

## Domestic Matters.

### SPRAINS,

Or strains of the joints are very painful, and more tedious of recovery than a broken bone. What we call flesh is *muscle*; every muscle tapers down to a kind of string, which we call cord or sinews. The muscle is above the joint, and the sinewy part is below it, or *vice versa*, and the action is much like that of a string over a pulley. When the ankle, for example, is "sprained," the cord, tendon, or ligament (all mean the same thing) is torn in part or whole, either in its body or in its attachment to the bone, and inflammation—that is, a rush of blood to the spot—takes place as instantly as in case of a cut on the finger. Why? For two reasons. Some blood vessels are ruptured, and very naturally pour out their contents; and second by an infallible physiological law, an additional supply of blood is sent to the part to repair the damages, to glue, to make grow together, the torn parts. From this double supply of blood the parts are overflowed, as it were, and push out, causing what we call "swelling"—an accumulation of dead blood, so to speak. But dead blood cannot repair an injury. Two things then, are to be done, to get rid of it, and to allow the parts to grow together. But if the finger be cut, it never will heal as long as the wound is pressed apart every half hour, nor will a torn tendon grow together if it is stretched upon by the ceaseless movement of a joint; therefore, the first and indispensable step, in every case of sprain, is perfect quietude of the part: a single bend of the joint will retard what Nature has been hours in mending. It is in this way that persons with sprained ankles are months in getting well. In cases of sprain then, children who cannot be kept still, should be kept in bed, and so with many grown persons.

The swelling can be got rid in several ways; by a bandage, which, in all cases of sprain should be applied by a skillful physician—otherwise mortification and loss of limb may result. A bandage thus applied keeps the joint still, and keeps an excess of blood from coming to the part, and by its pressure, causes an absorption of extra blood or other extraneous matter.

Another mode of getting rid of the swelling is to let cold water run on the part injured for hours.—*Journal of Health.*

### SPRING COMPLAINTS.

We eat about one-third more in winter than in summer, because we not only have to repair the wear and waste of the system, but we eat to keep the body warm; a portion of the food is converted into fuel; we must keep a bodily warmth of 90° or 100° winter and summer, but it is easy to understand, that, as the thermometer is at 40 in winter and 80 in summer, less fuel is required to sustain the natural temperature in warm weather; if in defiance of this, we pile on the fuel, a wreck and ruin is as inevitable as the blowing up of a steam engine, if double the necessary quantity of steam is constantly generated.

For awhile after the opening of spring, we have the appetite of winter, and not using our knowledge, we indulge it as extensively; and thus generating more heat than is needed, we soon begin to think "we are feverish," in other words we are too warm, but instead of making less fire, we begin to tear down the walls of our bodily house, by taking off our winter clothing, and thus add another cause of disease and death. In a short time, however, nature comes to our aid, and to save us, takes away our appetite; but we, taking this as an evidence of declining health, decide upon one of two things; either to eat without an appetite—which is expressively denominated as "*forcing it down*,"—or we decide upon taking a tonic, forgetting that nature can neither be forced nor coaxed with impunity. The effect of eating without an appetite, or forcing an appetite by the use of tonics, is the same, that is, the introduction of more food into the stomach than nature requires, than there is juice to digest it; for although you may take a tonic which whets the appetite, it does no more; it does not increase the amount of gastric juice, for nature supplies it only in proportion to the needs of the system and if she gave as much when 20° of heat were required as when 60° were necessary she would commit a great blunder—this she never does when unmolested. Then we have more food in the stomach than there is gastric juice for; more wheat than there are mills to grind it; more work than there are workmen to perform. But nature has not "a lazy bone in her," but goes to work to do the best she can; the food is digested, but not thoroughly; it is ground up, but not perfectly; the work is done, but it is badly done; hence an imperfect material for making blood is furnished; and an impure blood, an imperfect blood is

inevitable. The best remedy for spring diseases of whatever name, is—eat less.—*Journal of Health.*

### WHAT IS A COLD?

On a less authority than the London *Lancet* would the theory be credited that the resolve of a person not to take a cold is ample protection against having one. "It is startling to discover," says the *Lancet*, "how little we know about the commoner forms of disease. For example, a 'cold.' What is it! How is it produced, and in what does it consist? It is easy to say a cold is a chill. A chill of what part of the organism? We know by daily experience that the body as a whole or any of its parts may be reduced to considerably lower temperature than will suffice to give to man a cold if the so-called chill be inflicted upon the surface suddenly. It is then the suddenness of a reduction of temperature that causes the cold? It would be strange if it were so, because few of the most susceptible of mortals would take cold from simply handling a piece of cold metal or accidental contact with ice. The truth would seem to be that what we call cold taking is the result of a sufficient impression of cold to reduce the vital energy of nerve centres presiding over the junctions in special organs. If this be the fact, it is easy to see why nature has provided the stimulus of a strong fit of sneezing to oust the dormant centers and enable them at once to resume work and avoid evil consequences. This explains why the worst effects of cold do not, as a rule, follow upon a 'chill' which excites much sneezing. Shivering is a less effective convulsion to restore the paralysed nervous energy, but in a lower degree it may answer the same purpose. The shivering that results from the effect of a poison on the nervous centres is a totally different matter. We speak only of the quick muscular agitation and teeth chattering which occur whenever the body is exposed to cold and evil results do not ensue. It follows from what we have said that the natural indication to ward off the effects of a chill is to restore the vital energy of the nerve centres, and there is no more potent influence by which to attain this object than a strong and sustained effort of the will. The man who resolves not to take cold seldom does."

CARE OF CHILDREN.—Every mother should know that very young children often suffer for the want of fresh, cold water. This they should have every two hours, and more frequently, if they become restless and fretful. Fretfulness is generally caused by great thirst. While making a voyage at sea some years ago, I was greatly disturbed by the incessant crying, or moaning of a child, during the first few days of the journey. The child was about one year old and very delicate. I suggested to the mother that it wanted water. She said that it never, to her knowledge, tasted water, as she thought it dangerous to give to children so young. I assured her she need have no fear. I directed that it should have water every hour, a little at a time, until it became accustomed to it. This was given it, and during the rest of the voyage, of five or six days, I never saw a better or happier child. I believe the child's health was permanently impaired by the constant thirst that during its short life had been consuming it.

LEPROSY IN AMERICA.—The *Commonwealth* in a late issue remarks: "The medical journals see danger ahead from the leprosy which has been introduced into this country. Quite a number of unmistakable cases have been reported from the Southern States, and the disease is disagreeably common among the Chinese in California. On the coast of New Brunswick there are several colonies of lepers. Physicians who have had good opportunities of investigating the character of the disease are of opinion that it is contagious in the full sense of the term. It is nearly sure to spread to the same extent that leprosy subjects freely associate with uncontaminated persons. Some salubrious little island in the Gulf of Mexico ought to be set apart for these unfortunates people, to which every new case of leprosy should be promptly transported. Immediate and complete isolation has always from the most ancient periods, been held to be the only safe way of treating the loathsome complaint."

PERSONAL HABITS AND HEALTH.—The importance of personal habits as affecting health can hardly be over-estimated. Hundreds of cases can be cited of noted persons of the most feeble constitution who by care were able to prolong their lives and accomplish wonderful labors in spite of almost continuous illness. The Jews are said to be the longest-lived people, because of their strict attention to hygiene as directed in the Mosaic law. If a man by taking thought cannot add a cubit to his stature, he may at least lengthen his days very materially by prudence. Any one can prolong his or her life beyond the average term of years by simple attention to hygienic laws.