

BRONCHITIS: ITS COMMON-SENSE TREATMENT.

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.

THE climate of rich and populous England is so very far from being a model one, that while all enjoy its far too short summer, tens of thousands look forward with something like dread to the advent of

winter; for only a few favoured by fortune can afford to seek for safety by change of climate. By the way, I wonder much if ever that charming idea of winter cruising for invalids in southern seas will be carried out. How many a valuable life it would save! How many a delicate frame it would change to a healthy and robust one! The scheme was this:—A large frigate-built ship of 1,300 tons register was to leave England about the middle of October. It was not to be a hospital-ship by any means, but freighted only with cases likely to be benefited by the cruise, and the absence from our terribly fickle winter climate. It was to be fitted up with every comfort and even luxury—bathrooms, a library, and musical instruments; its table was to have been well found, the wines well chosen; its officers and crew were to have been picked men of the

Royal Naval Reserve; and for safety against pirates, who now-a-days are as unsubstantial as the Man of the Moon, the ship was to have been properly armed. The doctor, too, would no doubt have been a sensible one. Nor were the perils of ocean to have been encountered, for this vessel was to have cruised within the influence of the trade winds, and in the loveliest climate in the world, with a temperature rarely exceeding 75°, in a sea almost waveless, and under a sky that is ever blue. The vessel was to have visited and stayed for some time at every interesting and beautiful place on her route, such as Gibraltar the impregnable, leafy Madeira, wildly romantic Teneriffe, the beautiful islands of Cape de Verde, Bahia, and Rio, Ascension, St. Helena, with its wooded hills and fertile vales, and Cape Town itself, the mountains around which are gorgeously draped in heaths and geraniums. Of course, there were to have been excursions to the interior of every interesting island or place, and no end of fishing, shooting, fern and plant collecting, gipsying, and general jollity. The whole scheme was truly excellent, and it is a pity that for want of a few pounds

it should have fallen through, and it will be still more of a pity if it be not yet carried out.

Now there are many ailments and dangers which may well make the delicate and invalid look forward to the cold season with some degree of anxiety, but there are few more troublesome and painful complaints than that which has received from medical men the name of BRONCHITIS, from the fact that it is an inflammation, either acute or chronic, of the delicate mucous membrane that lines the *bronchi*, or air-passages of the lungs. It is in fact, in plain language, a very bad cold. There are many forms of bronchitis, ranging in degree from the simple catarrh, which is cured in a few days, to the highly dangerous and

frequently fatal acute form of the disease. The latter must be left to the care and judgment of your own medical attendant. No simple treatment will remove it, so I pass it by; merely mentioning that if you have reason to believe an attack is coming on, from a fevered feeling, a harassing cough, pain and tenderness at the breast-bone, and tightness of the chest, you had better remain in bed, drink



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barley-water, take some aperient medicine, put mustard on the chest, and send for the doctor. For the benefit of those, however, who live at a distance from medical aid, I cannot do wrong in giving just one prescription, which I have very often found do good, especially when the patient was weak:—Take of the tincture of senega six drachms, sal volatile half an ounce, spirits of ether three drachms, and make this into an eight-ounce mixture with camphor-water; the dose is a sixth part three or four times a day. Turpentine applied to the chest upon a piece of flannel that has been wrung out of hot water is often of great service in tightness and pain in the chest, and of the advantage to be obtained by putting the feet and legs in hot water, to which mustard has been added, I have before spoken.

Young children are frequently afflicted with distressing cough of an inflammatory nature, and great care is needed to bring the little patient safely through. The greatest danger, probably, is that from what is termed pulmonary collapse, which means that from the large quantity of mucus discharged from the

lungs, and from weakness and inability to cough it up, some of the pipes become choked. There would, in this case, be little addition to the feverish symptoms, but largely increased difficulty of breathing. This would call for energetic treatment at once, and an emetic should be given, but not one that would depress the vital functions, such as antimony or ipecacuanha. Mustard is always at hand, and if the child can only be got to take a tea-spoonful in a wine-glass of warm water, it acts well, and is safe. It will greatly help the chance of cure if you afterwards place the child in a warm bath, and give some wine, with good nourishing soup, a little at a time, beef-tea, and milk.

Next in the scale of danger must be mentioned a form of bronchitis which is often fatal to those pretty well advanced in years. The symptoms are those of severe cold or catarrh, accompanied with difficulty of breathing and plentiful expectoration of frothy mucus. These cases, from the simple fact that the feverish symptoms are at the outset only slight, are oftentimes neglected, and thus many a fatal termination is arrived at: the patient getting rapidly weaker, the difficulty of breathing amounting to almost suffocation, from the accumulation of phlegm which the sufferer is powerless to expel, in which case death is almost certain to step in and end the scene. Such "bad colds" should be grappled with at the onset. People who are subject to them should keep in the house ipecacuanha emetics, one of which should be taken, and followed by a mixture every four hours, containing carbonate of ammonia, ether, tincture of squills, and paregoric, which any chemist can compound, but let him not be too sparing with the ammonia.

Old people, again, are remarkably subject to a kind of chronic bronchitis, which recurs again and again, often in spite of all treatment, and the symptoms of which are troublesome cough, some degree of shortness of breath, and a very large amount of expectoration—so much, indeed, as to often cause great alarm to the patient and his friends. Some aged people are hardly ever free from this form of bronchitis, but there are times when the cough is much worse than at others. It may last for many years, indeed it is by no means incompatible with long life. A friend of mine, who lives in Ramsgate, a deliciously bracing and health-giving place in summer, but cold and trying during the winter months, has attained the ripe if not patriarchal age of seventy and nine, but yet is wonderfully fresh, hale, and hearty, although he has been plagued with chronic bronchitis for nearly forty years. The usual story, I believe—caught a cold while out in the rain one wintry night; this cold was only really cured when summer weather came, but it returned with the cold season, and so has been going and coming ever since, although now the expectoration is very great indeed. I am mentioning my friend's case, reader, not because it is a remarkable one, but because there are many thousands like it, and I happen to know that one invalid likes to hear tell of the symptoms of another. There is but little pain with my friend's cough, and just a little shortness of breath, but no wasting of flesh, and he eats heartily and sleeps

moderately well. Nevertheless, like a great many sufferers from chronic cough, Squire T— has often frightened himself into a state of nervous fidgets, by the thought that he is far gone in consumption. *The* one mistake, in my opinion, which this gentleman makes in the treatment of himself is this: he keeps his rooms too warm and close; he is perfectly willing to take the fresh air out-of-doors, when the weather permits, but seems to object to it in-doors. And now we leave him, and long may he take his walks abroad; and I proceed to lay before the reader a few hints for the relief and subjection, if not the radical cure, of his chronic cough.

Well, then, if you chanced to visit a consulting-room, the physician would doubtless put a few questions to you. One of the first I should put would be, "How do you clothe?" Remember, hot as this summer has been at times, although the sun still shines warmly in the middle hours of the day, cold winds often blow, and the evenings and mornings are chilly and cold; and if you doffed your flannels at all, I trust you have taken to them again a month ago. If your under-garments, and stockings or socks, be soft, and good, and warm, heavy lumbering external clothing need not be worn. I am sure that many people fall into the grave error of wearing too much clothing, and thus encumbered it cannot be expected they can take sufficient exercise without feeling oppressed and tired. Those woollen-woven waistcoats, by the way, are capital chest-protectors for men who are subject to chronic cough; while the gentler sex, who are similarly afflicted, should never on any account wear tight-fitting stays.

After walking, never stand or sit in a draught; and if the feet are wet, or even moist, change the stockings as soon as you come in-doors. I do not wish you to consider yourself an invalid—the very thought of that is depressing, and depression is just one of the things I want to avoid; but I wish you to use every precaution, notwithstanding. Whatever you do, avoid sleeping in a badly-ventilated room. Remember it is your lungs that are the invalids; do not, therefore, begrudge them a little pure air. If you do, impure blood will be the result, languor and listlessness, and your mucous membrane will become more relaxed than ever.

The ordinary bath I have always upheld, but never said much about the Turkish bath. I consider it invaluable in cases of chronic cough, or in driving away any new accession of cold. But it may be expensive, as well as inconvenient, or even impossible, to find your way, when you want to, to a proper Turkish bathing establishment. It is pleasing, then, to know that you can have a portable Turkish bath in your own room. It is a positive luxury, which having even once enjoyed, few would be without. It is often, in cases of bronchitis and other chest ailments, advisable to have the air of the room moistened with vapour medicated or otherwise. Kettles are also made for that purpose, of which I cannot speak too highly.

Bronchitic patients should live well, and a moderate amount of stimulant may with advantage be taken at meals; but all excess only leads to further relaxation.