

[FOR THE CRITIC.]

"AT NIGHT."

I stood 'neath the shade of an old fir tree,
 And the night was then half gone,
 The hills o'er the water shew'd dark in the sea,
 Looming black 'gainst the dim light of dawn,
 The water lay calm as a mirror a deep,
 Save the rustling night wind's sigh;
 And the stars in its dark depths sleepily winked
 To their mates in the deep blue sky—
 And it looked as tho' shower on shower had roll'd
 From the depths of the summer night;
 In sparkling splashes of silver and gold,
 To make this glorious sight—
 And the mermaids gather the golden stars
 That fall on the sea-worn strand;
 That sparkle in rido and golden pass,
 On the wave-ruled, rippled sand;
 And they carry them down to their haunts below,
 'Midst the coral and kelp, and shells;
 Where the silent fishes come and go,
 'Thro' feathery shadowy dells—
 'Thro' herring in schools sweep quietly by,
 'Thro' the water like ghostly bark;
 Their wake like a spirit seems to sigh,
 In eddies, all dazle and spark—
 A flash! and a meteor, blazing light,
 Flies thro' the vaults dark blue;
 Splitting the darkness and chasing the night,
 And turning to jewels the dew—
 Now the big bear tramps on his lonely way,
 Where the stillness reigns profound;
 And beyond him shines the sun's bright ray,
 And below him the earth turns round—
 And about him waves of ether roll;
 And around him endless space,
 As he tries to reach the starry pole,
 That smiles in his rugged face—
 And below on the water the northern loon,
 Laughs over the misty calm;
 And jeeringly cries to the sentinel owl,
 Which echoes the loud alarm.

A. H.

PREVENTING COLDS.

Colds are always with us, like the poor, and the two ills are about equally difficult of treatment. The very name "cold" is misleading. There is nothing cold about a cold; it is, on the contrary, an acute inflammation, a heat; and it runs its course like any other fever. This must be kept in mind if we would understand the best way of preventing and of checking a cold—I will not say of curing it; for a cold, once well established, is as incurable as any other self-limited disease.

It takes its misleading name from the fact that exposure to cold produces it. Cold feet, a cool draught upon a part of the body, or exposure of the whole body to a low temperature, will bring on its symptoms either in the bronchial tubes ("cold on the chest"), the vocal organs ("cold in the throat"), or the nasal passages ("cold in the head"). When the flame of inflammation is lighted in either of these sensitive regions it is apt to extend itself to the others. But whatever it is, the disease is inflammation, and nothing else, and must be treated as such; that is to say, by palliative remedies and by avoiding further exposure until it has run its course.

But a cold, once established, is seldom cured—it ends when it has spent itself. So that the more important question for us is, how may we keep from catching colds? How can we diminish the great tax that they lay on our comfort, the risk which they cause of pneumonia or bronchitis, and their frequent termination in chronic catarrh, the characteristic American ailment, and the most distressing of those that come from our variable climate?

Of the ordinary precautions against catching cold I need say little. To dress with sufficient warmth in Winter, to avoid suddenly checking the perspiration in Summer, to guard against cold feet the year round and against accidental uncovering during sleep, to avoid draughts and to keep warm in the cold—all these precautions we know and practice more or less carefully, and yet many persons, in spite of them all, are among the greatest sufferers from colds.

Who are these unfortunate persons? They are of all temperaments, habits and ages. No age, no country, has not heard their sneezings; and the chorus will never cease until the sufferers learn this lesson, which should be embroidered upon every pocket-handkerchief in Christendom: "It is not enough to protect yourself against the cold. You must also harden yourself against the cold."

The people, then, who catch cold are those who depend too much upon precautions and too little upon hardening, and the more they protect themselves without hardening the tenderer they become and the likelier to catch cold. It is like banking up a river; the higher you build the levees the worse will be the overflow when it comes. Those people who defend themselves only by artifice against colds are the worst sufferers from colds.

Now, what regime can be recommended to these sufferers? Certainly no extreme or Spartan measures; for many of those who suffer the most from colds are delicate ladies, invalids, children or aged persons. To such it would often be dangerous to recommend cold plunge baths or long walks in rain or snow. These are good tonics for some, but they are for the strong, and not for the weak. But the principle of treatment is the same for all. These sufferers generally have one trait in common. They have coddled themselves so warmly as to have an over-sensitive skin; and this is the great source of colds. Happily, it is a condition that can be rationally treated and usually cured.

How does the trouble begin? Very often, perhaps usually, in childhood. An anxious mother wishes to be sure that her child shall not take cold; "and if I only keep him warm enough," she says to herself, arguing from

the name of the thing—"if I can only keep him warm enough, surely he will never catch cold." So the child is burdened night and day, Summer and Winter alike, with wraps and coverings that keep him in perspiration a great part of the time, and this causes such tenderness of the skin that catching cold on the least exposure is inevitable. It is quite true that a child should be kept warm. But the anxious mother must bear in mind that, in a warm room or on a hot day, he does not need as much clothing as when it is cold. Overheating, in a word, is the surest preparation for colds; but with each new attack the ignorant mother can think of nothing better than to make the house warmer and the clothing thicker. Of course the little sufferer's skin becomes still tenderer and the colds more frequent. Many an active little fellow, thus coddled, has to spend the bright days of Winter in watching from his bedroom windows the sports of happier children who are not so tender but that they can face the snow without danger.

Now, what is to be done in such a case? The treatment needed is simple enough, though it needs intelligent care in the application. These are my five rules for hardening:—

1. Cold plunge baths for the comparatively few who can bear them.
2. Cold sponge baths daily for the majority of healthy persons.
3. As much out door exposure, Summer and Winter, as possible, always with clothing according to the season.
4. Avoid sleeping too warm at night. The golden mean in the matter is the best.

5. Many persons take cold by having cold feet, and for these the cold douche to the feet is a most effective cure. It stimulates the nerves and the arteries of the feet, and produces a brisk reaction of warmth. A single application will sometimes set cold feet glowing that have not been warm for a whole Winter. In practice I have found this a most effective remedy, and while it is not to be used absolutely without precautions of time and seasons, yet there are few persons so delicate as not to bear perfectly well this moderate and local exposure to cold, or to profit by it. Often it will entirely cure the life-long affliction of cold feet. The colder the water the better; and if one has not the convenience of a douche, it will serve fairly well to stand in a tub or basin filled to six inches deep with the coldest water at command. The warm reaction is essential.

In the matter of colds an ounce of prevention is worth at least a pound of cure, as in other ailments of which I have written elsewhere. One who will toughen himself as I have indicated need not often ask, "How shall I cure my cold?" for he will have already said to himself, "First, don't catch your cold."—*T. M. Coan in Harper's Bazaar.*

FIGHTING-KITES IN INDIA.

It was late in summer some years back, when I was living in the suburbs, that a strange boy called on me to inquire if I had Indian kites with me, or if I could give him some information about them. Though unable to oblige my young inquirer in the way he desired, I was pleased to notice that boys here are awakening to a choice of better kites than the curious ones they fly at present. The thick picture-kites with long tails are after the fashion of the Chinese, who, however, are not backward in the use of lighter and more refined fighting-kites, which form the speciality of Indian kite-fliers. To save space I shall touch only on the main features of kite-flying in India. In that country there are shops where they sell kites very cheap; so very few people make them at home. Besides, it wants a fine and practised hand to make the thin, well-balanced fighting-kites. They are made of one (square) shape, but of various sizes: the smallest being 8 inches square and the largest 2 feet square. The most common and useful ones are a foot square. Very thin but strong paper, resembling tissue or cigarette paper, of all colors, is used for the purpose. But whether the kite is made of one or different pieces of paper, it must be of the same thickness throughout. The backbone is a straight, flat, strong, well-finished lath, and the bow is made out of a cane or a piece of pliant wood half as thick as the backbone, round and knotless. The latter must be of equal thickness and weight throughout its whole length, as on it mainly depends the balance of the kite. The tail, which is merely a finish or an ornament, is triangular or round, measuring only two or three inches at the longest. Strong card-thread is used to fly kites with. The English manufacturers would be surprised to learn the amount of cotton thread consumed in India for this purpose; one lad using as much as 10,000 yards in the course of a year. Silken thread is also used, though rarely. The knots joining the pieces being made fine, smooth, and strong, the whole length of the thread is drawn through a mixture of fine pounded glass and light starch, which gives it a keen edge. The dried thread, which is now ready for fighting purposes, is then wound up on a wooden frame resembling a spool. Great ingenuity is spent in making this spool or roller light, useful, and handsome. Next, as to the motion of the kite. Two pieces exactly equal in length off the main thread are tied to the kite; one at the meeting-point of the bow and the backbone; the other, a few inches lower, to the backbone only. There are two useful things of motion besides the ordinary straight one: the wheeling motion, in which the kite wheels round and round, and the quivering motion, in which its head keeps on quivering sideways as it flies upwards; both being very graceful. A practised hand can give to the kite either motion as he pleases. Of course a good deal depends on the proper fastening of the kite. If it wheels too much you must make the lower fastening thread shorter, or if it leans too much on one side you should stick a piece of paper or fine linen to the bow on the other side. Similarly there are other little means to regulate the motion of the kite. As in all warfare, great skill and practice are required to fight well with kites, and manœuvring counts a great deal in paper actions. Sometimes the enemy has certain advantages over you: for instance, his house is higher than yours (in India kites are usually flown from the flat tops of houses), commanding a greater swoop; or his kite may be a little