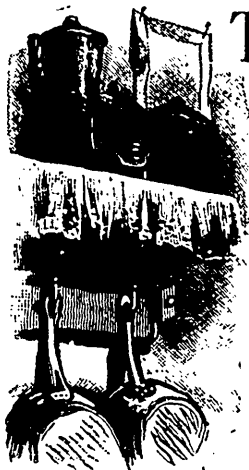


OUR SCARLET-FEVER ATTACK.

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I.



THE story of an attack of scarlet fever in a house and parish, and its arrest by the adoption of precautions, may be interesting and must be useful. I will therefore tell the whole story from beginning to end. One unsatisfactory element in it is that we never were able to determine exactly how it originated in the house, though the origin in the parish was traceable enough.

As to dates and all particulars I shall be very exact, as in such cases it is of the

highest importance to note every point.

On July 4th the governess, with four little children, went to a certain watering place about twenty-four miles distant, which we will call Sands. On July 17th, another child, Violet, went there also; on July 26th, two boys from school, day boys, the eldest we will call Julius. With Violet was put in the same bed a little brother of five years, called Hal.

Every week we sent butter and vegetables to the party at Sands; the butter from a farm I had in hand in which lived a family, the wife being my dairywoman.

On August 8th the governess and the four little children returned from the seaside, leaving Violet and the two elder boys there. My wife went to be with them in the place of Miss Jones, the governess.

On August 11th I went to Sands intending to spend a fortnight there, when, on arriving, my wife told me that Violet was in bed very unwell, had had a shivering fit the previous evening (Sunday), and was now feverish. I at once sent for the doctor, who shook his head and said he could not be certain; he would call next morning early and tell me what he thought.

Next morning, August 12th, at 9 a.m., the doctor came and pronounced that the girl had scarlet fever and ordered us to leave at once. I telegraphed immediately home for Miss Jones to come with the carriage half way to the town of X. I hired a waggone and drove to X., but Miss Jones did not arrive till 6 p.m., as that day there was a flower show at the neighbouring town of Welltown, and coachman, butler, gardeners—all who could—had gone to the flower show.

We were therefore obliged to remain the night at X. and send on Miss Jones to Sands to nurse Violet.

With our returning party, which consisted of the two boys and baby of four months old, myself and wife, was

the under-nurse, in a deadly condition of panic, her name Jessie.

There happened to be close to my house a tower, completely isolated, with bedroom in it and fireplace. I wired that a bath, hot water in abundance, and complete changes of raiment were to be in readiness on our arrival. At X. I provided myself with a supply of carbolic soap and sulphur, and various disinfectants.

On reaching home we drove at once to the tower, where a fire was lighted and all was prepared. Then each of those returning from Sands passed one by one into the tower and bathed and washed completely with carbolic soap and put on entirely fresh clothing, and threw all that was taken off into one corner. The fresh clothing was handed in by the housemaid as required. In the meantime, no contact was allowed between those returning from Sands with those in the house.

At last all the returning party in renovated condition entered the house to enjoy a hearty lunch. Naturally the first to undergo the operation was baby, who rather enjoyed it than otherwise—he dearly loves his tub.

In the meantime I had summoned the village surgeon, and had ordered the heating of the coppers in the wash-house, distant a couple of hundred yards from the house. The surgeon and I proceeded to convey in baskets all the washable articles of clothing taken off to the coppers, and threw them all in, where they were boiled for two or three hours. Being both of us novices in washing we unhappily threw in children's scarlet flannel petticoats along with the white linen and white flannel cricketing suits of the boys. The result was that the colour came off the former and on to the latter. Moreover, in with the rest went my wife's purse, which she had forgotten to remove from her pocket, and that was boiled with the garments, aye, and boiled to shreds; moreover, it iron-moulded somewhat the linen it touched.

Then the village doctor arranged clothes-horses in the tower, and a couple of bricks were heated red-hot in the kitchen stove. When ready all the clothing (not boiling in the copper) was hung by the surgeon on the clothes-horses, and he proceeded to put sulphur on the red-hot bricks—one pound sufficed. The door was fastened hermetically, and the room was soon so dense with brimstone vapour that not a fly could live in it. There the garments were left for twenty-four hours.

We flattered ourselves that by this means we had completely stopped infection; and so we would have done, but, alas! whilst locking the front door, we had left open the back.

(To be continued.)

A FACT FOR TEMPERANCE WORKERS.—"I have often mentioned, and I do not know that I can do better than mention it again, a most remarkable instance of the connection between offences of violence and excessive drinking. On one occasion, in a northern county, I sat to try a calendar of sixty-three prisoners, out of which thirty-six were charged with offences of violence, from murder downwards, there being no less than six murderers for trial among those thirty-six. In every single case, not indirectly, but directly, these offences were attributed to excessive drinking."
 —JUSTICE DENMAN.