

Health Department.

The Inroads of Disease.

How often do we hear the remark made by one who has been confined to the house with a long illness, "I don't see how I happened to be taken sick."

Without entering into a confusing analysis of the causes of disease, we may in general terms divide them into two classes: visible and invisible. The former we can easily understand, and we need but cite a few examples to illustrate. There is not usually much doubt or mystery attending the case of a man who has been injured by an explosion of gunpowder, a railroad accident, a fall from a building, a runaway horse, or an overdose of poison. The query usually in such cases is, not how did it happen, but the wonder is why the result was not more serious.

But with the latter, or the invisible, doubts and questions will always arise. It is true that there are many diseases which are hereditary, but scientific investigation compels us candidly to admit that the list of so-called hereditary diseases is not at present so large as it was ten or fifteen years ago. Recent research seems to point clearly to the fact that it is not so much the disease that is transmitted from one generation to another, as it is a low, impoverished and feeble constitution which is unable to withstand the attacks of such maladies as are generally met with in the course of an ordinary life.

But it is to the manner in which these invisible attacks are made upon the citadel of life, and which bring in their train the long list of fevers and other wasting diseases, that we wish now to consider, and, if possible, to guard against.

Medical treatises teach us that there are three avenues of approach to the human system: the stomach, lungs and the skin.

Now, with the exception of a few diseases which, either in a latent or more advanced form are present in the system at birth, the cause of any disease must exist outside of the body, and, if subsequently taken into the human system, must be conveyed to it through one of the above mentioned channels.

The question then to be decided is, can these avenues be guarded so as to keep out the enemy. The answer must be, no. This is inevitable, for in order to sustain life these ways of approach must be kept open in order that the functions of the body may be carried on. We must eat; the lungs must take in and exhale air, and the pores of the skin must be kept open and free from any obstruction.

The dismissing of this factor leaves but two others to be considered, one, is the removal of expurgating from food, air and water, which substances are known to be either poisonous or detrimental to health; the other is to fortify the system so that it will not submit or be impressed by these outside or external influences.

To one of these belongs the province of sanitary laws and the best methods of preventing disease, which have already been made the subject of previous articles in this series. To-day we take up the consideration of some of the best means of preventing the inroads of disease by a well nourished and evenly balanced mind and body.

That a weak and impoverished body is peculiarly susceptible to disease of any kind can be no longer questioned. It is therefore the duty of every one to keep up his normal standard of health.

This can best be accomplished by regular habits as to food, sleep and exercise. In

this connection also a word should be spoken with reference to variety in labor and periods of recreation. It is the steady and continuous round of the same work, day after day, that wears out our people. The treadmill will wear out three horses, where the road will one. We need a change in order to equalize the forces of the physical system.

To think that everything will go to ruin unless you are there to "run it," is a mild form of insanity, and to think nothing can be done in the home, on the farm, in the store, mill or office, is one of the first intimations that the work can be done without you.

Again, it is a mistake to force labor which must be done at the expense of the body braced up by stimulants.

Another cause of debility, and which soon produces an injurious effect upon the body, is long continued over exertion. This is specially true of domestic and out door labor on a large farm. The result of such over exertion is to enervate the system so that when in the fall, typhoid or typhus fever is prevalent, the system is not able to prevent the taking in and absorbing its poisonous germs, and thus preparing the way for a long spell of sickness. Additional help is cheaper in the end than to try and do all the work alone.

A man's length of days is largely in his own hands; certainly he may not cut short the Scriptural limit as so many do. But in order to do this we must be regular in our habits, cheerful in our disposition, willing that others should live and have an equal chance with ourselves, and lastly, remember the trite saying of one of the celebrated physicians in medical history, "Keep the head cool, the bowels open, and the feet dry."

Healing Properties of Water.

There is no remedy of such general application and none so easily attainable as water, and yet nine persons in ten will pass it by in an emergency to seek for something of less efficacy. There are but few cases of illness where water should not occupy the highest place as a remedial agent. A strip of flannel or a napkin folded lengthwise and wrung out of hot water and applied around the neck of a child that has croup will usually bring relief in ten minutes. A towel folded several times and quickly wrung out of hot water and applied over the seat of the pain in toothache or neuralgia will generally afford prompt relief. This treatment in cold works like magic. We have known cases that have resisted other treatment for hours yield to this in ten minutes. There is nothing that will so promptly cut short a congestion of the lungs, sore throat, or rheumatism as hot water when applied promptly and thoroughly. Pieces of cotton batting dipped in hot water, and kept applied to all sores and new cuts, bruises and sprains, is the treatment now generally adopted in hospitals. Sprained ankle has been cured in an hour by showering it with hot water, poured from the height of 10 feet. Tepid water acts promptly as an emetic, and hot water taken freely half an hour before bedtime is the best of cathartics in the case of constipation, while it has a most soothing effect on the stomach and bowels. This treatment continued for a few months, with proper attention to diet, will alleviate any case of dyspepsia.

Nursing As a Fine Art.

Few facts in reference to the sick and their welfare are more noticeable than the development of the art of nursing in recent years. Twenty years ago nursing was a luxury very much monopolized by hospital patients, and even in their case the luxury was somewhat

of a coarse character. There were, of course, good, kind, wise women in those days who had quick sympathies with the sick, and whose presence and ministrations in wards were like those of mother or a good angel, but they were not plentiful, and the work done was often performed unskillfully and untenderly. It is not pleasant to recall what must have been the sufferings of the sick in earlier days in poorer hospitals, especially in poor-law hospitals, when given over for the night to the care of a nurse not considered good enough for day duty, and who prepared herself for her nocturnal work by copious potations of beer. The cry for a cup of water or for a change of posture by a thirsty or restless patient was often unheeded, or only heeded to be rebuked. When kindness was not at fault, intelligence was often wanting, and superstition and ignorance had it all their own way. The best proof that this is not an exaggeration is to be found in the prejudice which still survives against professional nurses. There are large numbers of educated people who would not consent on any terms to have a "hospital" nurse. It can scarcely be imagined that their objection is to the training received in the hospitals. It must be traceable to experience of the older order of nursing, or to the survival of some of its bad traditions. The older order of nursing is not quite extinct. Practitioners of any standing could still give instances of nurses whose coarse ignorance and unkindness brought discredit on the order, who put the wrong end of the clinical thermometer into the mouth, who seemed to think less of the patient than of themselves, who conceived of nursing as a calling requiring a large amount of stimulant, and who disgusted all the other members and servants of a household by the assumption of airs of superiority which neither their nursing powers nor their general intelligence justified.

Exercise and Its Effects.

Strictly speaking, exercise signifies the performance of its function by any part of the body; thinking, for instance, being an exercise of the brain, digestion an exercise of the stomach and respiration an exercise of the lungs; but when we speak of a person taking exercise, the term is generally accepted as meaning exercise of those muscles of the body which are under the control of the will and which are called voluntary muscles.

The editor of the *Western Plowman*, Moline, Illinois, has "struck it rich" in the publication of the "Game of Flying Dutchman." It consists of fifty-six cards, each containing a letter of the alphabet and a number. By means of these cards an infinite number of words can be formed, and by adding a number found on them the numerical value of each word is formed. To stimulate interest in the game, the publishers of the *Western Plowman* offer a premium of fifty dollars in gold to the one who makes the highest numerical value out of the letters contained in the words, *The Western Plowman*. Besides this prize, a great many independent prizes are offered by outside parties, among which are three life scholarships in business colleges, worth from fifty to seventy-five dollars each, grinding mills, feed mills, foot lathes, churns, plows, washing machines, scales, cockle mills, patent gates, books, bee-hives, evaporators, etc. The award is to be made January 1, 1886. This innocent, fascinating and instructive game is sent free to every subscriber to the *Western Plowman* at thirty cents for six months, or fifty cents for twelve months.

It seems appropriate for a druggist to subscribe himself, "Cordially yours."

NEWSPAPER READING.

Education and Intelligence Increasing the Demand.

This is emphatically a reading age. Relatively with our enlarged educational facilities the reading public has increased in number. Where heretofore those who could not read were in the majority, the rule has been reversed, and now a person who cannot read is regarded as a curiosity, but yet deserving the sincerest sympathy. In every department of life the demand for newspaper reading is ever on the increase. The boy at school, the young man in the workshop or in the office, the young girl in domestic service or behind the counter, the master at the desk and the mistress in the parlor, all look with equal eagerness for the regular appearance of the local journal. To supply the growing demand for newspaper reading the city dailies publish large weekly editions, made up almost entirely of the matter which appears from day to day in the daily. These weekly reprints of the great dailies are supplied at such a ridiculously low subscription price as threatened at one time to totally extinguish the local country sheet, which could never afford to furnish the quantity of reading matter given in the large foreign weeklies. To meet the difficulty which here presented itself, the ready-print system was inaugurated. Firms were established which make a specialty of furnishing to country publishers ready-printed sheets, containing the essence of each week's happenings, and clippings from sources available only to a large city publisher.

This system has rapidly grown in public favor, until, in the Dominion at least three-fourths of what are known as the country press are published on the auxiliary plan. The prejudices which once existed against the ready-print system have entirely disappeared, and proprietors find that in order to compete with contemporaries using the system, and with the city dailies, and to ensure a profit at the end of the year, they must comply with the inevitable and adopt ready-printed sheets.

Some idea of the popularity which this system has attained with country readers will be gained when we state that a firm in this city supplies between one and two hundred publishers with ready-printed papers. To do this three separate and distinct editions are issued every week, containing matter entirely different each from the other, and the system is becoming so general that those who have, from prejudice or other cause, heretofore refrained from adopting it, find it necessary to do so to maintain their circulation and give satisfaction to their patrons.

The Washing of the Kismet.

A family enjoyed the services of a neat-handed little waitress of Irish extraction, who proved herself very fond of using any large words she might hear at the table. On one occasion a young lady spoke of reading "Ki met," and upon being questioned as to the meaning of the word explained that it was "fate." A few days afterwards, Biddy having spent a longer time than usual in dressing to wait at dinner, her mistress inquired as to the cause, and was told: "Sure, ma'am, I was washing my Kismet."

M. Percy, a Dijon astronomer, offers a novel explanation of the frequency of the earthquakes which have produced so much disturbance on the surface of our planet of late. His theory is that they are caused, like the tides, by the attraction of the sun and moon.

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