

THE  
**WATER-CURE JOURNAL,**

DEVOTED TO THE  
EXPLANATION OF THE PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE, OF  
**HYDROPATHY, OR THE WATER-CURE.**

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"Wash and be Healed."  
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Vol. II.—No. 5.]

NEW-YORK, AUGUST 1, 1846.

[WHOLE No. 17.]

**DOMESTIC POISONS.**

(From Dr. Alcott's *Library of Health*, of 1839.)

[Continued from page 54.]

*Sugar of Lead.*—Our readers have been already introduced to this very poisonous compound, in the preceding paragraphs. It is most dangerous, however, because most frequently used in that way, in the preparation of wines, syrups, brandies, &c.

In preparing syrups and brandies, they are sometimes clarified with sugar of lead. If the clarification is not well performed, the liquors retain a part of the sugar of lead; and the most terrible results may follow.

It is, however, in the preparation of sweet wines, that sugar of lead is so used as to produce the greatest amount of mischief. This substance, as may readily be conceived, sweetens old sour wines, and seems to improve them surprisingly, in other respects. An immense amount of poison is worked up in this way, and drunk in the course of a year. Indeed, there is reason to believe, that most wines which tend to become acid by age, are adulterated in this way more or less, in order to conceal both their acidity and their roughness. Litharge is also occasionally used for the same purpose.

Orfila says—"If water or wine containing very little of this metal (lead) be drunk, no inconvenience may be felt from

it at first; but if the use of these drinks is continued, they ultimately produce a chronic disease, which in general resembles the colic of painters; but which, in certain circumstances, is a true palsy."

It has been said—we know not with how much of truth—that if lead, in the smallest quantity, is received into the human system, it is impossible to escape more or less of suffering as the consequence, although the punishment should be delayed for many years. Instances are on record of disease having occurred, as the consequence of using lead, some twenty or thirty years afterwards.

*Tin.*—Pure tin is not much used in the formation of culinary utensils. The substance commonly called by the name of tin, is an alloy of tin and iron. To form it, very thin plates or sheets of iron are dipped into melted tin, which not only coats the iron plates, but penetrates them. We believe that the principal common articles made of pure tin—britannia, as it is called—are tea pots, cream vessels, and spoons.

But whether made of pure tin or an alloy, they are not injurious as long as they do not rust or oxidate; but the moment they do, they become poisonous. The rust itself is poisonous; and so is every compound formed by every acid which comes in contact with it.

It will be proper here to describe briefly

the symptoms of disease which are induced by the preparations of tin, because they are almost precisely the same as those induced by copper, zinc, bismuth, and arsenic; and one description will therefore suffice for the whole.

First, there is a greater or less degree of constriction in the throat. This is soon followed by pain in the back part of the mouth, and in the stomach and bowels, which ere long becomes insupportable. Next follows a sickness at the stomach and occasional vomiting, with constipation or diarrhœa; for sometimes it is one, and sometimes the other. The water vomited, as well as that rejected, is of various appearances, and sometimes bloody. To these alarming symptoms are frequently added very offensive belchings of air from the stomach, with hiccough, difficult breathing, and a sense of suffocation.

These are the symptoms which appear generally; though of course greatly modified as to number and severity, by the existing circumstances. When the poisoning has been so considerable as to give rise to the whole train of symptoms above mentioned, and is not quickly relieved, a most unquenchable thirst, with dysuria, cramps, convulsions, and an icy coldness of the extremities, comes on, followed—if no relief still—by delirium and death. Sometimes, however, the delirium is wanting.

This will suffice, as we have already said, for a description of the consequences of swallowing not only tin, but also zinc, copper, arsenic, verdigris of both kinds, and bismuth. But to return to the consideration of tin.

It is not a little remarkable, that while vessels made of tinned plate are more frequently used among us for milk than for almost any other purpose, the acid of which, should it turn acid at any time, would be ready to combine with all sorts of rust on tin to form a poisonous salt, this very milk is the most natural and most appropriate antidote for this species of poisoning. It is on this account, in all probability, that so little suffering is experienced from this source. Tin ware, however, is much used for other purposes than to set milk in; and there can be no doubt in the hands of unskilful or uncleanly house-

wives, it is often the cause of much human suffering.

Sulphur combines very readily with tin, if brought into contact with it, forming a new and injurious compound. Eggs, therefore, and other animal and vegetable substances which contain sulphur, should not be cooked or kept in tinned vessels.

*Pewter* is made by mixing together three parts of tin and one of lead. Cups, plates, and spoons, and many more culinary vessels, have been made of pewter; and so long as they do not oxidate, are safe; but the moment they are suffered by neglect to oxidate, they become poisonous.

*Zinc*.—This metal is much used in the manufacture of boilers, baths, &c., and it has likewise been used for many other culinary vessels. It has also been proposed by some, as a substitute for lead and copper in covering houses and ships, and in the formation of pipes for the conveyance of water. All this, however, is wrong; for experience proves that it rusts very easily, and that milk, butter, and every vegetable acid, act upon it so readily as to render it wholly unsafe. The French chemists even say, that water in contact with it, becomes poisonous. Food prepared in vessels of zinc may occasion vomiting and diarrhœa, with all the usual symptoms of metallic poison.

Zinc is an essential ingredient in brass; and it is sometimes mixed with tin and lead in the formation of pewter. Whether it increases the liability of these compounds to rust, we are not certain; but in reasoning from analogy, we are led to think so.

The sulphate of zinc or white vitriol, so much used as an emetic, is of course poisonous—but this belongs to the department of medicine.

*Copperas*.—This is the common or vulgar name for the combination of sulphuric acid with iron, called by the chemists sulphate of iron. It has an astringent, metallic taste; and is much used in the preparation of ink, and in dyeing. Vegetables boiled in iron pots and kettles, are not unfrequently blackened; which we presume is often the result of a combination of the small quantity of sulphur contained in the vegetables—for many vegetables contain

a little sulphur—with a small portion of iron or of its oxides. Of this, however, we are not quite certain.

Nor are we quite certain how poisonous copperas is to the human stomach. Ink, in the preparation of which it is much used, has always been considered poisonous; and it is also used for medicinal purposes.

*Verdigris.*—Every preparation of copper, when introduced into the stomach, even in the smallest doses, is poisonous. The most common of these, however, is verdigris.

There are two kinds of verdigris. One of them is called *natural*, the other *artificial* verdigris; but both of them are exceedingly poisonous.

Natural verdigris is formed by the union of carbonic acid with copper, and is, in chemical language, a sub-carbonate of copper. It is observed on pieces of money—cents and half cents—in soda fountains, and on copper stop cocks. It does not readily dissolve in water; but if, in drinking water or any thing else which contains it, any fragments or particles of it should be swallowed, it will produce all the symptoms of poisoning. On this account, intelligent chemists advise us never to drink water kept in vessels which have copper about them.

Artificial verdigris—the sub-acetate of copper—will dissolve in water, and whether swallowed in powder or in water, is always poisonous. Too much care cannot be taken to prevent the formation of this substance in kitchen utensils; and yet, through the neglect of housekeepers, hardly any thing is more common. Sauce-pans, whether of copper or brass—for brass contains much copper—if well tinned and kept perfectly clean, are not at all dangerous, whatever may be cooked in them; but when they are badly tinned, not only wine, cider, vinegar, currant and gooseberry juice, but oil, and all greasy substances, cause the formation of verdigris, and may occasion the most fatal accidents.

When the substances of which we have been speaking, especially oily or greasy food, are not only prepared in copper vessels, but also left to cool in them, the quantity of verdigris formed is apt to be very considerable. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance to pour off whatever we

cook in these vessels while it is still boiling.

It is stated in our more elaborate works on poisons, that people are sometimes made sick by eating salads seasoned with vinegar, in consequence of the previous exposure of the vinegar, in some way, to copper. Medicines also—whether in the family closet or the apothecary's shop—have, at times, become poisonous in a similar way.

*Arsenic.*—Fears have been sometimes entertained by families who use arsenic or ratsbane to destroy rats and mice, that these animals, after having gnawed the bait set for them, and before they become sick with it, might gnaw our articles of food, and thus communicate the poison. We do not know whether there is much danger from this source or not.

But there is one use of this substance in modern housewifery, or at least by those who keep dairies, which is exceedingly dangerous, and cannot be too much condemned. It is in the preparation of cheese. We have it on good authority, that part of the cheese in Worcester county, in this state, is prepared in this manner; and we have little doubt that it is so elsewhere.

Arsenic is used in cheese to give to the curds the appearance of having been formed from new milk, when it is not so. It imparts a tenderness, and freshness—real or imaginary—which tempts too much the cupidity of our people, to be effectually resisted. If it should be said that the quantity of arsenic used in a single cheese is probably very small, and that very few would be likely to be made immediately sick with it; we grant it. Still, some are so, to our certain knowledge; and more may be so. Besides, our readers know very well, before this time, that a person may sustain injury—may indeed be actually poisoned—even though he should not appear to suffer at once. The consequences of receiving poison may be delayed for many years.

*Mercury, or Quicksilver.*—Those who work at the gilding of toys, and buttons, and glass plates, are said to be exposed more or less to the influence of mercury or quicksilver, but in what way, except through the medium of its fumes, we are

not enough acquainted with these occupations to know. Those who work at looking glasses are also peculiarly exposed to dangers. The results of poisoning with this metal, may be precisely those which are witnessed in severe cases of poisoning by taking it internally, as a medicine; first a salivation, and next ulcerations of the mouth and throat, eruptions, rheumatic pains in the limbs, and diseases of the bones. A disease, however, which, if possible, is still more terrible, sometimes supervenes, called mercurial palsy. We say more terrible, because, though it attacks suddenly, and disables most effectually, it nevertheless is not apt to destroy life; but what is in some respects still worse, it keeps up a sort of lingering *dying* death for many years, sometimes for twenty or twenty-five. In fact, we know of no metal—lead itself not excepted—whose effects on our own system we should more dread, than mercury.

*Nitre.*—Nitre, or saltpetre, is poisonous both to men and animals, whether taken internally, or applied externally where the skin is broken. We have the highest authority for asserting its poisonous character, although many physicians make assertions to the contrary. When used in any considerable quantity, it gives rise to obstinate and bloody vomitings, to inflammation of the stomach, and to all the symptoms which have been described (at page 66;) to which we must refer the reader.

Now is it not strange, that this poisonous substance should be used so frequently in the preservation of our pork and beef, and yet nobody, or hardly anybody, suspect it injures them? The truth is, that as with many other things, so it is, in all probability, with this; the quantity used at once is so small, that the injury is for the most part slow. It irritates the stomach, inflames its lining membrane, and the lining membrane of the whole intestinal canal; impairs digestion; affects seriously the liver; impairs the nervous system; and finally either produces serious disease by itself, or aggravates diseases induced by other causes. And yet should any, or all these evils come upon us, we refer them to something else—to almost any thing else—rather than to the true cause. So ignorant are we, and withal, so infatuated!

We have now considered, briefly, all the more important of the solid metallic poisons to which we are exposed in the more common walks of life—exclusively of medicines, which for the present, as we have already said, we purpose to omit. There are one or two more substances, however, of which we wish to say a *few words*.

*Bismuth*, in one of its forms—that of *magistery of bismuth*, as it is called by the chemists, or *pearl white* by the vulgar—is very poisonous; and we have no doubt produces, in the fashionable world, not a little disease. We refer to its use as a cosmetic, or paint for the face. It not only prevents perspiration, by stopping the pores, but it also gives rise to chronic diseases, such as rheumatisms, nervous complaints, &c.

*Pearlash* is regarded by some as a narcotic; but it so, it is a poison, and its frequent employment in cooking requires this passing notice. There is no doubt that it ought to be banished from our tables, and confined to our shops, especially to the shop of the apothecary.

*Sulphur*, in its simple state, can hardly be said to be a poison; although some of its *compounds* are very poisonous. Among these is the liver of sulphur, or sulphuret of potash. Its effects on the human system are much like those of nitre, only more dangerous.

We have before us an authentic anecdote of a lady—a distinguished countess—who, having swallowed by mistake a small quantity of liver of sulphur at a bathing house, expired in a few minutes. Happily, however, it is not much used in the arts at present, so far as we know, except in making glass, and soft soap, and in the use of medicated baths; and those who let alone all medicine, except when it is prescribed by a physician, need not come in contact with it, except in the use of soap. And even here its effects must, as it seems to me, be greatly neutralized by the oil with which the liver of sulphur combines.

There are several compounds of sulphur with other substances, either in the liquid or gaseous form, which are very destructive to human health and life. Among these are the sulphurous acid, and the sulphuretted hydrogen gas.

*Sulphurous acid*, if inhaled in its pure state, is instantly fatal; and even a small quantity of it, if mixed with the air we breathe, produces cough and difficulty of breathing. The greatest danger from it in the arts—where it is much used for bleaching—is in bleaching straw, paper, rags, &c. There is, however, some danger from it in burning several kinds of coal, if the air from the stove is suffered to escape into the room. In burning several parcels of Lehigh and Schuylkill coal, we have often discovered a strong sulphurous smell in the room. We repeat it; this smell should always warn us of danger, and lead us to exercise caution.

*Sulphuretted hydrogen gas*, which is so apt to accumulate in the slightly debilitated stomach and bowels, and which is evolved also from necessaries, and from many decaying substances, as from putrescent eggs, is a very rank poison. Air containing a thousandth part of it, if inhaled by birds, kills them immediately; that which contains a hundredth part, kills dogs; and that containing a fifteenth part, horses. It is even exceedingly injurious to the human intestines, wherever they contain it, and to all the vital organs, as it penetrates the membranes, with astonishing rapidity, poisoning wherever it goes.

When this gas is inhaled in large quantities, the following are its effects, from which the reader may judge of its deadly nature; smaller quantities producing, of course, symptoms less severe in proportion.

In a little time after breathing sulphuretted hydrogen gas, in considerable quantity, the individual is deprived of sensation, consciousness, and motion; the body is cold, and the lips and face violet; a bloody froth escapes from the mouth; the eyes lose their brilliancy, and become closed, with the pupil greatly enlarged and motionless; the pulse becomes small and frequent; the heart palpitates and moves irregularly; the breathing is short, difficult and convulsive, and the limbs relaxed. To these symptoms, however, soon succeed others of a still more dangerous character. The limbs and moving powers of the body become agitated or convulsed, and the body is sometimes bent backward; severe and acute pains are experienced; the groans or expressions of suffering resemble

more the bellowing of a bull than any thing else; and if no relief can be had, the scene soon closes by death.

But we have said so much about this gas, in our treatise on "BREATHING BAD AIR," that it is unnecessary to add more in this place, except to say a word or two in connexion with its existence in eggs. It seems to be a product of decomposition and putrefaction; but is it uniformly so? If it is, we seldom get our eggs for the table, without being a little putrefied; for a silver spoon is almost always discolored when put into eggs, which proves the presence of the poison in question; as the sulphur leaves the hydrogen to unite with the silver. Are our eggs, then, almost always in a state of incipient putrefaction when we eat them? But whether they are so or not, they are always more or less poisonous when they contain sulphuretted hydrogen gas; and they always contain this gas, when they blacken our silver.

*Nitric acid*, or aqua fortis, which is much used in the arts, is an exceedingly strong poison; but we are not enough acquainted with its particular effects to say much concerning the forms of disease it induces; besides, we want the space for the discussion of other topics.

*Cold applications.*—In an essay written by the late Dr. Dickinson, of New York, and recently read before the Holstein Lyceum, the author points out the leading popular errors, pursued in the treatment of wounds and other external injuries. These errors had their origin in the incorrect views of the animal economy entertained by some of the older writers on medicine and surgery, and were by them transmitted as a legacy to the public at large; by the less informed of whom they are fondly cherished even at the present day. The praiseworthy efforts which are now making to convey useful knowledge to every class of society, will, it is to be hoped, before long, disabuse the public mind on this as well as numerous other subjects. The essay of Dr. Dickinson is well adapted to this end: it is marked throughout by that plain practical sense which distinguishes so pre-eminently the writings of Franklin. We have only room for the following judicious re-

marks of the doctor on *cold applications* :—This, he remarks, is a class of very great importance; one which has been too long in dispute, and too little used in our attempts to alleviate human sufferings. Cold applications are required in all high feverish heats; in all bruises, sprains, and inflammations; in all violent head-aches, sore eyes, wasp stings, &c. Now let us look at the reason for applying cold. It is in all cases to *prevent* [and mitigate] *inflammation*. It is one law of our nature that an unusual quantity of blood rushes to any part inflamed. As a proof, think how quickly the eyelids will swell when stung by a wasp. Now this swelling is nothing more than the flesh being crowded too full with blood. Again, it is another law of our nature that less blood goes to any part that is cold, and more to any that is warm. As proof, in winter we come into the house with hands, face, ears, &c. white with cold, but we find the good woman sitting by the fire flushed with heat. Thus you see why cold is applied; and you also learn all the cases in which it is required; viz. in all cases where you wish to prevent inflammation and swelling, or where swelling has taken place and you wish to remove it. And you may learn likewise how effectually this may be done, by remembering that if you remain out in a cold evening long enough; that is, applying cold enough to your ear to freeze it, you have driven every particle of blood from it, and it is as white as a lily. In all common cases much less cold than that will answer our purpose. The effect will always be the same, differing only in degree; cold will always keep the blood from rushing to the part; that is, will always prevent inflammation and swelling; and that is what we are called upon to do.

Having proved that the application of cold is necessary and useful, the next question will be, how will this application be made? What articles shall be used? There are many articles and many ways of accomplishing this object; but the cheapest and most convenient, the neatest, and altogether the very best mode of applying cold, is by means of cold water, snow, or ice. The *prejudices* against *simple cold water*, I know to be very great in

the community; but I also know these prejudices are hereditary; believed because grandfathers and grandmothers said so; without one reason from the nature of things, or one single fact from experience. We know such prejudice to exist, from the fact that cold water is never recommended as an application to an inflamed limb, a sprained ankle, or sore eyes; but we hear from one the question, what, *clear cold water*? May I not put some rum or some vinegar to it? Another will ask, if it would not be well to put in some salt or soap? and if it is to wash inflamed eyes, all will cry out, put some milk with the water. Now, do any of the articles recommended by these prejudiced advisers, make the water better? that is, colder. Oh, no; this is not expected; we would mix these articles with water, say they, to keep the patient from taking cold! But look at this one moment. Can it be supposed that a little salt, or vinegar, or rum, applied to the skin, will keep a person from taking cold? Are there any facts to prove such an assertion? Oh no. It is an idea that has been handed down from father to son, ever since the first Indian doctor began to practise his mysterious roots; and no reason can be assigned for it. As well might we say that the pebble stones on the bottom of the brook keep the horses from taking cold, when we drive them in to drink. I have known a swelling upon a child's forehead, as big as a pigeon's egg, occasioned by a fall; and because there happened to be no camphire in the bottle, the sympathising mother had nothing to do but sit down and cry over her child. Now, she should know that cloths dipped in cold water, or if in winter, when it can be obtained, a snow ball wrapped up in a cloth, and held upon the swelling, will do more good than a gallon of camphire. I have known persons to heat rum to wash the head with, in violent head-aches, when showering it with cold water, or a cap full of snow, will do a great deal of good, as we might expect. I have known a good nurse put on bruised wormwood, steeped in boiling vinegar, to a sprained ankle, to keep the swelling down; but according to the laws of nature, all hot applications in such cases do harm. We must apply

cold to do any good. Let pitchers of cold water be poured from a height upon such an ankle, and the inflammation will be very soon subdued."

As is afterward intimated by Dr. Dickin-son, these directions to use cold water, are intended to apply to an inflamed state of the part, when it is red, hot, painful, and swelled. After the subsidence of the redness and heat, but pain and tumefaction remaining, and if it be a joint, stiffness of motion, the best applications are warm and even hot water poured on the part, and active frictions.—*Journal of Health*, 1831.

*Temperance.*—A temperate diet has always been attended with the best effects. A regular attention to this practice is the only infallible nostrum for the prevention of disease. It is sometimes essential for those who are under the necessity of having their minds always on the watch, to be extremely temperate; hence the gallant defender of Gibraltar, (Elliot, Lord Heathfield,) lived for eight days during the siege, taking only four ounces of rice per day, as solid food. Dr. Franklin, when a journeyman printer, lived for a fortnight on bread and water, at the rate of ten pounds of bread per week, and he found himself stout and hearty with this diet. A respectable magistrate has related of himself, that at the age of seventy, he was free from every bodily complaint, and had never paid five shillings a year for medicine, which he attributed to his having restricted himself to fourteen ounces a day of solid food. And the number of indigent people who have lived to a great age, is a proof of the justness of Lord Bacon's observation, that intemperance of some kind or other destroys the bulk of mankind; and that life may be sustained by a very scanty portion of nourishment. An eminent British army physician (Dr. Jackson) on this subject says,—“I have wandered a good deal about the world, and never followed any prescribed rule about any thing; my health has been tried in all ways; and by the aids of temperance and hard work, I have worn out two armies, in two wars, and probably could wear out another before my period of old age arrives; I eat no animal food,

drink no wine, or malt liquor, or spirits of any kind; I wear no flannel, and neither regard wind nor rain, heat nor cold, where business is in the way.” Such is the protecting power of temperance.—*Journal of Health*.

*Antiquity of Bathing.*—If the custom of bathing be not coeval with the world, its origin may at least date from a very early epoch. The means which it furnished of purification and invigoration, seem to have been first adopted by the inhabitants of middle Asia, placed as they were under a sultry clime.

The people of the first ages immersed themselves most frequently in rivers or in the sea; and, accordingly, we are told of the daughter of Pharaoh bathing in the Nile, of Nausicaa and her companions, as also Agenor, bathing in a river, and of the Amazons refreshing themselves in the waters of Thermodon. The Greeks plunged their tender offspring into cold torrents—and Moschus and Theocritus make Europa bathe in the Anaurus, and the Spartan girls in the Eurotas. Domestic baths, suggested by the wants or the conveniences of life, were not unknown at very early periods. Diomed and Ulysses are represented as making use of such after they had washed in the sea—Andromache prepared warm water for Hector, who had just returned from battle—and Penelope, to banish sorrow, called in the aid of unctions and baths. Minerva, at Thermopylæ, is feigned to have imparted, by such means, vigour to the wearied limbs of Hercules, and, in place of other gifts, Vulcan offered him warm baths. Pindar praises the warm bathings of the nymphs—and Homer himself, who ranked baths among the innocent pleasures of life, not only makes mention of a hot and vaporous spring adjoining a cold one, but even describes to us the baths which, by common tradition, were situated near the Scamander, in the vicinity of Troy.

Of nearly equal celebrity were the baths of the Assyrians, Medes, and Persians—and to such a pitch of grandeur and improvement were they carried by this last people, that Alexander himself was astonished at the luxury and magni-

ficence of those of Darius, though accustomed to the voluptuous ones of Greece and Macedon. We need here but allude to the natural warm baths of Bithynia and Mytilene, mentioned by Pliny, and to those of the Etruscans, as among the most early and extensively known and resorted to.—*Journal of Health.*

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## WATER-CURE JOURNAL.

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NEW-YORK, AUGUST 1, 1846.

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### PREGNANCY AND CHILDBIRTH.

[From the Editor's Note Book.]

June 26th, 1846.—Two weeks ago, Mrs. E. of 56 Prince street, informed me that she had arrived very near the end of the period of her first pregnancy, and that she desired me to attend her in childbirth. By conversation I soon found that she was well informed in the new system and the modes of preserving health, and this without her having had any particular advantages for acquiring such knowledge. She had read faithfully and understandingly upon the subject of health, a duty which too few mothers observe. Mrs. E. is about 22 years of age, with constitution naturally very good, although not remarkably strong. Her attention became directed to bathing about two months since. She performed two ablutions daily, and took sitz-baths; discontinued the use of tea and coffee, took very little animal food, living principally upon coarse bread, hominy, cracked wheat, and fruits. She took frequent exercise in the open air, and by these means became sensibly invigorated in general health, and was kept perfectly free from unpleasant symptoms of every kind. I advised my patient to go on as she had done perseveringly and to the last. Her very kind and affectionate husband and her mother, as well as other good meaning relations, insisted that she should take a different course, particularly in food

and drink. But she chose understandingly to pursue her own way, feeling full confidence that she would be able to prove to her friends that she was in the right, and that young persons were not necessarily less knowing than older ones.

To-day (June 26th,) Mrs. E. sent for me early in the morning. She had experienced by turns slight labor pains from 9 A. M. the day before; was not able to sleep much in the night. Took baths as usual, and walked in the open air. This morning she practised general abluion and sitting baths as usual. Cold water renders the pains more efficient, which is a good symptom. Walking about the room has the same effect. The pains increased very gradually, and this afternoon, notwithstanding they grew more severe, she was able to sleep at times between them. These continued to increase until six o'clock this evening, at which time she gave birth to a remarkably fine, healthy daughter. In a few minutes the after-birth was expelled, and no undue flooding occurred. Wet towels were placed upon the abdomen and the genital parts, and the face, hands, and feet were sponged, each of these applications having a most soothing and refreshing effect.

In the case of the infant, care was taken to avoid the great error so generally practised, of separating the cord by which the child is attached to the mother, too soon. As long as pulsation continues in the cord, it should by no means be severed. The blood that would naturally flow from the mother's system through this connexion to that of the child, should none of it be prevented. The cutting short this connexion before the flow spontaneously ceases, is in very fact robbing the system of the child of a part of its vitality or life.

The separation after due time being made, the infant was washed in soft water made very slightly tepid, with the addition



of a little mild soap. No bandage was put about its abdomen, for the reason that it always causes more or less harm—that is, if there is no malformation of parts, and always tends to induce the very difficulty it is designed to prevent, viz., that of rupture. The kind-hearted mother of Mrs. E. insisted, as a matter of course, that the bandage should be applied as in the good days of old, but Mrs. E. said “*Do as the doctor says.*” Very light muslin clothing was then placed upon the infant, after which it was left without drug or dose, quietly to sleep.

9½ o'clock, evening.—Returned. Mrs. E. happy and contented, has been enjoying sound refreshing sleep. Has had no nourishment since morning. Took then a little fruit. Prefers to wait until morning before taking any more. I recommended her to take fruit every day from the first, that the infant may be accustomed to her doing so. If mothers omit fruit for a while and then commence its use, the milk generally distresses the child. I believe that, as a rule, the judicious use of well matured fruits will not cause any difficulty in the child, provided the above direction is from the first and onward complied with.

Mrs. E. is now to take a bath—that is, with assistance, the whole surface is to be cleansed, portion by portion, by means of cloths wet in moderately cool water. This will cause a sense of great comfort—will increase the strength and promote sleep. As is very common on such occasions, the friends object strongly to the use of cold water. “Oh, it will give you a death cold; how can you do it?” and the like expressions are used. But the patient well understands that she needs the invigorating and soothing effect of the ablution, and that when the system is sufficiently warm, it will not only be perfectly safe, but highly beneficial. She prefers, as she has done, to practise upon rational and

well ascertained principles, rather than to be guided by the whims and caprices that custom with its iron rule entails upon society.

*First morning after confinement.*—June 27th, 6½ o'clock.—Mrs. E. slept sweetly and soundly during the whole night, waking only a few minutes at one time. She feels greatly refreshed, and able to rise and take a bath; judges by her feeling that she will be benefitted by sitting up; has a good appetite. I advised her to sit up as much of the time, little by little, as she feels inclined. She proposes eating very sparingly of well boiled cracked wheat, with a little uncooked milk and berries.

*Half past 9, P. M.*—Mrs. E. has set up at different times during the day. No after-pains or particular discomfort of any kind. Every time of sitting up has done her good. She has taken food at three different times. Will take a sponging now, and retire to rest.

*Second morning after the birth.*—Mrs. E. slept remarkably well during the whole night. Has been up, performed a bath, walked about the room, and is much invigorated. Felt decidedly the need of the bath. It strengthened her much. Has no after-pains or difficulty of the breasts. The milk secretes abundantly. The bowels are moved by injections of tepid water. Mrs. E. will sit up the greater part of the day.

*Third morning after the birth.*—11½ A. M.—Mrs. E. rested well during the night. Rose at six, and took her usual bath. Has been up ever since rising. Reclines now awhile. Would be able to walk up and down stairs were it necessary. Her infant is remarkably well, and sleeps the greater part of the time. Mrs. E. is one of that very small number of mothers that has energy of character, resolution and system enough to nurse her infant regularly, and not during the night time. Once

in three hours, between 6 A. M. and 9 P. M., at the very most, is as often as she will allow it to take the breast. If at any time it has no decided inclination for nourishment at the regular time, she will wait until the next interval before she allows it to nurse. Such treatment, together with its semi-daily ablutions, will keep the infant in good health, as naturally as the young of animals remain free from disease. It has had no bandage about it to cause heat, irritation or compression, nor flannels to weaken its little frame. Nor has it had paregoric, elixirs, or any thing of the kind, not even a dose of catnip tea. A strange phenomenon, indeed, for a child to commence life without having its system dosed with nauseous drugs.

*Seventh day.*—Mrs. E. has been improving day by day, from the first. She has had no inconvenience whatever; no pains of any kind, no swelling of the breasts or feverishness. Has well nigh her natural amount of strength. Her infant, too, is doing remarkably well.

**SUMMER OR BOWEL COMPLAINT IN CHILDREN.**—The present season is one in which the above-named complaint is very common. Parents, and those who have the charge of children, should endeavor, by all possible means, so to manage the diet and general regimen of infants and children that these complaints, so often fatal, may be avoided. By the greatest attention to regularity in meals, the quantity and quality of food, lightness of clothing, pure air, exercise, and bathing, these affections may, in almost every instance, be prevented.

The treatment of these cases is for the most part very simple. If there is not much fever, or increase of heat in the system, as there generally is not, a moderately warm bath, as from 90 to 95° F. should be administered for fifteen or twenty min-

utes. If, at the same time, lukewarm water can be administered sufficiently to cause vomiting, it will be well; but young children will hardly consent to this. The warm bath should be immediately followed by another as cool as may be borne. If there is, however, great debility, this should be deferred. Moderately warm injections should be administered as often as the bowels act unhealthily,—twenty times a day, if need be. A moderately warm bandage, covering the whole abdomen, and even some way up the chest, should be applied, and covered with flannels. If there should be a sensible increase of heat in the bowels, cooler applications are to be made. Local, as well as general fever, should always be kept down. The general bath should be administered at least twice a day, and oftener, should the disease continue. Pure soft water should be the only drink. As the patient recovers, very small portions of food only are to be given at a time. This simple treatment, taken in season and perseveringly followed, will, in almost every conceivable case, very soon arrest the disease; and numbers of such cases that prove fatal under all other modes of treatment, will, in this way, be easily arrested.

Constipation or costiveness of the bowels is not only a troublesome symptom, but always indicates an unhealthy state of things in the stomach, liver and abdominal organs. The use of cathartic medicine for this symptom, so common at this day, always other things being equal, only aggravates the complaint. Good food, as coarse wheaten bread and fruits, the avoidance of tea, coffee, spices, salt, and other heating and stimulating condiments, exercise in the open air, the drinking freely of pure soft water, and injections of the same fluid—judicious bathing daily followed—regularity and care in all the habits of life—these are the means, and incomparably the best, that can be used to prevent constipation.

## ON THE PROPER QUANTITY OF FOOD.\*

To ensure easy digestion and sound health, the quantity of food ought always to be proportioned to the wants of the system; but this can be done only by a constant reference to the constitution and circumstances of the individual, and not by attempting to lay down any standard as admitting of universal application.

We have seen that, where waste is great and growth active, an abundant supply of food is required, and that, in accordance with this relation, it is in such circumstances that the desire for food is most keenly felt. Generally speaking, appetite is a safe guide to quantity; but, in following its dictates, we must take special care neither to eat so fast as to prevent it from giving timely intimation that we have had enough, nor to confound the mere gratification of *taste*, or the yearning of a vacant mind, with the natural craving of unsatisfied want. Dr. Beaumont's remarks on this subject are characterized by so much soundness of judgment, that no apology can be required for soliciting the attention of the reader to the following very pertinent extract from his work:

"There is no subject of dietetic economy," says Dr. Beaumont, "about which people err so much, as that which relates to *quantity*. The medical profession, too, has been accessory to this error, in giving directions to dyspeptics to eat until a sense of satiety is felt. Now, this feeling, so essential to be rightly understood, never supervenes until the invalid has eaten too much, if he have an appetite, which seldom fails him. Those even who are not otherwise predisposed to the complaint, frequently induce a diseased state of the digestive organs by too free indulgence of the appetite. Of this fact the medical profession are, generally, not sufficiently aware. Those who lead sedentary lives, and whose circumstances will permit of what is called free living, are peculiarly obnoxious to these complaints. By paying particular attention to their sensations during the ingestion of their meals, these complaints may be avoided. There appears to be a sense of perfect intelligence

conveyed from the stomach to the encephalic centre, which, in health, invariably dictates what quantity of aliment (responding to the sense of hunger and its due satisfaction) is naturally required for the purposes of life; and which, if noticed and properly attended to, would prove the most salutary monitor of health, and effectual preventive of disease. It is not the sense of *satiety*, for this is beyond the point of *healthful* indulgence, and is Nature's earliest indication of an *abuse* and *overburden* of her powers to replenish the system. It occurs immediately previous to this, and may be known by the pleasurable sensation of *perfect satisfaction, ease, and quiescence of body and mind*. It is when the stomach says *enough*, and is distinguished from satiety by the difference of the sensations—the former feeling *enough*—the latter *too much*. The first is produced by the timely reception into the stomach of proper aliment, in exact proportion to the requirements of Nature, for the perfect digestion of which a definite quantity of gastric juice is furnished by the proper gastric apparatus. But to effect this most agreeable of all sensations and conditions—the real Elysian satisfaction of the *reasonable* epicure—timely attention must be paid to the preliminary processes, such as thorough mastication and moderate or slow deglutition. These are indispensable to the due and natural supply of the stomach at the stated periods of alimentation; for if food be swallowed too fast, and pass into the stomach imperfectly masticated, too much is received in a short time, and in too imperfect a state of preparation to be disposed of by the gastric juice.

"The quantity of gastric juice, either contained in its proper vessels, or in a state of preparation in the circulating fluids, is believed to be in exact proportion to the proper quantity of aliment required for the due supply of the system. If a more than ordinary quantity of food be taken, a part of it will remain undissolved in the stomach, and produce the usual unpleasant symptoms of indigestion. But if the ingestion of a large quantity be in proportion to the calls of nature, which sometimes happens after an unusual abstinence, it is probable that more than the usual

\* From Physiology of Digestion. By Andrew Combe, M. D.

supply of gastric juice is furnished; in which case the apparent excess is in exact ratio to the requirements of the economy, and never fails to produce a sense of quiet-ent gratification and healthful enjoyment. A great deal depends on habit in this respect. Our Western Indians, who frequently undergo long abstinence from food, eat enormous quantities, when they can procure it, with impunity.\*

If the purposes for which eating is necessary be kept in mind, the keen appetite and vigorous digestion observable in growing youths, and in those who undergo much active exercise in the open air—and the weaker appetite and feebler digestion observed during the middle period of life, especially in persons of sedentary habits—will appear to be in strict harmony with the wants of the system in the respective circumstances. But, from no attention being paid by either the old or the young to the principle by which the supply of nourishment ought to be regulated, and the haste with which every one labors to appease the cravings of hunger, it may be affirmed, as a general fact, that mankind eat greatly more than is required for their sustenance; and the indigestion thereby induced is a salutary provision of Nature to prevent the repletion which would otherwise ensue.

Sir Francis Head, in his humorous book entitled *Bubbles from the Brunnen of Nassau, by an Old Man*, expresses his astonishment at the "enormous quantity of provisions" which the invalids and sojourners at these watering places "so placidly consume;" and, after noticing "the heavy masses which constitute the foundation of the dinner, and the successive layers of salmon—fowls—puddings—meat again—stewed fruit—and, lastly, majestic legs of mutton—which form the lighter superstructure," he adds, "Nothing which this world affords could induce me to feed in this gross manner. The pig which lives in his sty would have some excuse, but it is really quite shocking to see any other animal overpowering himself at mid-day with such a mixture and superabundance

of food." (P. 71.) In another page he returns to the subject, and quaintly enough remarks, "that almost every malady to which the human frame is subject, is, either by highways or byways, connected with the stomach; and I must own, I never see a fashionable physician mysteriously counting the pulse of a plethoric patient, or, with a silver spoon on his tongue, importantly looking down his red inflamed gullet, (so properly termed by Johnson 'the meat-pipe,') but I feel a desire to exclaim, 'Why not tell the poor gentleman at once—Sir, you've eaten too much, you've drank too much, and you've not taken exercise enough!' That these are the main causes of almost every one's illness, there can be no greater proof than that those savage nations which live actively and temperately, have only one great disorder—death. The human frame was not created imperfect—it is we ourselves who have made it so; there exists no donkey in creation so overladen as our stomachs; and it is because they groan under the weight so cruelly imposed upon them, that we see people driving them in herds to drink at one little brunnen."—(P. 91-2.)

Our supposed "Old Man" is by no means singular in his opinions. The celebrated Roman physician, Baglivi, who from practising extensively among Catholics, had ample opportunities of observation, mentions, that in Italy an unusually large proportion of the sick recover during Lent, in consequence of the lower diet which is then observed as part of their religious duties. This fact is at once a testimony in favor of temperance, and a proof of the assertion that excess in quantity is a prevailing error in society.

Professor Caldwell, of the United States, in one of his vigorously conceived and very instructive essays, inveighs eloquently against the intemperance of his countrymen in eating as well as drinking, and tells them that one American consumes as much food as two Highlanders or two Swiss, although the latter are among the stoutest of the race. "Intemperate eating," says he, "is perhaps the most universal fault we commit. We are all guilty of it, not occasionally, but habitually, and almost uniformly from the cradle to the grave. It is the bane alike of our infancy

\* Experiments and Observations on the Gastric Juice and Physiology of Digestion, by William Beaumont, M. D. Reprinted with notes, by Andrew Combe, M. D. Edinburgh, 1838, pp. 54-56.

and youth, our maturity and age. It is infinitely more common than intemperance in drinking; and the aggregate of the mischief it does is greater. For every reeling drunkard that disgraces our country, it contains one hundred gluttons—persons, I mean, who eat to excess and suffer by the practice.” “How, indeed,” he afterward exclaims, “can the case be otherwise, while children and youth are regularly taught, hired, bribed, or tempted to over-eat themselves from their birth? Do you ask me for evidence in proof of this charge? Go to our dining-rooms, nurseries, fruit shops, confectionaries, and pleasure gardens—go even to sick rooms—and you will find it in abundance. You will witness there innumerable scenes of gormandizing, not only productive of disease in those concerned in them, but in many instances offensive to beholders. The frightful mess often consists of all sorts of eatable materials that can be collected and crowded together; and its only measure is the endurance of appetite and the capacity of the stomach. Like the ox in rich pasture-ground, or the swine at his swill-trough, men stow away their viands until they have neither desire nor room for any more. I do not say that such eating matches always and everywhere occur among us. But I do say that they occur too frequently, and that they form fit subjects for caricature pictures, by European tourists, of our domestic manners. I add, however, that similar scenes present themselves in every country I have visited, where provisions are abundant and cheap.”\*

This is a strongly drawn picture, but with a modification in degree, it is perhaps not less applicable to our own and other European countries, than to the United States. The “Old Man’s” description of German feeding is, in its main features, essentially the same; and, so far as my observation and experience go, it is only in a less degree that we fall short of our brethren in America. As a general rule, we also exceed, though not to the same extent. This is owing partly to our more

advanced civilization, and partly to the greater difficulty of procuring the means of excess; and if I have resorted to Germany and the United States for the most striking illustrations of the principle, it is not from want of examples at home, but because we are so much more alive to the errors of our neighbors than to our own, that the principle involved in their commission will be more readily recognized when pointed out in them, than when its perception is made to imply condemnation of ourselves.

It is a trite observation, that medical men are constantly exclaiming against the eating propensities of their patients, and inculcating the practice of temperance. An eminent physician of the present day says, “I believe that every stomach, not actually impaired by organic disease, will perform its functions if it receive reasonable attention; and when we consider the manner in which diet is generally conducted, both in regard to quantity and to the variety of articles of food and drink which are mixed up into one heterogeneous mass, instead of being astonished at the prevalence of indigestion, our wonder must rather be, that, in such circumstances, any stomach is capable of digesting at all. In the regulation of diet, much certainly is to be done in dyspeptic cases, by attention to the quality of the articles that are taken; but I am satisfied that *much more depends upon the quantity*; and I am even disposed to say, that the dyspeptic might be almost independent of any attention to the quality of his diet, if he rightly observed the necessary restrictions in regard to quantity.\* The latter opinion, which is in perfect harmony with Dr. Beaumont’s observation of the power of digestion being limited by the amount of gastric juice which the stomach is capable of providing—an amount varying with the wants of the system, and, consequently, with the mode of life—is also forcibly, though quaintly, supported by a late popular writer, who affirms that “it is your superfluous **SECOND COURSES**, (which are served up more to gratify the pride of the host than the appetite of the guests,) that *overcome the stomach and paralyze digestion*, and seduce children of

\* Transylvania Journal of Medicine for September, 1832, p. 313. See also Dr. Caldwell’s excellent Thoughts on Physical Education, and the True Mode of Improving the Condition of Man; reprinted for A. & C. Black, Edinburgh, 1836.

\* Abercrombie on Diseases of the Stomach, &c. 1st edition, p. 72.

larger growth to sacrifice the health and comfort of several days—for the baby pleasure of tickling their tongues for a few minutes with trifles and custards.”†

Cornaro, Cheyne, and others, have, most absurdly, attempted to determine a standard quantity of food for all mankind, and have fixed it at the lowest possible limit. The very attempt, however, is inconsistent with the laws of the animal economy; since the supply required must necessarily vary, not only according to the age, sex, and constitution of the individual, but according to the mode of life and the circumstances by which he is surrounded; and it would be, therefore, not less injurious than unnatural for any one to adhere to the same invariable proportion. I have seen several instances in which young men have suffered considerably from adopting for a time the low scale of diet recommended by Cornaro, or from living exclusively on vegetables, without regard to the urgent demand for a full supply of nourishing food necessarily excited by the active bodily exertion in which they engaged.

(To be continued.)

#### WATER-CURE IN OHIO.

It is somewhat singular that we have a larger number of subscribers in Ohio than any other State in the Union. There are at present more establishments commencing in that State than in any other. The following extract will give some idea of what is going on there:

NEW BRIGHTON, Pa.,  
June 28th, 1846.

*Friend Doctor Shew,*

Enclosed is \$— for the “Water-Cure Journal.” \* \* \* There is a small Water-Cure establishment in Phillipsburgh, just across the Ohio river from here, under the care of Dr. Acre, a German. He has accommodations only for six or eight at a time. Says, if he had water sufficient to enlarge his establishment he could have forty or fifty patients constantly. He is, so far as I learn, very successful. I visited the establishment a few weeks ago; was much pleased with the

location. It is a pleasant airy spot, at the foot of a hill, where beautiful trees wave in the summer breeze, and wild birds sing their merry songs. So far as I could judge, the Doctor is well acquainted with the system. He is a very pleasant and affable man, and very unassuming in his manners. I gave him one of your Journals. He seemed pleased with it. He takes one or two German Water-Cure papers. In his practice, however, in the village and vicinity, to those who have not confidence in water, he still gives some kinds of medicine.

There is another similar establishment about being erected in Salem, Ohio, which I was also at a few days ago. There is one also in Canfield, Ohio, under the care of a German physician, Dr. Bells. Success to the good and purifying work. Yours, in haste,

MIL0 A. TOWNSEND.

*Popular Receipt for Sore Throat.*—Mix a penny's worth of pounded camphor with a wine glass of brandy; pour a small quantity upon a lump of sugar, and allow it to dissolve in the mouth every hour.—*Exchange paper.*

The above is a regular tippler's receipt, and is as pernicious and arrant a humbug as calomel for the liver complaint or warm lemonade for stubborn measles. See how simple the real remedy is, when compared with a legitimate remedy. Mix a cent's worth of Cayenne in a tea-cup of hot water; sweeten slightly, and sip with a teaspoon. Besides being infallible, it will not irritate the tissue of the stomach, like camphor, nor excite and inflame its blood vessels, and kindle the half-smothered appetite of the reformed inebriate like brandy.—*Boston Investigator.*

Pure unmixed cold water, brother Seaver, will be found still more simple and more real—will be less liable to “irritate the tissue of the stomach and inflame its blood-vessels.” Those who drink nothing else, and avoid improper coverings and exposures of their throats, will rarely have them sore; and prevention is better than cure. But when disease or the soreness exists, gargle with cold water often; wet a bandage in cold water, and wear it du-

† The Art of Prolonging and Invigorating Life. 3d ed. p. 168.

ring the night next to the surface, with a dry one around it. In the morning remove it, and wash with cold water.—*Regenerator*.

(From the work of Dr. Smethurst, England.)

A FESTIVAL AT GRAEFENBERG.

The 2d of October, 1842, was a day of great rejoicing at Graefenberg: it was the forty-third anniversary birth-day of Priessnitz, commemorated by a rich merchant from Vienna, who was cured of a chronic disease of long standing. This gentleman had an obelisk erected for one of the best springs in the woods, which bore the name of Hirsch, or stag-spring; on this spot, two hundred years ago, fell a Priessnitz, an ancestor of our renowned Vincent Priessnitz, in the defence of his only daughter, against the Swedes who then invaded the country: both fell a sacrifice to the infuriated soldiers. On the completion of the spring in question, it was christened and called "Priessnitz Spring," the year 1642 being placed over, and 1842 under the name of "Priessnitz Spring," to mark the two events. There was a procession formed of all the patients, three or four hundred in number, headed by a band of music profusely decorated with garlands, and followed by the flags of all the nations, individual members of which were present, twelve in number. Each had their own flag made at their own expense, in honor of the country they represented; and the Union-jack waved triumphantly next to the national flag of Austria; besides which, there were the Prussian, French, Belgian, Bohemian, Hungarian, Dutch, &c. The cure-guests, or cure-guests, brought up the rear:—all who could walk or hobble joined, the ladies enlivening the scene by their presence. After the ceremony of consecrating and christening, a collation was served up, consisting of potatoes and salt, which were boiled in large saucepans in gypsy style, fifty yards from the spring;—these were relished with copious draughts of the pure water from the Priessnitz spring. Due honor was paid to Priessnitz and to the various nations, by their healths being proposed; all were received with tremendous cheering, which

made the very woods ring again; a salute of cannon succeeded every toast: greater joy and hilarity could not be witnessed in the most sumptuous feast. The procession retraced their steps to the house in a similar manner: the evening was finished with a grand ball, the spacious saloon being brilliantly illuminated. Priessnitz absented himself that day, but his health was drunk again and again, each time cheered louder and louder, with bumpers of—WATER.

The health of many a person is completely destroyed by mercury. Probably more cases of rheumatism are caused by it than by all other causes combined. By its use, the system is often rendered so sensitive to the impression of air and moisture, that the slightest exposure is sufficient to bring on an attack of the disease. The medicine so called is very often given now-a-days to act upon the liver. It stimulates for the time the glandular system, and particularly the great gland, the liver; but there always follows, with the most positive certainty of natural law, a depression or weakening effect upon the part; and, other things remaining equal, the very difficulty for which the medicine is taken, is in the end increased.

☞ *The Northampton Water Cure Infirmary*.—We gave a while since, some account of this institution, carried on by *Mr. David Ruggles*. We have since been informed that certain persons, principally of that vicinity, have subscribed funds for the purpose of erecting more ample buildings for the accommodation of *Mr. Ruggles'* patients. These improvements are expected to be finished early in the fall. It is but just to state that *Mr. R.* is a man of color. We are glad to hear of his good success and the general feeling of confidence manifested towards him by his neighbors, and those who have been for many years acquainted with him. Again, we wish our friend *Mr. Ruggles* good success.

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