

## RANDOM NOTES

## For Busy Households.

Much has been written on the methods to be adopted in taking the morning cold bath, and like most other hygienic practices, benefits some and injures others, according to physical constitution, vigor and vitality. Many people who have, as they say, been "always accustomed" to take a cold tub every morning continue the habit long after it had better been given up. They do this partly because it is a habit and because they dislike the confession of getting old which seems to be involved in giving up the custom of their more youthful days. But, unless go reaction quickly follows a cold bath, and follows it without much "towel," such tubbing is very often injurious. Whenever a man has to "rub himself warm," or when he finds he is not right again until after his breakfast, he may feel sure that his tub is doing him harm, and that he would do better to take a warm bath, finishing off with a rapid sponge over with cold water.

There is a class of children who suffer from overworked brains who have no right to suffer. There are children under 7 years of age whose parents understand nothing of the laws of physiology but feel that no time should be lost in getting the child to school. The brighter the child the harder he is pushed. During the first seven years of life the brain develops very fast. All that is done to crowd it during this time is done to the child's advantage.

During this period attention should be given to developing a good constitution, remembering that the brain will go forward fast enough after that age. Parents make a mistake if they send their children to school before they are seven years of age, unless, perhaps, to the kindergarten. There is no doubt about this. All physiologists agree on this point, and there is no sound argument against it.

Some of the American dailies are devoting considerable space to the subject of nursing consumptives, and to the great care necessary to prevent contagion in such cases.

The danger lies almost exclusively, as is well known, in the dried sputum of the patient. While this is most harmless, but on drying it pulverizes into a powder, carrying everywhere in the air tubercle bacilli. The patient who in his sick room is provided with a cup in which may be kept a little carbolic acid in solution to receive the expectoration is not only practically harmless to those around him, but he is relieved too from the otherwise almost certain result of re-infecting himself. In addition, the breath of a consumptive should not be inhaled, and he should at all times occupy a bed alone. Special bedroom linen should be kept for his use, and should be disinfected and washed separately. For the person afflicted with tuberculosis who is not confined to his bed, and he is the one who is the most dangerous because he is often not suspected and because he comes in contact in going about the streets and riding in the public vehicles with very many persons—for him there should be provided paper handkerchiefs to be used in lieu of the cups. The supply, of course, needs to be generous, and they should be promptly burned.

The use of these paper handkerchiefs by many more than those afflicted with tuberculosis ought to be widely urged. In an address at Saratoga by Dr. J. W. Brannan of New York, two or three years ago, before the Social Science Association, the value of this use among families whose members suffered from any form of cold, influenza, catarrh, or any affection of the breathing-organs was forcibly presented. It has been found that all of these ailments are communicable, and that, too, almost entirely through the contamination from the discharges. Japanese handkerchiefs in plain white and of soft finish can be had at a very low price per thousand at any of the stores where paper napkins are sold. Their general use would work an almost incalculable benefit. In point of fact, there is an almost intolerable want of cleanliness in much of the present use

of linen handkerchiefs. Their use except in emergencies should never permit them to reach more than the rumpled, mussed, stage. When more soiled than this they should preferably be burned but if this does not meet the economy of the family, they should always be laundered separately after being disinfected.

The safest, easiest, and most cleanly way, however, is that every house mother should see that a stock of the paper handkerchiefs is kept on hand just as coal is kept in the cellar, or flour in the bin. Whenever a child or any member of the family has any sort of ailment of the eye, nose, or throat which is accompanied by a discharge, these paper handkerchiefs should be supplied to him in ample quantities each day to be burned on his return to the house. He should use them also in place of towels.

The habit children have of using the handkerchiefs of playmates who may or may not be suffering from some of these troubles, should be suppressed. A child should be promptly taught that handkerchiefs are as personal and noninterchangeable as toothbrushes. This simple precautionary measure will work directly towards the mitigation even of consumption, for it is the infection and re-infection from the early catarrhal and bronchial stages that assist in producing the final serious result in the patient and tend to sow the contagion broadcast.

It is impossible to emphasize this too strongly to women; they have it in their power to aid greatly in these remedial and preventive measures. Wherever they go—to the shops, to the summer boarding-houses, anywhere—if a case of consumption is encountered, there should be an attempt made to investigate the preventive care that is being taken in regard to it. This can be done with tact and courtesy, and surely, when the motive is understood, only gratitude can follow from the persons afflicted.

This is the moment when the dangers of that malady for which sanitarians have coined the word "cellaritis" should be kept before every house-keeper, remarks a well-known contributor on matters concerning the household. As is well known it is the weakening and undermining of the nervous system due to cellars damp and dirty to a degree. It is not a catalogued infection, such as tonsillitis, diphtheria, and typhoid fever, but is none the less detrimental to the health of the family. The city chateleine is apt to consider that her slight use of the cellar does away with its possible dangers. It is not wise, however, to relax vigilance in any way. It is true that supplies such as vegetables and fruits are not so often kept in cellars in the city as in the country, but they can accumulate below the street line in almost any house a considerable amount of flotsam and jetsam in the course of a year. Rubbish that is difficult to burn in the small court-yards attached to the homes and which the particular ash-man will not cart away, is carried to the cellar and forgotten. If even a little dampness exists there, and few cellars are absolutely dry, it does not take long for this accumulation of odds and ends to become a nurture place for system-undermining germs. In a paper read before a club the other day, what was called a "lady's cellar" was described. They had a cemented floor swept twice a week, was airy, well-lighted, treated twice a year to a heavy coat of whitewash to which a little carbolic acid had been added, and had nothing standing in the corners to defy quick inspection. All boxes and trunks in this cellar stood upon slats that the air could circulate beneath them. Only one criticism suggested itself to the listener, and that was of the rope matting with which the stairs leading to the cellar were carpeted. Better than this dust-holding matting would have been the bare wooden step which is so easily kept clean. As it was forcibly put in the paper referred to, "Let the parlor be neglected occasionally if it must be, but remember that only in 'eternal vigilance' is cellar 'safety' secured."

## AN IRISH LEGEND.

Rev. Canon O'Hanlon has collected, under the title of "Irish Local Legends," a number of most interesting traditions, and amongst them we find the following one, which is connected with Lough Derg, in Donegal:—

"One of the most interesting localities in Donegal is gloomy and lonely Lough Derg, which is approached from Ballyshannon, by road through the village of Pettigo, from which it is about three miles distant. It covers

an area of over three thousand acres, and contains a few very small islets, the chief of which are Station Island, noted for its pilgrimages from the first of June to the 15th of August; Saint's Island, and Inishgosh. The waters expand in their solitude amid a wide, and wild waste of highland moors, while the prospect around is closed in by distant ranges of heath-covered hills, without any considerable elevation or distinctiveness of

form. From this lough proceeds the river Derg, which takes a north-easterly course of sixteen or seventeen miles, till it meets the Moyle at a point about two miles below Newtownstewart, in the County Tyrone. In the summer season the pilgrim's boat is in constant requisition, safely to ferry over from the mainland all who desire to visit Station Island through motives of devotion or curiosity, and thousands of people land there; but still beyond in the lough lies Saint's Island, now less frequented than formerly, although its celebrity is of earlier date, and reaches back to the sixth century, when St. Dabhaoc lived on it as a recluse, and is said to have founded there a monastic establishment. During the middle ages the Canons Regular of St. Augustine had a religious house on Saint's Island, from which they were expelled in 1603, at the beginning of the reign of James I.

With Saint's Island is associated a curious legend, of which the following is an outline:—

In the old Pagan times a peistha or water serpent of immense girth and

of still greater length was believed to haunt the celebrated Lough Derg in the northern parts of Ireland. Sometimes his horrid head and open jaws were seen above the surface, as if drawing in the upper air. More frequently the fishermen saw him gliding slowly through the depths. When St. Patrick landed at Saint's Island that large water serpent was known to have tenanted the waters of Lough Derg. He had caused the destruction of many a dwelling on the banks. But the saint could not tolerate the presence of such a monster, and accordingly with a stroke of his staff the peistha was destroyed. Afterwards the waters of the lough began to assume a reddish tinge, so freely did the monster bleed, and to the present day has that color continued; hence the name is given to it—the Red Lake. The skeleton remained on Station Island to the beginning of the present century, as the old people living around the shore are ready to asseverate; and many of them have conversed with persons who alleged they saw the last remaining portions of that serpent's body mouldering into dust."

## NUNS OR PROFESSIONAL NURSES FOR HOSPITAL WORK.

At the ordinary meeting of the Trustees Board of Guardians held some weeks ago, Mr. J. Roche, J. P., chairman presiding, and there being upwards of fifty guardians, elected and ex-officio, present, a lengthened discussion took place on a recent letter received from the Local Government Board requiring the guardians to appoint two trained nurses for the hospital, and refusing to sanction the appointment of an additional nun as nurse, though the guardians in their resolution pointed out that while only four nuns were paid £25 a year each without rations, the sisters were maintaining six nuns as nurses in the hospital. The guardians at the previous meeting of the Board asked the Local Government Board to forward them a copy of the report of Dr. Flavey on the subject, but the Local Government Board did not reply to the request, a proceeding which was condemned by the chairman and other guardians as discourteous. Dr. Flavey, who was present, said he had a rough draft of the report, which he would read for them. The report, which was sent in reply to a circular from the Local Government Board, was a very detailed one, but the substance of it will be found in the following further report furnished by Dr. Flavey, in reply to a resolution of the Board:—

"Sir,—In reply to your order of 8th inst., asking for a written report as to how the nuns have been discharging their duties as nurses in the hospital, and if the present staff be sufficient I beg to report that the nuns have been discharging their duties with the zeal and conscientious devotion to duty which are so characteristic of the members of all religious communities, and which is universally recognized. Relative to the sufficiency of the present staff, I beg to say that in reply to a circular letter of the Local Government Board, dated July 18th, 1888, I reported on September 17 on the relative qualifications and adequacy of the nursing staff and other matters. In this report you will find the following:—

"In my opinion the nursing of the sick is efficient, but the staff is not sufficient. I would advise the appointment of two trained nurses and one for the female hospital, these nurses to be subordinate to the nuns." Since I wrote the report nothing has occurred and no change has been made in the staff to alter the opinions I then held. I repeat these opinions now, that the staff is insufficient, and that two trained nurses should be appointed. I consider it right to state that the above mentioned circular, letter, and report are the only communications that have passed between the Local Government Board and myself on this subject."

Very Rev. J. P. McDonnell, Adm., V. F., who, with Rev. T. D. Sullivan, C. C., attended in reference to the subject, pointed out that Dr. Flavey was satisfied that the nuns had discharged their duties not only satisfactorily but with the greatest possible efficiency, but he also certified that the staff was insufficient, and he (Father McDonnell) presumed that the only way to remedy this was by appointing an additional nun as nurse. He saw no good to be derived from introducing different orders into the one institution. The nuns were only receiving £25 a year, without rations, and everybody felt grateful to them for their kindness and attention; whereas, trained nurses should be paid £50 a year, with rations, and apartments, which would mean a heavy tax on the ratepayers. In conclusion, he said that he had very good reason to believe that if trained nurses were introduced into the institu-

tion the nuns would find it necessary to reconsider their position in the house altogether.

The Chairman said that the concluding words of Father McDonnell were very ominous, and he thought it would be a great calamity to the sick poor, and to the ratepayers if the nuns withdrew from the workhouse. The hospital under their management was the one bright spot in the workhouse, and two of the present staff were no novices as they had no less than twenty-seven years' experience in hospital nursing.

Mr. J. Leonard, J. P., spoke at length on the great blessing the nuns were to the workhouse, and pointed out that if they withdrew the sick and poor would suffer, and the ratepayers would lose heavily. He proposed the following resolution:—

"That the guardians express their astonishment at the action of the Local Government Board in declining to forward to them the report of Dr. Flavey on the hospital nursing on which this Board are asked to make a serious and important alteration. We consider such action alone very discourteous to a large and important board such as this."

"Having before us to-day a report from Dr. Flavey, stating that the nursing of the nuns up to this had been efficiently discharged as well as creditable to the nuns, we are convinced that by appointing an additional sister, the nursing would be efficient and sufficient; and, in the face of Dr. Flavey's report, that the nursing up to now has been so efficiently discharged by capable and self-sacrificing nuns, a statement supported by the evidence of successive doctors, guardians, and everybody visiting the hospital here, we see no need whatever for appointing two trained nurses. We believe, firstly, it would be a loss to the ratepayers, and a decided loss to the sick poor in the workhouse hospital, who have been up to this so faithfully nursed by the good Sisters of Mercy, who, in our opinion, have no superiors as nurses. We have also to point out that the nurse in charge of the hospitals has 27 years' experience, and surely this training is sufficient, and greater perhaps than that of any trained nurse."

"We have also to take into our serious consideration the statement made to the Board by the Rev. Father McDonnell, Adm., acting for the nuns, that if these nurses are forced on them, they will consider the necessity of withdrawing altogether from the workhouse hospital. We know this would be an awful calamity and injustice to the sick and poor admitted to the hospital, who have been so anxiously, efficiently, and devotedly nursed by the good nuns, and also a serious loss to the ratepayers."

"We have, therefore, finally to in-

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form the Local Government Board that we cannot agree to appoint two trained nurses for the reasons stated; and we trust sincerely, speaking for the poor and the ratepayers alike, that the Local Government Board will not insist on their resolution. We take this opportunity—our last, perhaps—of thanking sincerely, the good Sisters of Mercy for their extreme and successful care of the sick poor under their charge in the workhouse hospitals, as well as their care of the property of the ratepayers. We beg to assure them of our warm approval and gratitude for those services, which will yet meet with a bright reward."

Mr. R. McCowen, J. P., a Protestant ex-officio member of the Board, seconded the resolution, and bore high testimony to the manner in which the nuns discharged their duties. He thought it would be a great injustice to the sick poor, to the ratepayers, and a great calamity if the nuns withdrew from the workhouse. He had a chairman of an English workhouse in Tralee last year, and took him through the house, and that gentleman was surprised at the cleanliness and general good order that prevailed in the house under the Nuns. Nothing like it existed in the workhouses with which he was associated. Mr. R. Latchford, J. P., another Protestant ex-officio member of the board, spoke in similar terms.

Mr. T. Slattery said that the action of the Local Government Board was in strange contrast with the action of the Government, who were giving the Irish people extended powers of controlling their own affairs. The Local Government Board wanted to deprive them of the power to manage that institution, but they would fight the Local Government Board to the end in this matter.

Mr. M. J. Kelly, J. P., and Mr. G. J. Rice, also supported the resolution, which was carried unanimously, amidst applause.—Dublin Nation.

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