

UNQUENCHED.

[At the Promethean and other festivals, young men ran with torches or lamps lighted from the sacrificial altar. In this contest, only he was victorious whose lamp remained unextinguished in the race.]

I think upon the conquering Greek who ran
(Brave was the racer!) that brave race of old—
Swifter than hope his feet that did not tire.

Calmor than love the hand which reached that goal;
A torch it bore, and cherished to the end
And rescued from the winds the sacred fire.

O life the race! O heart the racer! Hush!
And listen long enough to learn of him
Who sleeps beneath the dust with his desire.

Go! shame thy coward weariness, and wail.
Who doubts contest, doubts victory.
Go! learn to run the race, and carry fire.

O Friend! The lip is brave, the heart is weak.
Stay near. The runner faints—the torch falls pale.
Save me the flame that mounteth ever higher!

Grows it so dark? I lift mine eyes to thee:
Blazing within them, steadfast, pure, and strong,
Against the wind there fights the eternal fire.

—ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS, in the Century.

HYGIENIC PRECAUTIONS.

"Dangers we cannot avoid we must learn to defy."—LESSING.

Creatures in a state of nature can almost dispense with sanitary precautions; Providence has secured their safety in that respect. Animals are born with the instinct that enables them to distinguish wholesome from injurious plants. In the wilderness, where the neighborhood of men does not tempt them to brave the winter of the higher latitudes, most birds emigrate in time to avoid its rigors; those that stay can rely on their feather-coats; natural selection has adapted their utmost power of endurance to the possible extremes of the atmospheric vicissitudes. The sexual instinct of wild animals is limited to certain seasons and months that preclude the possibility of their young being born at any but the most favorable time of the year. From birth to death the children of Nature can trust themselves to the guidance of their hereditary inclinations; all the contingencies of their simple lives have been amply provided for.

These provisions do not apply exclusively to a state of affairs which the agency of man has in so many ways modified or even reversed; still, it would seem as if Nature had failed to make adequate allowance for the possibility of certain perils incident to our artificial mode of life. This fact is perhaps more strikingly illustrated by the treacherous non-repulsiveness of certain mineral poisons. The offensive taste of poisonous plants seems to be proportioned to the degree of their noxiousness; hemlock, strychnine, and opium are forbiddingly nauseous, even in the smallest quantities. A drop of prussic acid fills a whole room with its bitter aroma. But arsenious acid is tasteless and odorless, and so unsuspecting to the most wary animals that its name has become a synonym of ratbane. The reason is apparently this: that Providence (or "natural selection") has endowed animals with a protective antipathy against all poisons they could possibly mistake for comestibles, but not against such out of the way things as arsenic or sugar of lead, nor against the mixtures by which the art of man has disguised the taste of naturally unpalatable substances. Coffee, without sugar and milk, "straight and strong," as the Turks drink it, would hardly tempt a Christian schoolboy; mixed, it can be made seductive enough to deceive even the *ex-officio* opponents of the stimulant habit. In such mixtures as milk-punch, beer-soup, "Scutari sherbet," the taste—though not the effect—of alcohol almost disappears; the Algeria trappers catch monkeys with a *mélange* of rum and manna-sirap. A famous cook of the "Frères Provençaux" used to boast his ability of compounding delightful ragouts from meat in *any* state of decomposition. Early habits and the influence of evil examples also tend to corrupt the integrity of that physical conscience whose arbitrations form the health-code of our dumb fellow-creatures. In large cities the panders of vice vie in the art of making their poisons attractive, and, where such dangers can not be avoided, it is always the safest plan to meet and master them in time.

Early impressions are very enduring, and can make useful habits as well as evil ones a sort of second nature. In order to forestall the chief danger of in-door life, make your children love-sick after fresh air; make them associate the idea of dusty rooms with prison-life, punishment, and sickness. Open a window whenever they complain of headache or nausea; promise them a woodland excursion as a reward of exceptionally good behavior. Save your best sweetmeats for out-door festivals. By the witchery of associated ideas a boy can come to regard the lonely shade-tree as a primary requisite to the enjoyment of a good story-book. "Or, mes pensées ne veulent jamais aller qu'avec mes jambes," says Rousseau ("Only the movement of my feet seems to set my brains a-going"), and it is just as easy to think, debate, rehearse, etc., walking as sitting; the peripatetic philosophers derived their name from their pedestrian proclivities, and the Stoic sect from their master's predilection for an open porch. Children who have been brought up in hygienic homes not rarely "feel as if they were going to be choked"

in unventilated rooms, and I would take good care not to cure them of such salutary idiosyncrasies.

Every observant teacher must have noticed the innate hardness of young boys, their unaffected indifference to wind and weather. They seem to take a delight in braving the extremes of temperature, and, by simply indulging this *penchant* of theirs, children can be made weather-proof to an almost unlimited degree; and in nothing else can they be more safely trusted to the guidance of their protective instincts. Don't be afraid that an active boy will hurt himself by voluntary exposure, unless his chances for out-door play are so rare as to tempt him to abuse the first opportunity. Weather-proof people are almost sickness-proof; a merry hunting-excursion to the snow-clad islands will rarely fail to counteract the consequences of repeated surfeits; even girls who have learned to brave the winter storms of our Northwestern prairies will afterward laugh at "draughts" and "raw March winds." Winter is the season of lung-affections, the larger part of them induced by long confinement in a vitiated atmosphere; the part caused by light winter clothes is smaller than most people imagine. I have weathered a good many winters without fur caps and woolen shawls, and I ascribe my immunity to the circumstance that my guardian made it a rule never to force us to wear such things. The Moslems rarely eat before they have washed their hands, and a rather unscrupulous frontier Turk assured me that in his case the practice had nothing to do with superstition; it had become a physiological habit, whose omission, he had found, would produce a fit of very realistic nausea. In the same way more comprehensive ablutions may become a physiological necessity: there are people who owe their sound sleep and other sound things to their inability to go to bed without a sponge-bath. The habit can be formed in one summer.

The dietetic instincts of a rationally educated person should obviate the necessity of special precautions, but in large cities, where temptations walk in disguise, the welfare of inexperienced children may require additional safeguards. In the first chapter of this series I have enumerated the chief arguments of the vegetarian school. Among the incidental advantages of their system it might be mentioned that a purely vegetable diet is the most effectual precaution against a danger which only in one of its exceptional forms was lately brought home to us by the trichine panic. Flesh-eaters always run a risk of inoculating themselves with the germs of the various diseases which both beef and man-flesh is heir to, consumption especially, and several disorders arising from the corruption of the humors, by the use of decayed or fermented food. Sausage-makers, like trance-mediums, never divulge their trade-secrets, but it is a suggestive fact that, in the Anglo-German cities of this continent, the scrofulous and decrepit old females of the bovine race are known by the name of Bologna cows. Abstinence from *Wurst*, boarding-house hash, and mince-pies, may diminish the danger, but abstinence from all animal food is the safer plan and the easier one. If children were restricted to a vegetable or semi-animal diet (milk, eggs, etc.), I doubt if many of them would afterward choose to overcome that instinctive repugnance to flesh-fool expressed in the original meaning of the word *frugality*. The Romans of the Cincinnatian era, though entirely free from Buddhistic scruples, seem to have eschewed animal food for sanitary reasons. Children with a phthisical taint are certainly better off without it. Give them eggs and all the available vegetable fat they can digest, but no flesh nor milk of any-doubtful origin. Two or three families of moderate means might rent a bit of pasture-land, and divide the milk of a healthy country cow. The sanitary condition of a single animal could be ascertained by any competent farrier, but the control of a wholesale meat-market will always be more or less perfunctory.

Principis obsta is probably the wisest maxim ever expressed in two words, and I believe that the poison-problem will be ultimately solved on that principle. The work of reform must begin in the nursery; and, under circumstances where we can not keep temptations from our door, we must make our children temptation-proof, inspire them with an indelible abhorrence of drunkenness and poison-slavery of every kind.

"I still find the Laconic method the shortest," writes a friend of mine, alluding to the Spartan plan of warning boys by the example of a drunken Helot. He used to interest his boy in the *modus operandi* of alcohol, opium, etc., and then take him out, and, under some pretext or other, drop into a slum-saloon, on Saturday night, or a police-court on Monday morning, to give him a practical illustration of his theory. Whenever they saw the poison displayed in an attractive form, on ornamental sign-boards or in the gorgeous bottles of druggists and hotel-keepers, they would study the well-baited trap with a peculiar interest, and go their way rejoicing, as in the possession of an invaluable secret. The result was that the boy became "aggressively virtuous," and used to button-hole visitors in order to lecture them on the causes and the consequences of the popular delusion!

Even city boys do not often contract the nicotine habit till after their twelfth year, and a fit of tobacco-nausea before that time generally induces a forbidding reaction not easy to out-grow. I remember the case of a brutal tavern-keeper who tried to accustom his son to the fumes of Alsatian leaf-tobacco (*vulgo Stinkewitz*), and the unexpected result of his last experi-

ment. He took the lad on a stage-coach trip from Colmar to Metz, and induced the position to take in a few extra passengers, whom he treated to clay pipes and *Stinkewitz*. He then closed the windows, and in less than twenty minutes his son turned deadly pale, and would have fainted if he had not found relief in a violent fit of retching. If he had loathed *Stinkewitz* before, he now dreaded it, and six years after, when he was apprenticed to a tanner, he surprised his master by asking, as a special favor, that they would not force him to smoke leaf-tobacco. Frederick the Great, too, ascribed his abhorrence of the weed to the choking tobacco fumes of the Wusterhauser club-room, where the boon companions of his awful parent used to indulge from 5 to 12 P.M. It is not necessary to suffocate a child with nicotine fumes, but it can do no harm to take him once in a while to a smoker's den, to sniff the "pestilent and penal fumes," and let him glory in his blest exemption.

Coffee and tea temptations, pungent spices, etc., may be forestalled in the same way: much is gained if the dietetic innocence of a child has been preserved to the end of the fourteenth year, the age when routine habits first become physiologically confirmed. The habits of the last years of growth become ingrained, as it were, with the constitution of the body, and will bias the physical inclinations of all after years; circumstances may oblige a man to conform to the customs of a foreign country, the rules of a regimental mess, etc., but, upon the first opportunity of regulating his own regimen the habits of his boyhood will reassert themselves, even in regard to the time and number of his daily meals. I know from personal experience the unspeakable advantage of having a constitutional predilection for postponing the principal meal till the day's work is done. It was the plan of the ancient Greeks, and to their followers every day is its own reward—the symposium, and the long, undisturbed *siesta* a daily festival. It almost doubles a man's working capacity, by saving him the dire daily struggle between duty and the after-dinner drowsiness. Children who have tried the two methods will rarely hesitate in their choice. Give them a lunch at twelve o'clock, and for breakfast a crust of sweet bran-bread, the coarser the better. A hard crust is the best possible dentifrice. I never could get myself to believe in the natural necessity of a tooth-brush. The African nations, the Hindoos, the natives of Southern Europe, the South-Sea Islanders, the Arabs, the South American vegetarians, in short, three fourths of our fellow-men, besides our next relatives, the frugivorous animals, have splendid teeth without sozodent. I really believe that ours decay from sheer disuse; the boarding-house *homo* lives chiefly on pap—wants all his meats soft-boiled, and grows at cold biscuit or an underdone potato; in other words, he delegates to the cook the proper functions of his teeth. We hear occasionally of old men getting a second, or rather a third, set of teeth. I met one of them in northern Guatemala, and ascertained that he had become toothless during a twelve years' sojourn in a sea-port town, and that he got his new set upon his return to his native village, where circumstances obliged him to resume the hard corn-cake diet of his boyhood years. His teeth had reappeared, as soon as their services were called for, and would probably never have absented themselves if a pap-diet had not made them superfluous. An artificial dentifrice will certainly keep the teeth white, but that does not prevent their premature decay; disease gradually softens their substance, till one fine day the hash eater snaps his best incisor upon an unexpected piece of bone. Every old dentist knows hundreds of city customers whom the daily use of a tooth-brush did not save from the necessity of applying, before the end of the fortieth year, for a complete "celluloid set." I do not say that a soft tooth-brush and such dentifrices as oatmeal or burned arrow-root can do any harm, but, for sanitary purposes, such precautions must be supplemented by *dental exercise*. Let a child invigorate its teeth by chewing a hard crust, or, better yet, a handful of "St. John's bread" or carob-beans, the edible pod of the *Mimosa siliqua*. Children and whole tribes of the northern races seem to feel an instinctive desire to exercise their teeth upon some solid substance, as pet squirrels will gnaw the furniture if you give them nut-kernels instead of nuts. Thus Kohl tells us that the natives of southern Russia are addicted to the practice of chewing a vegetable product which he at first supposed to be pumpkin or melon seeds, but found to be the much harder seed of the Turkish sunflower (*Helianthus perennis*). Their natural diet consists of milk *kukuruz* (hominy, with butter, etc.), and boiled mutton, and they seem to feel that their Turkoman jaws need something more substantial. The schoolboy habit of gnawing pen-holders, finger-nails, etc., may have a similar significance. The *Mimosa siliqua* would yield abundantly in our southern States, and its sweet pods would make an excellent substitute for chewing gum. Our practice of sipping ice-cold and steaming-hot drinks, turn about, has also a very injurious effect upon the brittle substance that forms the enamel of our teeth; no porcelain-glaze would stand such abuse for any length of time, and experience has taught hunters and dog-fanciers that it destroys even the bone-crushing fangs of the animal from which our canine teeth derive their name.

Various diseases of the eye, including myopia, strabismus and catarrhal ophthalmia, are due to a scrofulous diathesis, and sometimes to a gene-

ral debility, and can be radically cured only by out-door exercise and a more nutritious diet. But a transient weak-sightedness" (*Schwachsichtigkeit*, as the Germans call it), is eminently a disease of the school room, caused by a persistent abuse of the eyes, poring for hours together over a spelling-book or writing by the light of a flickering candle (much worse than twilight), as well as by the wretched print of our modern dictionaries and cheap cyclopedias. It should be kept in mind that reading and writing, even under the most favorable circumstances, require an effort to which the eye can only very gradually accustom itself. Hereditary influences and the preliminary exercises of the infant's eye, as, in examining picture-books, the first graphic essays with a slate-pencil, etc., may help to smooth the difficulty; for it is a fact, attested by the experience of all school-teaching missionaries, that the eyes of an adult, sharp-sighted savage begin to smart and water at the first attempt to decipher the hieroglyphics of his primer. The rudiments ought to be taught in half-hour lessons, with liberal intervals of rest and out-door play; and scrofulous children should never be sent to a public school till after a novitiate of at least six months of home studies. Instruct them never to pore over a book, but to keep the head erect, and, at the first symptoms of dim-sightedness, to let the eyes rest upon some distant object, till the optic nerve has recovered from the short-range strain. The hues of the forest have a wonderfully strengthening influence upon weak eyes, almost like its air upon weak lungs; a woodland excursion is like a return to our native element, the birth-land to whose life conditions the organs of our ancestors were originally adapted.

Accidents cannot be avoided by keeping a boy in his nurse's arms or in a padded family coach. Sooner or later he will have to rely on his own limbs, and it is best that time should find him well prepared. Let him rough it, barefoot and bareheaded; let him climb hills and take short cuts over fences and ravines; every fall, every skinned elbow and bumped head, will impart a lesson in the art of locomotion. Without apprentice-fees of that sort he will never get to be a master. I would even connive at an occasional rough-and-tumble fight with a wild comrade; it will acquaint him with what Talleyrand used to call the "esoteric reason for preserving the peace." Constructiveness, too, often the redeeming propensity of a young scapegrave, has its dangers which had better be mastered than avoided. Instead of lecturing a lad or taking away his pocket-knife for cutting his finger, engage a carpenter to teach him the proper use of edge-tools. Let him have a little workshop of his own, with a lot of scrap-iron, boards, nails, and a five dollar tool-box. Ten to one that those five dollars will save ten cents a week for dime-novels, and, by-and-by, ten dollars a month for beer and tobacco. If your son should manifest symptoms of the collecting-mania, try to direct it to objects of natural history—herbs, beetles, or butterflies. It may lead to deeper studies, and the love of nature in general. A passion for the study of natural history has often turned the scales in a choice between a farm and a dry-goods prison.

"On a visit to Paris," says Carl Weber ("Democritos," vol. ix, p. 169), "the Mentor of a young man, after a trip to the Jardin des Plantes, should not fail to take him to Bertrand Rival's Anatomical Waxwork Museum. It is no misnomer if Bertrand calls his collection 'Musée physiologique, historique et morale'—intended not only to instruct but to warn the visitor. *Salus tuta illa sapere est.*" As a last resort, perhaps, but hardly before the twentieth year. Precocious prudence is due to causes which can generally be avoided. If you can educate the younger children at home and select their playmates, there is no real danger before the eleventh year of a boy and the ninth of a girl. After that, the following precautions will suffice in all but the unluckiest cases: Let your children have plenty of out-door play, especially in the evening. Wait till they are really sleepy before you send them to bed. Let every child have its own bed, or at least its own bedclothes. Keep your small boys out of the servants' room, and your girls after their tenth year; with girls under ten there is less danger: they are quite sure to tell about any improper thing they see or hear, and the servants seem to know that instinctively. Do not leave them alone with elder children—not even with their own neighbors' and relatives—till you have satisfied yourself about the character of their new friends. No need of a phrenologist to settle that point: the indications of a child's propensities are not confined to the cranium. Vary the child's diet with the season; put the flesh-pots aside when the approach of the summer solstice threatens the land with the temperatures and temptations of southern Italy. Let them avoid all greasy-made dishes when it is too warm to take much out-door exercise. And, if possible, cultivate their literary taste to the degree that enables them to appreciate the wit or the common sense of an author, as well as his imagination, and consequently to loathe the unmitigated absurdities. That alone will be an effectual safeguard against ninety-nine dime-novels out of a hundred.

In conclusion, I will add a short miscellany of hygienic rules and aphorisms.

The first thing a child should learn is to ask for a drink of water. I have seen hand-fed children scream and fidget for hours together, as if troubled by some unsatisfied want, but at the same time rejecting the milk-bottle and pap-dish with growing impatience. In nine such cases out of ten the nurse will either resort to