

Now, Sir, I am not here to advocate the superior claims of boarding-schools in all cases, but rather to defend them from the charges brought against them. In my opinion, both day and boarding-schools have their merits, and special merits in special instances. If there be a good and satisfactory day-school in close proximity to the home, and if the moral atmosphere of the home itself be true and pure, then by all means let the day-school suffice. But if the home influences exerted by father or mother, or brothers or sisters, be in any way harmful; or if no thoroughly satisfactory school can be found; or if the day-school necessitate too long a journey to and fro, let a good boarding-school be sought out. If, as is sometimes the case, the home example be bad—if there be irreligion, or continual gaiety, or excessive vanity in the home, how much better that for some part of each year the girl should be removed to a purer atmosphere! And why send a girl to a day-school if the education given be of a low order, or if the companionship be objectionable? Or if a satisfactory day-school—whether high school or other—can only be found at some distance, why expose a girl to manifold dangers on her daily journey—ay, and to the risk of becoming vain and forward through her free intercourse with a strange world at too early an age? The opener of the debate speaks of the freedom of home—the freedom from restraint; has not this vaunted freedom too often been the cause of much evil? Is it desirable that our daughters should run about when and where they will?

And now as to boarding-schools. There are good ones and there are bad ones, but the good ones largely

predominate. And when I speak of good ones, Sir, I do not necessarily mean schools that can show a long list of accomplished mistresses and visiting masters, or that can boast an array of students successful at public examinations. I have in my mind schools presided over by *very* women; women who are gifted with large hearts, overflowing with sympathy and love; women who can enter into all the little joys and sorrows of those in their charge; women who are not infallible, but who, from lengthened experience, rarely misunderstand child-nature; women who, as true servants of God, are kind and tender-hearted to all His creatures, and specially to those for whose moral and spiritual welfare they are in a large measure responsible. Such boarding-school mistresses *do* exist—ay, and in large numbers. It is the duty of parents to seek them out, and then there will be no talk of sensitive spirits dulled or broken by cold neglect or by irksome restraint; there will be no possibility of "a murdered childhood."

TO OUR READERS.—The Editor will be happy to receive the opinions of any Readers on the above Question, on either side, with a view to the publication of the most suitable and concise communications in the June Part. Letters should be addressed "The Editor of CASSELL'S MAGAZINE, La Belle Sauvage Yard, London, E.C.," and in the top left-hand corner of the envelope should be written "Family Parliament." The speech should be headed with the title of the Debate, and an indication of *the side taken by the Reader*. All communications on the present Question must reach the Editor not later than April 12.

An Honorarium of £1 1s. will be accorded (subject to the discretion of the Editor) to the *best speech on either side of the Question*; no speech to exceed 50 lines (500 words).

## THE FAMILY MEDICINE-CHEST, AND WHAT SHOULD GO IN IT.

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.



HERE is no need to enlarge upon the advantages of having a small and carefully-stocked medicine-chest in a family, especially where there are children; but great need to warn my readers of the danger, not to say folly, of flying to it upon every little occasion, or with every trifling ailment.

We should remember that we have a great *Mater Natura*, who is always willing, and nearly always able, to nurse us quietly back to health, if we would but leave her alone.

Much ought to be left to her, therefore, and much will be left by fathers and mothers if they but bear the following truths in mind:—1. No remedy is infallible. 2. Most medicines must do harm before they do good. 3. The *post hoc propter hoc* line of argument is wrong; it is a common one with non-thinking people, and cannot be too highly nor too often condemned by medical practitioners. It is based upon the belief

that because a patient gets well after having taken a certain drug, it is the drug that has cured him. Granted that the cure *might* have been owing to the potency of the drug, yet, on the other hand, the medicine may have done neither good nor harm, and nature may have worked the cure, or the medicine may have positively retarded the cure, and nature, defiant, come off triumphant. If people would only get to believe this, there would be far less quackery in the land, and consequently far fewer cases for the coroner.

A good medicine-chest need not be a very bulky arrangement, but it is far better to have a chest or box of some kind than to keep the medicines in a cupboard. Buy the chest and have it filled only from a chemist of known respectability, for drugs are greatly adulterated now-a-days, especially the more valuable sorts, such as quinine, &c.; but few escape adulteration if the process be remunerative. Having procured your chest, place it in a safe place, beyond the reach of children, and keep the key in your own possession. A medicine-chest is often very pretty and ornamental, and might look well beneath the

dining-room side-board; but that is no place for it, for some unlucky day the key might be left in the box, and the results dire. I recollect a sad case of poisoning which happened in this same way. The key had been forgotten, and the parents were out, and two children, after smelling a few bottles, helped themselves liberally to *oil of cinnamon*.

Now, when you happen to be ill, and are standing in front of your medicine-chest, key in hand, I advise you to look twice at that key before you insert it in the lock; and if it be some one dear to you who is sick, then look four times at your key. It is surprising the amount of blind faith many put in the efficacy of drugs. This is only one of the remnants of the barbarous past. We know better now-a-days; we prefer culling our herbs by daylight, and we object to the dew on principle. We have banished the barber-chirurgion; the painted pole and dangling plate are but pretty frauds; soda-water has taken the place of phlebotomy; we sweeten and flavour our mixtures, and gild or sugar-coat our pills. And yet I know there are thousands—nay, millions of men still who think physic ought to be nauseous to the taste, not the sweetest of perfume, and taken in large quantities in order to do any good. But all this while I am leaving my reader standing key in hand. What I was going to say, then, is this, that before dosing oneself or any one else with medicine, we ought to consider the cause of the complaint and try to remove that. Drugs always leave some bad after-effects, natural remedies do not. For example, I say that if a person feels a trifle hot and feverish of an evening, it is better to retire to quiet rest an hour earlier, and take a seltzer or soda in preference to either James's powder or Mindererus spirit; or if his liver—so often sinned against, so seldom sinning—be a little out of sorts, a brisk walk will do a deal more good than a blue pill.

Another person we find standing musingly in front of his medicine-chest because his blood is out of order; he is looking for a "blood purifier." Well, his blood may or may not be in the condition he supposes; but granting that it is, before choosing his remedy it will be well if he thinks back a little way, to see if he can possibly trace the cause. If he knows of any very serious one, let him go straight off to his own doctor at once and consult him. If he knows of no serious cause, then I can tell him he is looking for something which he will not find. What would he think of a miller who, finding the water in the mill-lead muddy and impure, went off and purchased a cart-load of disinfectants, and set himself to pour them into the lead, instead of going right away to the mill-dam at once, and trying to purify that? The water in the lead is muddy, the wheel will not revolve as it ought, and the miller keeps pouring purifiers into the lead, instead of going to the dam; and as long as he does, the wheel goes merrily enough. A patient is dull, miserable, and not at all what he ought to be, and he goes in search of medicine to cleanse his blood, instead of going straight away to the fountain-head, the reservoir of

food, the stomach. I ask you, are not miller and patient equally thoughtless? The patient's blood is thin, he is pale, and anæmia and eruptions come out on his face. The patient is too stout, he is unfit to walk without panting, and perhaps he is blotchy. Blood out of order in both cases. The medicinal remedies would be different in either, but I could find them in that chest. Yet if I did not first and foremost correct the patient's errors in diet, if I did not first rectify the blood-forming process, should I not be as bad and foolish as the miller? Given such a patient, I will correct his dietary, both in quantity and quality, I will regulate his hours for exercise, work, and sleep, and condemn any bad habit he may have fallen into. As an adjunctive to this, I may prescribe a corrective of some kind, and a simple aperient; when I have done this, I will be content to wait a few days. I do not want to hamper Nature, but to walk reverently at her heels, and lend a hand when needed. When she has begun the cure, be it mine to help to mend matters, to repair injured tissue, to thicken impoverished blood, and to brace and tone the system generally. This I can do by tonics and special stimulants, but am I to give these all the credit of the cure? No.

I say now, and I have said so before, there are few more dangerous medicines to be found than tonics. They are often wolves in sheep's clothing. They are like spirited horses—splendid servants, but they need watching.

*Aperients*, again, are far too often abused. We feel out of sorts, have but little appetite and less spirits; we are recommended to take two of a certain kind of pills at bed-time. We do so, and next morning, after some time, feel fresh and light and happy. From that day, probably, we pin our faith upon that pill. It is just the one that suits us. It becomes our servant, and for a time all goes well, and every time we want him, our servant appears obedient to call; but we soon discover that his services are more and more begrudgingly given, and by-and-by he either is no longer of any use, or we must have him so constantly with us that things are quite reversed, and the slave becomes the master. There is another remedy some reader might suggest—namely, to turn this servant away and get another. Ah! yes; but the old one doesn't depart without having done us infinite mischief, and one servant can't be held accountable for another's breakages. Therefore, believe me, the motto "*Gang warily*" applies with great force to medicinal aperients. Plenty of exercise in the open air, and *ripe fruit before breakfast*, are the best and safest aperients in the world.

The medicines that find a place in the family medicine-chest should be of the simplest kinds, especially those for children's use, which might be confined to grey powder, to be used when they feel out of sorts; senna, for tea in the morning; carbonate of magnesia, easily given in pap, to correct acidity and act as a laxative; syrup of rhubarb and syrup of senna, both gently aperient; borax, used one part to seven of honey, for thrush or aphthæ; antimonial wine, for severe colds

with difficulty of breathing; calomel; castor oil, a nice, simple, softening laxative; santonine, for thread-worms; steel wine, a capital tonic, and easy to take; dill-water, in pain; and lastly, milk of sulphur.

In addition to these, and chiefly for adults, there should be, as laxatives or aperients, effervescent citrate of magnesia, Gregory's powder, sulphate of magnesia, rhubarb powder, so useful as a stomachic, some podophyllin pills, and some of the bicarbonate of potash and soda, with either citric or tartaric acid, to compose cooling effervescent drinks withal. The anti-febriles must not be forgotten—spirits of sweet nitre, and Mindererus spirit. The tonics may be quinine, tincture of iron, cod-liver oil, and tincture of quassia; sulphate of zinc and alum for astringent purposes; laudanum and chlorodyne to allay pain; pargoric, Dover's powder, syrup of squills, and balsam of tolu for coughs; dilute sulphuric acid, solution of morphia, and chloric ether for diarrhoea; and Dover's powder, or James's powder, should not be omitted, the latter being an excellent remedy for slight colds. I should also mention glycerine, cod-liver oil, essence of ginger, tincture of valerian, compound camphor liniment, Friar's-balsam, nitrate of silver, citrine ointment, and benzoated oxide of zinc ointment.

The chest would not be complete without linseed meal, mustard or mustard-leaves, carron oil for burns, some cotton wool and lint and oiled silk, adhesive plaister, and a few bandages. There should also be a pair of small scales, an ointment or plaister knife, and a pair of surgical scissors. Many handy compound medicines might be added to the list, but

I think it is complete enough as it is. It may even seem formidable in length. So it really looks on paper, but many of the bottles will be small, for the quantities of each medicine you purchase must be commensurate with the dose.

In prescribing for any one, remember the *age* of your patient; a child of a year old—supposing that the medicine is suitable at all—will only take a twelfth ( $\frac{1}{12}$ ) part a grown-up person can, a child of three one-sixth ( $\frac{1}{6}$ ), one of seven one-third ( $\frac{1}{3}$ ), a youth of fourteen about half. Old people must be dealt with in the inverse ratio after sixty. Women take smaller doses, and an opiate should not be given to a child—not even as a soothing powder. Remember the season of the year. Give the less weakening remedies in preference to the stronger. Never give medicine at all unless it is really required. Do not continue the use of a remedy a day longer than it is required, but give it as soon as it is required—a stitch in time saves nine. Always shake a bottle; this is being on the safe side, for even some mixed powders separate. Put everything back in its proper place, and see that the labels are all secure. Lastly, lock up, and take away the key.

In conclusion, it will be observed that in giving my list of medicines I omitted to give the dose of each. I did so purposely, because while strongly advising the members of every family—especially those residing in country places—to have a medicine-chest, I as strongly urge them to get a guide to it. These guides do not add much to the expense—about a shilling or so—and if you could also have by you "The Family Physician,"\* so much the better.

## WHAT TO WEAR.

CHIT-CHAT ON DRESS. BY OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT.



WE have now arrived at that happy moment when all the preparations which have been making for months come to the fore; and the manufacturer has the satisfaction of knowing whether he has prejudged the popular taste rightly, and is fortunate in the productions on which his looms have been employed.

I have been devoting much time and patience to a thorough inspection of new fabrics—wool, silk, and cotton. There is a good deal that is really novel, and

many improvements have been effected on old and well-tried materials. Tinsel finds its way into wool, silk, and even into cotton; an absurdity, the last, seeing that it cannot possibly wash. Cotton and woollen goods are made with borderings, intended to be used as trimmings; but I will enter minutely into the question of fabrics, telling you what I have seen, and what there is for you to buy. We will begin with the woollens, because just now, at this *demi-saison*, there is no style of costume so useful, nor so universally adopted. Little checks are once more quite fashionable, more particularly of the shepherd's-plaid order, and in very inexpensive fabrics; but the absurdity is that when made up they are lined with the richest poul de soie. I saw the other day a brown and white costume made of écarté cloth, which can be bought, I know, in England for about 8d. a yard, lined with olive silk at 8s. This écarté material is reversible, having a sort of pepper-and-salt mixture on the wrong side, and can be skilfully blended for trimming.

\* Published by Cassell, Pether, Galpin & Co.