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HALIFAX, N. S.

HALIFAX, N. S.

[FOR THE CRITIC.]

LETTERS TO COUSIN CARYL.

Dear Cousin Caryl,—I ran down to the beach on Saturday for a quiet little outing, after a week of tending little Mollie, who has been quite ill. I must say that some things I saw there (Nantasket) did not tend to have a soothing influence on my mind. I can't help thinking that any fastidious person, nay, any one innately delicate must feel shocked at the daily spectacle the bathing beach now presents. The habit of promiscuous bathing grows more common every year, although there are some people left who doubt the propriety of it. It is getting common to see a young man and woman, who have only met at their hotel, emerge from their bathing houses, the man looking like a harlequin in his red or white jersey and short blue trousers, legs and arms perfectly bare; the girl in her *costume de bain*, of fine, white serge, if she be very luxurious, made tight, showing every curve. I feel that a protest is in order.

Latest advices tell us of stockings cut so as to expose the toes, which some newspaper correspondent describes as "ten tiny pink shells." As I see them thus arrayed—or disarrayed, to speak correctly—I fear the girl will soon begin to calculate the effect of what some one lately called "artistic brownness" on the mind of masculinity, and the man to be too conscious of the value of muscle and calf which he exposes.

A little girl I know the other day at the beach asked her mother "if she might take off her dress and play in her underclothes like the ladies did on the beach."

I think we should stop to think of the effect of such things on our "day and generation." It may be all right for you and me whose morals, let us hope, are in a degree educated. But there are hundreds of girls who come to these beaches—good girls enough, but lacking the right training morally. What is the effect on them? They come to the "shore" to have a good time, "to paint the town red," and they begin early and end late; they work for their fun as they do for their bread. The freedom which the morning bath introduces grows as the day speeds on. Their companions, "gentlemen friends" as they are called, are liberal to a fault; everything that the town affords is at the girls' service. They ride, they dance, they flirt, and when night has drawn her curtain, as they pass me in couples, he with his arm around her slim waist, grown so careless that they do not even shrink as they see me, I can only implore their guardian angels to guide them, since humanity seems so oblivious of their welfare. That is what this sort of promiscuous bathing is leading to. Frown on it, Caryl, every time.

I told you Mollie had been quite ill. Yes, poor thing, threatened with spinal meningitis. But she is much better now, and our physician says with good care will get well. "Good care!" what a physician that is. Worth more than a whole pharmacopeia any day. You remember what a famous nurse Aunt Sabrina was? Well, do you know, I believe sometimes that her mantle has fallen on me? My friends all send for me now-a-days when they are sick. They claim that I do better for them than half the trained nurses, and I like to do it. If I were reduced to the necessity I could earn a good living that way. Aunt Sabrina says it is a "gift" to be able to nurse the sick well. Do you suppose I have it? This is the way I make a sick bed: A mattress not too hard, and, if possible, on a single bed. Cover over with a sheet, tucking in well; then across the bed I put a piece of rubber oil cloth, about a yard wide and long enough to tuck in each side; then I take a sheet, fold it once in half length-wise, I place it length-wise over the rubber cloth, tucking it in on one side. This leaves more than is necessary to tuck in on the other side, so I draw tight across and the surplus fold flat and put under the mattress. This I call a draw-sheet, and should be placed so as to come well under the patient's hips, so that in using the bed-pan, in case of a mishap the under-sheet will not get wet. Now if the draw-sheet should get soiled or wet, I untuck it, and being over a piece of rubber cloth, it will slip very readily. I take one side that is not folded and draw my patient to the edge of the bed; then I go to the opposite side, take out the folded part and smooth it out; the surplus sheet in the middle of the bed I take close up to my patient's back, and with both hands press down the mattress; my patient turns over, he is on a clean sheet and without being lifted. I then go the other side of the bed and fold in the same manner as before I had done the surplus clean portion. If there is any odor, or it is at all soiled, I put a clean one on; in that case before turning my patient I pin to either one of the sides of the soiled sheet my clean one, tuck it in and fold, taking under my patient as before described. Often the patient is lying at the side of the bed; in that case he is moved only once. I keep a plentiful supply of pillow-cases, and change often; having an extra pillow I hold the patient's head with one arm and put the froth pillow under with the other hand. I change my draw-sheet once or twice, whether it is soiled or not, as it makes my patient feel always refreshed. It has never yet caused any harm, and I have nursed a good many.

My dear, I have at last had given me that moon-stone ring of aunt Pearl's I coveted so long. Just now there is a perfect mania for moon stones. Not always to be worn as ornaments, but to be carried about the person as a temptation to good fortune and success. To show how deep-seated is this belief, I will quote a letter received by a dealer in gems from an unlucky artist: "Having heard of your wonderful fortune-compelling moonstones, I send immediately for one, hoping that it may dissipate the ill luck that has followed me for some time. Though not a believer in necromancy, I am inclined to accept this with my whole heart. If you can add an extra charm to it I will remain your debtor for life." So you see I am not the only silly woman in regard to moon-stones.

Boston.

Lovingly yours,

ELEANOR WINNE.