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NOTES
ON NURSING

HOW TO TREAT SMALLPOX—GUARANTEED
TO PREVENT DISFIGURATION AND
LESSEN SUFFERING.

CURE FOR CHOLERA, CANCER, SPRAINS,
&c , &c.

BY
MRS. DANIEL MACPHERSON.

MONTREAL:
PRINTED BY JOHN LOVELL & SON,
1890.

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NOTES ON NURSING.

THIS pamphlet must necessarily be egotistical, if I am to help others by my advice and experience. I can only do so by saying what I did myself and how I came to do it.

Well, in the year —, a young son of mine was sitting on the Esplanade, Quebec, watching some exhibition, when he found the party seated beside him was a young girl covered with small-pox. He left quickly, but the harm was done. I forget how many days after he took ill. The late lamented Dr. LaFleur, of Levis, attended him, and from him I learnt the treatment, which enabled me, alone, without nurse or physician, to treat another son. Both were very bad cases, and neither bear the slightest mark of ever having had the disease.

I wished to go to the General Hospital in Quebec with my boy. "What is your object?" Dr. LaFleur inquired. "To prevent giving it to others," I answered. "Well," he said, "as

you would have to get a carriage, cross in the steamer, and drive some distance, you would probably do your son great harm and risk infection to dozens of people before you get there." So I remained where I was. We occupied a very large double house; one side-parlor and bedroom was tightly closed off from the rest. All food was carried to me by an old man, hired to sit on a grass-plot and bring what was required—taking it from the servants, hands and depositing it on the gallery. Every article of furniture was taken and, with carpet, put in the hangard, and there kept three months. I only retained a bed, and I had a small stove, in which I burnt all remains of food, and the plates were thoroughly soaked in disinfectants before being returned to the cook. All linen and bits of cotton used as pocket handkerchiefs were burnt, and the sheets thrown into tubs of cold water, with disinfectants, and the old man, with a stick, shaking them around several times, before changing the water, and put them out on the grass, in the hot sun, to dry; thus I could change the bed every day or two, and yet not risk infection to others by having them washed. Dr. LaFleur only came into the house for about a

week, he looked at his patient through an open window. I attended him alone for six weeks, and then two tents were erected, in one of which he and I sat and talked to other members of the family in another tent. This was the one solitary case in South Quebec. Thank God no one took it from us. And now for my second case and the treatment :

I must premise I pretend to no medical knowledge. I never gave a pulse or temperament to a doctor, for my days were the days of Dickens' Sarey Gamp, and to give a drink, or rather not give a drink, of cold water to a fever-stricken and thirst-consuming patient was the utmost we aimed at in nursing ; so that in acting the part of sole physician, I was driven by stern necessity by no desire of my own.

When first the small-pox epidemic appeared in Montreal, there was a regular panic, there was not room in the Civic Hospital, and the doctors feared to attend small-pox cases on account of the fears of their other patients. This was the position of affairs when I went one morning to my dressmaker, and asked her to make some small repairs to a pair of pants belonging to my —. When I went back for them and for some dresses (fortunately they

were calico and so washed), I noticed a very peculiar and disgusting odor. I remarked, "You can never be healthy in such an atmosphere as this. Why don't you open your windows?" "They have been open." The room was in semi-darkness, and a child's cot was in the corner. I believe now the sick child was in that cot. I took my effects and departed. The next day. Mrs. G——, a kind neighbor from that house, said: "You get your sewing done there? I want some done; but little Jeff, who went to get some milk there, says he is sure that he saw a child ill with small-pox, and refused to take the milk." "Can it be possible!" It flashed upon me instantly that was really the peculiar disgusting odor of small-pox I had smelt. I said so. A doctor was sent to investigate, and it was found to be the case; and the criminal neglect of that family gave it to ten parties in that street—one of them my son. Another of little Jeff took it also. My patient had started on business and reached Toronto, feeling very ill; went to a physician there, who told him there was a good deal of low fever about, and he had better lay up in some hospital there. He said, no, he would come home; but, just on arrival, wanted to go to an hospital—

beginning to fear it was small-pox. But as it was late, and he very much exhausted, I persuaded him to stay with us for one night, as he had had no food and could take none. I gave him some hot bitter ale (an old Englishman had told me it was a good thing to cause an eruption to come out). He slept the sleep of exhaustion that night, and the next morning he was covered with a rash. We had been such a healthy family. We knew no doctor in Montreal; knew none to whom to apply. So (and now the personal pronoun must be used very often if I aim to obtain the desired result from these memories) that by helping any one unexpectedly placed in my position, unable to procure medical help, I was enabled to take care of and preserve the life and prevent disfigurement of a patient, and destroy all danger of infection.

I called to Mr. G——, a neighbor, from an upper window, and asked him to send me a doctor. "What for?" "I don't know." "Can it be small-pox?" "It may be." So he sent. Dr. Laberge arrived, glanced from a distance, said "I'll send the doctor of the Civic hospital tomorrow. We'll judge better then." There was

chloride of lime on a saucer in the passage, through which passed a through draft of air. There was no one in the house except my husband, my son and myself. My servant had gone home some days previously. My dear husband would not leave; but I never spoke to him, except from a distance, for six long weeks. He occupied a room in the lower story, and spent his days walking in the country, and took his meals out. The next day the civic doctor arrived—he pronounced it an unmistakable case of small-pox. “Will you have him taken to the Civic hospital?” was the next query? “Can I hire a room to go with him, and nurse him, if I stay inside all the time?” “No; there is no room to hire. The hospital is crowded. It will be as much as I can do to get your son a bed; then he will remain.” The two next houses were unoccupied—parties were in the country. Mine was on a corner, next a large vacant lot, opposite a large green field, with an empty school-house. I decided to ask permission to remain. I again sent for Dr. Laberge; he took in the surroundings, and said I could, as he saw I was to be trusted. I asked him to attend my patient; he said he could not, in his public situation he

would risk too much infection to others. "Well, then," I asked, "can you tell me how to make the salve Dr. Lafleur, of Levis (now deceased), put on the patient's face to prevent disfigurement? Was it black?" "No, grey." "This I cannot tell you; but I know in England they use something with charcoal in it." And that was all the medical advice I had in the course of this long and very serious illness, for it was a very bad case, and the doctor who had seen my son in Toronto said, from the weakness of my patient at the time he saw him, he thought that there were no hopes of recovery. I also sent for Dr. P——, of Bleury street. He looked in from the door, and said his duty to patients he was then attending would prevent his coming, unless in case of inflammation of the lungs or other serious complication. So I prepared for a seige in earnest. I talked from an upper window, and ordered that essence of beef and a bag of ship (not cabin) biscuits, be sent to me. Some canned things for myself, cheese, other crackers, honey, preserved fruit, lemons, oranges, gelatine and wine for jelly, etc.; and as medical stores an ounce of flour of sulphur, a bottle of iodine (small one), a jar of mineral water, a few

ounces best cream of tartar, a small quantity of powdered charcoal, a box of pure fresh lard, a small new paint brush, a bottle of sweet oil, and a few seidlitz powders.

This was all my medical paraphernalia, more preventive than curative, for I pretend to no medical knowledge.

OTHER PREPARATIONS.

In the outbuildings was a table, with drawers, containing silver money over a cup of chloride of lime, paper, and pen and ink.

I arranged with a man to place on that table every day, a pound of any kind of fresh meat, some boxes of strawberries, half a gallon of milk, a few fresh eggs, and the daily papers. My friends were requested after ringing the bell to look to the parlor window, from whence I said how we were getting on, and to place between the doors amusing books, papers and letters. Well, with profuse apologies came the men. "So sorry, but we are obliged to placard you." "So much obliged," said I. "Put it on the outer door where it can be well seen, and then I shall have perfect quiet and not be bothered by visitors."

Now I think it is time to go back to my patient, whom I have left quietly dosing in the very top story on the bath room flat. For the first few days he was very weak, his long travel and anxiety to reach home had told upon him, so occasionally I gave him hot ale as nutritive and stimulating, and sailors' biscuits and strawberries. He was delighted with the biscuit. "How did you come to think of it. I could not have eaten bread."

I know by experience that a person ill can eat sailors or soda biscuit when they cannot eat anything else; besides, the baker ceased to come, and if the man I had hired to bring me provisions failed me, I was insured against starvation, for none of my family would have been permitted to come near me. I have since learned, that when a house is placarded, you can insist on a policeman calling with eatables every day. As soon as the eruption was fully out, I made a salve of charcoal, perfectly black, with which the patient's face was thickly covered, he only looked like a negro, and as the oldest of everything was brought into use and burnt in a small stove on the same flat, it did not matter much. Old shirts shared the same fate, and for pocket handkerchiefs I used old squares of cotton,

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and burned them. Then I put into practice what Dr. LaFleur taught me. It sounds disgusting, but is not everything about small-pox disgusting, and a few days patience and perseverance protects from disfigurement for life. So I must tell you that *every single pustule as soon as it reaches maturity, must be picked with a clean fine-needle,* and not suffered to eat holes in the skin, for this is what causes disfigurement, by small-pox. Then mix equal parts of cream and iodine, and with a small clean paint brush touch every pustule, don't neglect one, or there will be a mark. This must be done every day for a few days; if it smarts put more cream, and then every day for about a week, put on all over the face a mixture of cream and glycerine: That is the whole process, very simple in practice, and which not only saves the looks, but gives great relief, by taking away the intolerable itching which small-pox patients suffer from; for sore throat and inability to swallow, gargle with flour of sulphur, and put a little on the tongue. Now for diet. As soon as the eruption was fully out, I gave all fruit and milk he asked. I stopped the ale, and never gave a drop of wine or stimulant of any kind during the whole six

weeks he was in my charge. I may state here that from what I have heard, I attribute the great disfigurement amongst the French Canadians, particularly of the lower class (intelligent people know better), to the great quantity of whiskey and gin given at that time. In fact, I heard a man say in the cars one day, there is only one remedy for small-pox, this about a young child—*du gin à force*—meaning gin in any quantity, and now mind ask a doctor what diet should be, as I had no doctor. I gave my patient what he asked for, tea, coffee, broma, lemonade, and when the fever was high lemonade with plenty of cream of tartar, for which this receipt :—

Take an ounce of cream of tartar, put it in a good sized jug, cut up a lemon and put it on the cream of tartar with some white sugar, pour on it some boiling water to extract the juice, then fill up with cold water, and when well settled, give as the patient is thirsty.

After the anxiety of the first ten days was over, and my patient began to mend, we had some very pleasant though quiet days. I read aloud amusing books and papers, and at the end of about six weeks I thought my patient well enough to go free, and so called out of

the window to send for a city doctor to pronounce my patient cured. We went into the hangard, where a nice dinner was cooling on a coal oil stove, passed the day there while the house was being disinfected, and returned next day to freedom, with grateful hearts to rejoice over past danger. If I have been so minute in these details, it is that in times of public calamity, when doctors are overworked and hard to procure, most parties lose their wits, and do not exercise the calm judgment that might otherwise help to save their friends and themselves.

I must note as a singular fact that both the gentlemen I have spoken of as patients had been vaccinated as children, which shows the necessity of revaccination, while I, who attended them, had not been revaccinated, and, after a lapse of fifty years vaccination, never took it, though I attended them both. An extraordinary exception, not to be relied upon. The question was asked me, what would you have done if your patients became delirious, as you were alone? They were both at times slightly delirious, but not annoyingly so. Had they shown the slightest symptom of becoming

uncontrollable; I should have rolled them in sheets, tied them, and called for help. I had reasoned out all my plans in my own mind. So I give this as a hint to others, and I advise any one else to bathe the feet constantly in sweet oil, as one patient suffered most from his feet. In cases of yellow fever, I have heard that in the South they apply a salt herring to the sole of the foot, it draws out the fever, becomes black, is burnt, and another put on. I would now try the same on small-pox, taking care the brine did not touch the skin, the herring to be well covered.

CHOLERA.

The first case of cholera I remember of was the case of a servant who was pronounced by two doctors almost in the state of collapse. A man—I never knew his name—asked to be allowed to try what he could do, as there was pronounced no hope. He tried brandy in good green tea, after a dose of castor oil,—I think a tea-spoonful of best brandy in a small cup of hot green tea. The women recovered, and, like wildfire, the news spread, and old Mr. Tibbits, recently deceased, and Horatio Patton, Esq.,

both lumber merchants, employing hundreds of hands, used to start out in the morning, on their rounds, each carrying a bottle of brandy and pail of hot tea in hands, waiting on and saving the lives of hundreds of men, women and children.

The late Brian O'Hara, Esq., a very old friend of my dear father's, told me that when a merchant in Porto Rico (he was English consul there), so many of his blacks died of cholera, that he was obliged to have a large dining room in his house prepared as an hospital, and the ladies of his family to look after them. Cold water was supposed at that time, in nearly all diseases, especially cholera, to be so much poison, and the men were, some of them, strapped down to prevent their getting at it. One powerful fellow, on seeing the men place water on the verandah, broke his bonds, and before he could be stopped, drank more than a quart; all expected to see him die, instead, he began to mend from that moment, and then the others were allowed to use it. None died after.

I had a very young child ill with country cholera. My father advised my trying cold

water and giving the child ice to suck. My boy is living now. And a young doctor, living near us at Lake St. Charles, refused to try it, thinking it too hazardous a remedy. His child died. Water poured on chopped raw beef, allowed to soak to extract strength, is also good in cholera for a young child.

Now, cholera is much better understood ; then its treatment was guess work. A physician, now deceased, who had a great deal to do with it (late Dr. Michaud, of Kamouraska), told me, from the first moment of an attack, if possible one attacked should remain perfectly quiescent. The movement of a hand even being unwise.

PREVENTION.

Mrs. MacDonald, wife of a sergeant in the army (one of Quebec's noted nurses), told me that on the outbreak of the cholera in India, the doctor of the regiment ordered that every man, woman and child put on and keep on a flannel band, reaching from the waist to the hips, and not one of their regiment died of it. *Apropos* of cholera, the late Dr. James Sewell told me that when in England, staying with two old lady friends, one became ill. He said

he had seen so much of it in Quebec he knew it was cholera by the peculiar look in the eye, and advised them to send for their own doctor at once. The learned man came and, after examining the lady, said it was nothing serious, and wanted to see this young prodigy from America who knew so much. The lady was dead before night of Asiatic cholera. The London physician knew it in theory, Dr. Sewell by practice. But even Dr. Sewell's well tried knowledge failed to save his cherished wife, who died of it after a few hours illness. The first symptoms must be attended to at once ; whereas this lady, seeing her husband so overworked, failed to acquaint him how ill she felt, and fell a victim in part to her own unselfishness. How great was the universal sorrow I need not say.

CANCER.

The late Dr. Anderson told me he had seen his father, I think it was, cure a woman by the application of pure lemon-juice. He said the lemon-juice killed the cancer, the bad flesh fell off, and the woman's shoulder remained perfectly cured without aid of the knife.

SPRAINS.

An Indian remedy for sprains is to take salted parsley and bind it on the sprained part, changing it occasionally till it is cured. This I know to be perfectly successful, having seen a party treated. Hot camomile infusive is also good for a sprain.

INDIAN REMEDY FOR DROPSY.

I was told that a woman who had lived near us some years ago, a farmer's wife, had been cured by a squaw; by covering the whole body with slices of cucumber which drew out the water through the pores, I do not know whether this is true or not, but it was told to me for a fact.

For sting of a wasp or bee, wet earth, and put it on, it will take away the pain at once.

BALLOON
BAPTIST