to take great care to be right in this material article, and that nothing be given them but what is wholesome and good for them, and in such quantity as the body calls for towards its support and growth ; not a grain more. Let us consider what nature directs in the case : if we follow nature, instead of leading or driving it, we cannot err. In the business of nursing, as well as physic, art is ever destructive, if it does not exactly copy this original. When a child is first born, there seems to be no provision at all made for it ; for the mother’s milk, as it is now managed, seldom comes till the third day ; so that, according to this appearance of nature, a child would be left a day and a half, or two days, without any food. Were this really the case, it would be a sufficient proof that it wanted none ; as indeed it does not immediately ; for it is born full of blood, full of excrement, its appetites not awake, nor its senses opened ; and requires some intermediate time of abstinence and rest to compose and recover the struggle of the birth, and the change of circulation (the blood running into new channels) which always put it into a little fever. However extraordinary this might appear, I am sure it would be better that the child was not fed even all that time, than as it generally is fed ; for it would sleep the greatest part of the time, and, when the



milk was ready for it, would be very hungry, and suck with more eagerness; which is often necessary, for it seldom comes freely at first. But let me endeavour to reconcile this difficulty, that a child should be born thus apparently unprovided for: I say apparently, for in reality it is not so. Nature neither intended that a child should be kept so long fasting, nor that we should feed it for her. Her design is broke in upon, and a difficulty raised that is wholly owing to mistaken management. The child, as soon as it is born, is taken from the mother, and not suffered to suck till the milk comes of itself; but is either fed with strange and improper things, or put to suck some other woman, whose milk flowing in a full stream, overpowers the newborn infant, that has not yet learned to swallow, and sets it a coughing, or gives it a hiccup: the mother is left to struggle with the load of her milk, unassisted by the sucking of the child. Thus two great evils are produced, the one a prejudice to the child's health, the other the danger of the mother's life; at least the retarding her recovery, by causing what is called a milk-fever; which has been thought to be natural, but so far from it, that it is entirely owing to this misconduct. I am confident from experience, that there would be no fever at all, were things managed rightly; were the child kept without food of any kind till it was hungry, which it is impossible it should be just after the birth, and



then applied to the mother's breasts : it would suck with strength enough, after a few repeated trials, to make the milk flow gradually, in due proportion to the child's unexercised faculty of swallowing, and the call of its stomach. Thus the child would not only provide for itself the best of nourishment, but, by opening a free passage for it, would take off the mother's load, as it increased, before it could oppress or hurt her ; and therefore effectually prevent the fever, which is caused only by the painful distention of the lacteal vessels of the breasts, when the milk is injudiciously suffered to accumulate. Here let me describe a case of pure nature, in order to illustrate this material point yet farther. When a healthy young woman lies-in of her first child, before the operations of nature have been perverted by any absurd practices, her labour would be strong, and, as I have chosen to instance in the case of a first child, perhaps difficult ; but in a few minutes after her delivery, she and her child, if it be not injured, would fall into a sweet sleep of six or seven hours : the mother, if no poisonous opiate has been unnecessarily given her, would awake refreshed, the child hungry. A little thin broth with bread, or some such light food, should be then given her ; and soon after the child be put to suck. In one hour or two the milk would infallibly flow ; and, if nothing else be given it, the child would grow strong,



and she recover perfectly in a few days. This is the constant course of nature, which is very little attended to, and never followed. The general practice is, as soon as a child is born, to cram a dab of butter and sugar down its throat, a little oil, panada, caudle, or some such unwholesome mess. So that they set out wrong, and the child stands a fair chance of being made sick from the first hour. It is the custom of some to give a little roast pig to an infant, which, it seems, is to cure it of all the mother's longings. Much nonsense has been propagated, and believed, about women's longings, without any foundation in truth and nature. I wish these matters were a little more inquired into, for the honour of the sex, to which many imperfections of this kind are imputed, which I am sure it does not lie under.

“ Hence I may be asked, what is to be done with a child born sick, that, instead of sleeping, cries incessantly from the birth, and is hardly to be quieted by any means? Let good care be taken that it is not hurt by the dressing, or rather let it not be dressed at all, but wrapped up in a loose flannel. If, notwithstanding this precaution, it still continues crying; instead of feeding it, for it is certainly a preposterous thing to think of feeding a child because it is sick though possibly this may stop its mouth for a



little while, let it be applied to the mother's breast, perhaps it may bring the milk immediately, which would be the best medicine for it in such a case; or the nipple in its mouth may quiet it, though it does not bring it. And it is certainly better it should be quieted without food than with it, which must necessarily make it worse. Sometimes indeed the child may be so very ill, that it will not even attempt to suck. In such a case, which I think can happen but rarely, let the physic I shall recommend a little farther on, where children are unavoidably to be dry-nursed, be given, a little every hour, till it takes effect, still attempting to bring it to suck the mother's milk, which is the best physic or food it can take.

“ When a child sucks its own mother, which, with a very few exceptions, would be best for every child and every mother, nature has provided it with such wholesome and suitable nourishment, supposing her a temperate woman that makes some use of her limbs, it can hardly do amiss. The mother would likewise, in most hysterical nervous cases, establish her own health by it, though she were weak and sickly before-as well as that of her offspring. For these reasons I could wish, that every woman that is able, whose fountains are not greatly disturbed or tainted, would give suck to her child. I am

very sure that forcing back the milk, which most young women must have in great abundance, may be of fatal consequence: sometimes it endangers life, and often lays the foundation of many incurable diseases. The reasons that are given for this practice are very frivolous, and drawn from false premises; that some women are too weak to bear such a drain, which would rob them of their own nourishment. This is a very mistaken notion; for the first general cause of most people's diseases is, not want of nourishment, as is here imagined, but too great fulness and redundancy of humours; good at first, but being more than the body can employ or consume, they stagnate, degenerate, and the whole mass becomes corrupt, and produces many diseases. This is confirmed by the general practice of physicians, who make holes in the skin, perpetual blisters, issues, &c. to let out the superfluity. I would therefore leave it to be considered, whether the throwing back such a load of humour, as a woman's first milk, be most likely to mend her constitution, or make her complaints irremediable. The mother's first milk is purgative, and cleanses the child of its long-hoarded excrement; no child, therefore, can be deprived of it without manifest injury. By degrees it changes its property, becomes less purgative, and more nourishing; and is the best and only food the child likes, or ought to have for



for some time. If I could prevail, no child should ever be crammed with any unnatural mixture, till the provision of nature was ready for it; nor afterwards fed with any ungenial alien diet whatever, at least for the *first three months*: for it is not well able to digest and assimilate other aliments sooner. I have seen very healthy fine children, that never ate or drank any thing whatever but the mother's milk for the first ten or twelve months. Nature seems to direct this, by giving them no teeth till about that time. There is usually milk enough with the first child; sometimes more than it can take: it is poured forth from an exuberant, overflowing urn, by a bountiful hand that never provides sparingly. The call of nature should be waited for to feed it with any thing more substantial, and the appetite ever precede the food; not only with regard to the daily meals, but those changes of diet, which opening, increasing life requires. But this is never done in either case, which is one of the greatest mistakes of all nurses. Thus far nature, if she be not interrupted, will do the whole business perfectly well; and there seems to be nothing left for a nurse to do, but to keep the child clean and sweet, and to tumble and toss it about a good deal, play with it, and keep it in good humour.

“ When the child requires more solid sustenance, we are to inquire what, and how much  
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is most proper to give it. We may be well assured there is a great mistake either in the quantity or quality of children's food, or both, as it is usually given them; because they are made sick by it; for to this mistake I cannot help imputing nine in ten of all their diseases. As to quantity, there is a most ridiculous error in the common practice; for it is generally supposed, that, whenever a child cries, it wants victuals; and it is accordingly fed ten, twelve, or more times in a day and night. This is so obvious a misapprehension, that I am surpris'd it should ever prevail. If a child's wants and motions be diligently and judiciously attended to, it will be found that it never cries but from pain: now the first sensations of hunger are not attended with pain; accordingly a child (I mean this of a very young one) that is hungry, will make a hundred other signs of its want, before it will cry for food. If it be healthy and quite easy in its dress, it will hardly ever cry at all. Indeed these signs and motions I speak of are but rarely to be observed; because it seldom happens that children are ever suffered to be hungry. In a few, very few, whom I have had the pleasure to see reasonably nursed, that were not fed above two or three times in four and twenty hours, and yet were perfectly healthy, active, and happy, I have seen these signals, which were as intelligible as if they had spoken.

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“ There are many faults in the quality of their food : it is not simple enough. Their paps, panadas, gruels, &c. are generally enriched with sugar, spice, and sometimes a drop of wine, neither of which they ought ever to taste. Our bodies never want them : they are what luxury only has introduced, to the destruction of the health of mankind. It is not enough that their food be simple, it should be also light. Several people, I find, are mistaken in their notions of what is light ; and fancy that most kinds of pastry, puddings, custards, &c. are light, that is, light of digestion. But there is nothing heavier in this sense than unfermented flour and eggs boiled hard, which are the chief ingredients of those preparations. What I mean by light, to give the best idea I can of it, is any substance that is easily separated, and soluble in warm water. Good bread is the lightest thing I know : the power of due fermentation, in which consists the whole art of making it, breaks and attenuates the tenacious particles of the flour so as to give it these qualities I mention, and make it the fittest food for young children. Cows milk is also simple and light, and very good for them ; but it is injudiciously prepared : it should not be boiled ; for boiling alters the taste and property of it, destroys its sweetness, and makes it thicker, heavier, and less fit to mix and assimilate with the blood. But the chief objection is, that their  
food

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cause their juices are more elaborate ; especially if they have never been confined to be fatted. The juices of a young ox, taken from the plough, make the finest flavoured and most wholesome soup. I believe it is for the same reason, the flesh of all wild animals has a higher taste than that of tame, faginated ones, and is therefore most agreeable to the palate of the luxurious : but this is to be understood of those creatures that feed on corn or herbage. The other part of children's diet may be a little toasted bread and water boiled almost dry, and then mixed with fresh milk not boiled \*. This, without sugar, spice, or any other pretended amendment whatever, would be perfectly light and wholesome, of sufficient nourishment, something like milk from the cow, with the additional strength and spirit of bread in it. Twice a day, and not oftener, a sucking child should be fed at first ; once with the broth, and once with the milk thus prepared. As to the quantity at each time,

\* The London bakers are suspected of putting alum in their bread, which would be very pernicious to infants. Therefore rusks, or the biscuits called tops-and-bottoms, or rice, may be used instead of it. These will not turn sour so soon as common bread ; which quality is undoubtedly an objection to using much of it, especially when children are weakly. The safest and best method in my opinion is, not to feed them at all ; at least till they are six or eight months old. The finest children I ever saw lived wholly upon sucking till after that age.

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its appetite must be the measure of that. Its hunger should be satisfied, but no more; for children will always eat with some eagerness full as much as they ought: therefore it must be very wrong to go beyond that, and stuff them till they spew, as the common method is. They should not be laid on their backs to be fed, but held in a sitting posture, that swallowing may be easier to them, and that they may the more readily discover when they have had enough. When they come to be about *ten or twelve months old*, and their appetite and digestion grow strong, they may be fed three times a day; which I think they ought never to exceed their whole lives after. By night I would not have them fed or suckled at all, that they might at least be hungry in a morning. It is this night-feeding that makes them so over-fat and bloated. If they be not used to it at first, and, perhaps, awaked on purpose, they will never seek it; and if they are not disturbed from the birth, in a week's time they will get into a habit of sleeping all or most part of the night very quietly, awaking possibly once or twice for a few minutes, when they are wet, and ought to be changed. Their meals, and, in my opinion, their sucking too, ought to be at stated times, and the same every day; that the stomach may have intervals to digest, and the appetite return. The child would soon be quite easy and satisfied in the habit;  
much



much more so than when taught to expect food at all times, and at every little fit of crying or uneasiness. Let this method be observed about a *twelvemonth*, when, and not before, they may be weaned; not all at once, but by insensible degrees; that they may neither feel, nor fret at, the want of the breast. This might be very easily managed, if they were suffered to suck only at certain times. Were this plan of nursing literally pursued, the children kept clean and sweet, tumbled and tossed about a good deal, and carried out every day in all weathers, I am confident, that, in six or eight months time, most children would become healthy and strong, would be able to sit up on the ground without support, to divert themselves an hour at a time, to the great relief of their nurses; would readily find the use of their legs, and very soon shift for themselves.

“ If it be asked, whether I mean this of children in general, and that weakly ones, born of unhealthy parents, should be treated in the same manner; I answer, that it is not so common for children to inherit the diseases of their parents, as is generally imagined: there is much vulgar error in this opinion; for people that are very unhealthy seldom have children, especially if the bad health be of the female side; and it is generally late in life when chronic diseases take place

place in most men, when the business of love is pretty well over: certainly children can have no title to those infirmities which their parents have acquired by indolence and intemperance long after their birth. It is not common for people to complain of ails they think hereditary, till they are grown up; that is, till they have contributed to them by their own irregularities and excesses, and then are glad to throw their own faults back upon their parents, and lament a bad constitution when they have spoiled a very good one. It is very seldom that children are troubled with family distempers. Indeed, when we find them affected with scrophulous or venereal complaints, we may reasonably conclude the taint to have been transmitted to them; but these cases are very rare, in comparison of the many others that are falsely, and without the least foundation, imputed to parents; when the real cause is either in the complainants themselves, or bad nursing, that has fixed them early in bad habits. In one sense, many diseases may be said to be hereditary, perhaps all those of malformation, by which I mean not only deformity and distortion, but all those cases where the fibres and vessels of one part are weaker in proportion than the rest; so that upon any strain of the body, whether of debauch or too violent exercise, the weak part fails first, and disorders the whole. Thus complaints may be produced  
similar



similar to those of the parent, owing in some measure to the similitude of parts, which possibly is inherited like the features of the face; but yet these diseases might never have appeared, but for the immediate acting cause, the violence done to the body. Most distempers have two causes: the one, a particular state of the solids and fluids of the body, which dispose it to receive certain infections and impulses; the other, the infection or impulse itself. Now what I contend for is, that though this predisponent state or habit of the body be heritable, yet the diseases incident to these wretched heirs may be avoided, by preventing the active cause; which may be done in many cases by a due attention to the non-naturals, as they are called; in plainer words, by a temperate, active life; in children, by good nursing. Therefore I conclude, that, instead of indulging and enfeebling yet more by the common methods, children so unhappily born, what I am recommending, together with the wholesome milk of a healthy nurse, is the best, the only means to remedy the evil, and by which alone they may by degrees be made healthy and strong. And thus, in a generation or two of reasonable temperate persons, every taint and infirmity whatever, the king's evil and madness not excepted, would be totally worn out.

“ The plain natural plan I have laid down is never followed, because most mothers, of any condition, either cannot, or will not undertake the troublesome task of suckling their own children ; which is troublesome only for want of proper method : were it rightly managed, there would be too much pleasure in it, to every woman that can prevail upon herself to give up a little of the beauty of her breast to feed her offspring ; though this is a mistaken notion, for the breasts are not spoiled by giving suck, but by growing fat. There would be no fear of offending the husband’s ears with the noise of the squalling brat. The child, was it nursed in this way, would be always quiet, in good humour, ever playing, laughing, or sleeping. In my opinion, a man of sense cannot have a prettier rattle (for rattles he must have of one kind or other) than such a young child. I am quite at a loss to account for the general practice of sending infants out of doors, to be suckled or dry-nursed by another woman, who has not so much understanding, nor can have so much affection for it, as the parents ; and how it comes to pass, that people of good sense and easy circumstances will not give themselves the pains to watch over the health and welfare of their children, but are so careless as to give them up to the common methods, without considering how near it is to an equal chance that they are destroyed by them.



them. The ancient custom of exposing them to wild beasts, or drowning them, would certainly be a much quicker and more humane way of dispatching them. There are some, however, who wish to have children, and to preserve them, but are mistaken in their cares about them. To such only I would address myself, and earnestly recommend it to every father to have his child nursed under his own eye; to make use of his own reason and sense, in superintending and directing the management of it; nor suffer it to be made one of the mysteries of the *Bona Dea*, from which the men are to be excluded. I would advise every mother that can, for her own sake as well as her child's, to suckle it: if she be a healthy woman, it will confirm her health; if weakly, in most cases it will restore her. It need be no confinement to her, or abridgment of her time: four times in four and twenty hours will be often enough to give it suck; letting it have as much as it will suck out of both breasts at each time. It may be fed and dressed by some handy reasonable servant, that will submit to be directed; whom, likewise, it may sleep with. No other woman's milk can be so good for her child; and dry-nursing I look upon to be the most unnatural and dangerous method of all; and, according to my observation, not one in three survives it. To breed a child in this artificial manner, requires more knowledge of nature and the animal œconomy, than the best nurse was ever mistress of, as well

as more care and attention than is generally bestowed on children: the skill of a good physician would be necessary to manage it rightly." \* \* \* \* \*

The Doctor is here led to state his opinion as to the precautions necessary to be taken in the choice of hired nurses, and his reasons why the children entrusted to their care should be treated somewhat differently from those who are nursed in a more natural way, and suck their own mothers. He does not deem it enough that hired nurses should be clean and healthy: he looks upon their age as a material consideration. "Those," he says, "between twenty and thirty are certainly of the best age; because they will have more milk than the very young, and more and better than the old. But what," he thinks, "of the utmost consequence is, that great regard should be had to the time of their lying-in, and those procured, if possible, who have not been brought to bed above two or three months." He justly observes, that "nature intending a child should suck about a twelve-month, the milk seldom continues good much longer;" and he adds, with a still greater degree of evidence, "that, if a new-born infant be deprived of its own mother's milk, it ought undoubtedly to have what is most like it: the newer it is, the more suitable in all respects to its tender nature." \* \* \* \* \*



After censuring a very common practice with poor women, who, if they can get nurse-children, will suckle two or three of them successively with the same milk, he proceeds thus: "A nurse ought to have great regard to her diet: it is not enough that she be sober and temperate; her food should consist of a proper mixture of flesh and vegetables: she should eat one hearty meal of unsalted flesh-meat every day, with a good deal of garden-stuff, and a little bread. Thin broth or milk would be best for her breakfast and supper. Her drink should be small-beer, or milk and water; but upon no account should she ever touch a drop of wine or strong drink, much less any kind of spirituous liquors: giving ale or brandy to a nurse is, in effect, giving it to the child; and it is easy to conclude what would be the consequence." \* \* \*

This equally candid and judicious writer does not enter upon his promised description of the treatment proper for children put out to nurse, without again reminding his readers, that the plan, which he would lay down, could he prevail, would be that of nature, excluding art and foreign aid entirely. "But," he adds, "when this is broke in upon, a little adventitious skill becomes indispensibly necessary; that, if we are not perfectly right in following closely the design of nature, we may co-operate a little,

and not be totally wrong in counteracting it, as is too often the case. What I mean is, that every child, not allowed the mother's first milk, whether it be dry-nursed or suckled by another woman, should be purged in a day or two after the birth, and this purging continued for some time; not by regular doses of physic that may operate all at once, but some lenient laxative should be contrived, and given two or three times a day, so as to keep the child's body open for the first nine days, or fortnight; lessening the quantity insensibly, till it be left off. It should be so managed, that the operation of the artificial physic may resemble that of the natural. This is so material, that, for want of it, most children within the first month break out in pimples all over: the nurses call it the red-gum, and look upon it to be a natural thing, and that the children will be unhealthy that have it not. So indeed they will be in all likelihood; and it is better that these foulnesses, which become acrid and hot by remaining too long in the body, should be discharged through the skin, than not at all; or that they should be lodged in the blood, or fall upon the vitals, to lay the foundation of numberless future evils; but it is chiefly owing to the neglect of this method at first. A child that sucks its own mother, unless it be greatly over-fed, or kept too hot, will never be troubled with this humour at all." \* \* \* \* \*

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The following is the form of the gentle purgative which the Doctor recommends to such infants as have been deprived of the salutary operation of their mothers' milk :

“ Take manna, pulp of cassia, of each half an ounce: dissolve them in about three ounces of thin broth. Let the child take two spoonfuls three times a day, varying the quantity according to the effect ; which, at first, ought to be three or four stools in four and twenty hours.”

Among other rules for the conduct of hired nurses, this experienced physician particularly enjoins such women “ to keep the children awake by day, as long as they are disposed to be so, and to amuse and keep them in good humour all they can; not to lull and rock them to sleep, or to continue their sleep too long; which is only done to save their own time and trouble, to the great detriment of the children's health, spirits, and understanding.” \* \* \* \* \* Here he refers to his former observations on the changes to be gradually made in the diet of children, when they come to require more solid sustenance than breast-milk ; and he takes occasion to introduce the following remarks :

“ A child may be allowed any kind of mellow fruit, either raw, stewed, or baked ; roots of

all sorts, and all the produce of the kitchen-garden. I am sure all these things are wholesome and good for them, and every one else, notwithstanding the idle notion of their being windy, which they are *only* to very debauched stomachs; and so is milk: but no man's blood wants the cleansing, refreshing power of milk, more than his whose stomach, used to inflammatory things of high relish, will not bear the first chill of it. To children, all this kind of food, taken in moderation, is perfectly grateful and salutary. Some may think that they carry into the stomach the eggs of future worms: but of this I am not very apprehensive; for I believe there are few things we eat or drink that do not convey them. But then they can never be hatched in a healthy inside, where all the juices are sweet and good, and every gland performs its office: the gall, in particular, would destroy them: bullocks' gall has been found to be a good and safe vermifuge. It is my opinion, we swallow the eggs of many little animals, that are never brought into life within us, except where they find a fit nest or lodgment in the acid phlegm of vitiated humours of the stomach and bowels. Were these totally discharged every day, and the food of yesterday employed in nourishment, and the superfluity thrown off to the last grain, no worms could ever breed or harbour in our vitals. As soon as the children have any teeth, at six or eight months,  
they



they may by degrees be used to a little flesh-meat; which they are always very fond of, much more so at first, than of any confectionary or pastry wares, with which they should never debauch their taste."

I have elsewhere enlarged on the fatal effects of these palatable poisons; and I am not without hopes that tender and rational mothers will pay some little attention to my warnings. A reform in this article alone—the total disuse of pastry in the diet of young children—will go a great way towards preventing many of the worst complaints to which they are subject.

From the above remarks on the proper food of infants, the Doctor makes a very natural transition to the consideration of their diseases. He begins with exposing the absurdity of popular errors and popular prejudices with respect to teething. "Breeding teeth," he says, "has been thought to be, and is fatal to many children; but I am confident this is not from nature, for it is no disease, or we could not be well in health till one or two and twenty, or later. Teeth are breeding the greatest part of that time; and it is my opinion, the last teeth give more pain than the first, as the bones and gums they are to pierce are grown more firm and hard. But, whatever fever, fits, or other dangerous symptoms

symptoms seem to attend this operation of nature, healthy children have sometimes bred their teeth without any such bad attendants; which ought to incline us to suspect the evil not to be natural, but rather the effect of too great a fulness, or the corrupt humours of the body put into agitation by the stimulating pain the tooth causes in breaking its way out. This, I believe, never happens without some pain, and possibly a little fever; but if the blood and juices be perfectly sweet and good, and there be not too great a redundancy of them, both will be but slight, and pass off imperceptibly, without any bad consequence whatever. The chief intention of the method I am recommending is, to preserve the humours of the body in this state; and therefore, if it succeeds, children so managed will breed their teeth with less pain and danger than are commonly observed to attend this work of nature."

In support of this opinion, I can state from my own experience, that I have never known cutting the teeth, as it is called, attended with any pain of an alarming nature, except in cases of previous disease, mismanagement, or bad nursing. Fevers, convulsion-fits, and other dangerous symptoms, are always, upon such occasions, the consequences of an extreme fulness of the



the habit, a vitiated state of the blood and juices, some constitutional weakness, or a great irritability of the nervous system. The use also of corals, and the like hard substances, by rendering the gums callous, must oppose additional resistance to the bursting tooth, and greatly increase the acuteness of the pain. But the Doctor's text requires no comment. I shall therefore resume my quotation from his valuable pamphlet.

“ As I have said,” continues he, “ that the first and general cause of most of the diseases infants are liable to, is the acid corruption of their food, it may not be amiss just to mention an easy and certain remedy, or rather preventive, if given timely, at the first appearance of predominating acid ; which is very obvious, from the crude white or green stools, gripes and purgings, occasioned by it. The common method, when these symptoms appear, is to give the pearl-julep, crab's eyes, and the testaceous powders ; which, though they do absorb the acidities, have this inconvenience in their effect, that they are apt to lodge in the body, and bring on a costiveness very detrimental to infants, and therefore require a little manna, or some gentle purge, to be given frequently to carry them off. Instead of these, I would recommend a certain  
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fine insipid powder, called *magnesia alba*, which, at the same time it corrects and sweetens all sournesses rather more effectually than the testaceous powders, is likewise a lenient purgative, and keeps the body gently open. This is the only alkaline purge I know of, and which our dispensatories have long wanted. I have taken it myself, and given it to others, for the heart-burn, and find it to be the best and most effectual remedy for that complaint. It may be given to children from one to two drams a day, a little at a time, in all their food, till the acidities be quite overcome, and the concomitant symptoms disappear entirely. I have often given it with good and great effect, even when the children have been far gone in diseases first brought on by prevailing acid.

“ It is always easier to prevent diseases than to cure them ; and as neither children, nor indeed grown persons, are ever seized with chronic diseases suddenly, the progress of decaying health being perceptibly gradual, it is no difficult matter for a physician of common skill to observe the first step towards illness, and to foretell the consequence, in all those whose habit of life is well known to him. But to parents and nurses in general, these observations may not occur. I will therefore point out a few certain signs and symptoms, by which they may be assured, that  
a child's



a child's health is decaying, even before it appears to be sick. If these are neglected, the evil increases, grows from bad to worse, and more violent and apparent complaints will follow, and perhaps end in incurable diseases, which a timely remedy, or a slight change in the diet and manner of life, had infallibly prevented. The first tendency to disease may be observed in a child's breath. It is not enough the breath be not offensive: it should be sweet and fragrant like a nosegay of fresh flowers, or a pail of new milk from a young cow that feeds upon the sweetest grass of the spring; and this as well at first waking in the morning, as all day long. It is always so with children that are in perfect delicate health. As soon, therefore, as a child's breath is found to be either hot, or strong, or sour, we may be assured that digestion and surfeit have fouled and disturbed the blood, and now is the time to apply a proper remedy, and prevent a train of impending evils. Let the child be restrained in its food; eat less; live upon milk or thin broth for a day or two; be carried, or walk if it is able, a little more than usual in the open air. Let a little of this powder, or any other proper physic, be given; not that I would advise physic to be made familiar; but one dose administered now, would prevent the necessity of a great many that might afterwards be prescribed with much less good effect.

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the æra of their deliverance ; for this great difficulty surmounted, they generally do well, by getting out of the nurse's hands to shift for themselves. And here I must endeavour to correct a great mistake, which is, that most people think it wrong to put weakly children upon their legs, especially if they are the least bent or crooked ; but whoever will venture the experiment will surely find, that crooked legs will grow in time strong and straight by frequent walking, while disuse will make them worse and worse every day. As they grow daily more and more able, let their walks be gradually increased, till they can walk two miles on a stretch without weariness ; which they will be very well able to do before they are three years old, if they are accustomed to it every day. To lead them such a walk, should be imposed as an indispensable task upon their maids, for to them it will be the highest pleasure ; so far from a burthen to them, that if they perform the daily duty, they will, from the impulse of their own active vigour, be found running, leaping, and playing, all day long. Thus, a dull, heavy child may be made playful and sprightly, a weakly one healthy and strong, and confirmed in good habits and perpetual health.

“ There are some other little niceties that, were they observed in the nursing of children,

would be of some use to them ; such as making them lie straight in the bed. I do not mean extended like a corpse, but that their limbs may be free and easy. I have sometimes seen children a year or two old lie doubled up in bed as in the womb, especially in cold weather ; and from the constraint of their posture, fall into profuse sweats. This will be prevented if they are laid straight ; and sleep relaxing all the muscles of the body, the knees will naturally be bent a little. They should be taught to use both hands alike ; for employing one more than the other will not only make the hand and arm so used, but also that side of the body, bigger than the other. This is sometimes the cause of crookedness. It would likewise not be amiss to forward their speaking plain, by speaking plain distinct words to them, instead of the *namby-pamby* style, and giving them back their own broken inarticulate attempts ; by which means, I believe, some children scarcely speak intelligibly at seven years of age. I think they cannot be made reasonable creatures too soon. \* \* \* \* \*

As this essay was written in the form of a letter, the Doctor concludes it with an apology to the gentleman to whom it was addressed, for the loose manner in which the thoughts were laid before him. The writer very candidly confesses that he had “neither time nor patience to think  
of



of form and order, or supporting them by affected demonstrations taken from mechanical principles and powers. "All I have endeavoured," says he, "is to be intelligible and useful; and therefore I have avoided, as much as possible, all terms of art; together with learned quotations, as often produced out of vanity, and to shew deep reading, as for the sake of proof. \* \* \* \* I shall only add, by way of persuasive to those who may be inclined to make trial of the method I recommend, that I am a father, and have already practised it with the most desirable success."

In a postscript to the tenth edition of this pamphlet, dated July 17th, 1769, the author expresses himself in the following manner:

"It is now above twenty years since I wrote the foregoing essay; and though I have made a few alterations, it was only to explain those passages that contained any apparent difficulty or obscurity: I have never yet found cause to alter essentially any one opinion delivered in it. I have through the whole industriously laboured at the greatest plainness and simplicity; and yet my meaning has been much mistaken. Some have very strangely expected to find in it the general cure of children's diseases, though it be professedly written only to prevent them, by

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establishing



establishing good health ; a very different thing (whatever people may think) from the cure of diseases. Sick or weak children, whether such by nature, or made such by bad nursing, cannot perhaps be brought immediately into the habits here recommended, but must first be cured of their maladies by a skilful physician ; who, if he be also an honest man, will introduce these, or similar habits of management, to continue them in health and strength. But in treating their diseases, as well as in nursing them, I am very sure many capital errors are committed. I object greatly in particular to the frequent use of antimonial and mercurial medicines ; which, though they give sometimes a little temporary relief, by discharging crude and phlegmatic humours, killing worms, &c. I am very confident a repeated use of them breaks the blood, relaxes the fibres, and is every way destructive to the constitution of children. Present relief seems to be all that is desired, and therefore all that is intended by medication : the flow, but permanent effects of good habits few have patience to expect. Others have neglected essentials, to lay stress only upon trifles. A lady of great sway among her acquaintance told me not long ago, with an air of reproach, that she had nursed her child according to my book, and it died. I asked, if she had suckled it herself ? No.—Had it suckled any other woman ?—It was dry-nursed.—Then, madam, you cannot im-



pute your misfortune to my advice, for you have taken a method quite contrary to it in the most capital point.—Oh! but, according to my direction, it had never worn stockings.—Madam, children may die, whether they do or do not wear stockings.” A stronger illustration could not be given of the folly of attending only to trifles, and acting diametrically opposite to the dictates of reason and experience in matters of the greatest moment.

## THE END.

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- Page 96 line 12. *dele the before solid*  
 115 — 23. *for the read a*  
 173 — 7. *after not insert greatly*  
 258 — 19. *dele late*  
 296 — 8. *read her desponding*  
 333 — 15. *read preffure of*

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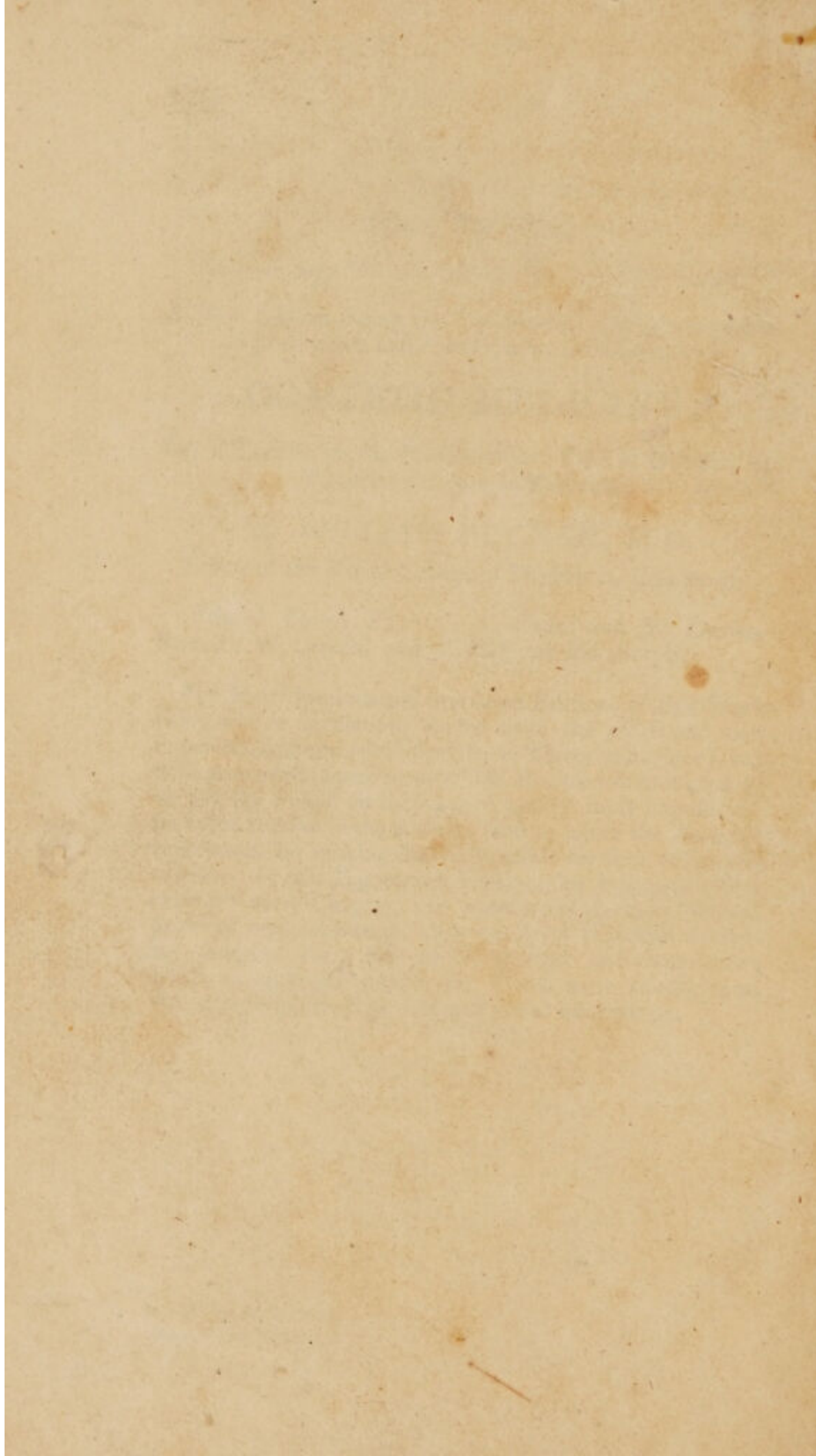
Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh.

Printed for A. Strahan ; T. Cadell and W. Davies,  
Strand ; W. Creech, and E. Balfour, Edinburgh.

\* \* \* Many spurious and mutilated Editions of this Work being now in circulation, copied from the oldest and most imperfect Editions (published above Thirty years since), and with pretended improvements, Dr. Buchan thinks it his duty to put the Public on their guard against those impositions, intended to take in the unwary, and to injure the Author's reputation, by making him responsible for their errors and defects. In this Eighteenth Edition, he has considerably enlarged every Chapter, and introduced above an hundred pages of original matter, on a variety of new and interesting subjects, the result of his practice and experience ; which he hopes will render the Work more conducive to the great purposes of general and useful information.









X  
Hygiene for women

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