

before serving, but we will take some round with it ; some persons may like it.”

The following morning the girls were busy in giving the finishing touches to their respective dainties ; the fillets of fish were dotted over with mayonnaise sauce, then sprinkled with lobster coral ; the lobster cutlets were coated *entirely* with mayonnaise, and in the centre of each a prawn was placed, the remaining portion—from a small tin—being used, together with the trimmings of the lobster cutlets, to make *Savoury Rolls*, their foundation consisting of tiny rolls, as used for the Indian sandwiches.

The edibles looked very tempting when arranged on the “buffet,” as the girls called the large table ; and

there was no fear of an insufficient supply, for, besides those made at home, there were cakes, biscuits, and chocolates, and fruits in plenty, fresh and preserved. And all agreed that the variety of beverages would be ample, as, in addition to coffee and chocolate, Myra had provided an excellent choice of cordials, syrups, aerated waters, and so on ; and as the girls had a last look round just before tea, they took sufficient credit to themselves to announce that, if the dishes were not speedily emptied, it would not be their fault ; and Myra also cherished the hope that a little surprise in the shape of cups of beef-tea, made from a good meat extract, which she intended to present on the departure of the visitors, would be a welcome one.

“SO PEEVISH AND IRRITABLE.”

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.



MOST of us grown-up folks have rather more than our share of troubles and worry and weariness. The oft-quoted text, “Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upwards,” does not, I fear, always console us ; and we go about airing our afflictions among, and seeking consolation from, our nearest and dearest.

Well, our griefs and pains are generally very real ; yet how seldom we think that there are others among us whose sorrows and aches are equally real, but who are deprived of the power of giving verbal expression thereof, or of seeking sympathy in any way whatever, except by the plaintive, peevish cry ! I allude, of course, to ailing little ones ; infants, young children—call them what you may.

The mortality among these in the earlier stages of existence is very great indeed, and in a direct ratio to the ignorance which prevails as to their management and rearing.

It is the children of the lower middle classes, and of the poor, that keep up this high rate of mortality. Nor is the latter due so much to the effects of poverty as to errors in diet, and inattention to the most ordinary rules of health.

The want of knowledge of the proper treatment of childhood is not, however, confined to the classes mentioned. Medical men encounter every day of their lives instances of the grossest ignorance of this kind, in the wealthier and well-to-do circles of society. And the little ones are the real sufferers. Indeed, in cases where kindly death does not step in to close their aching eyes, such children grow up, if not confirmed invalids, puny, sallow weaklings, dwarfed as much in mind as in body. Such beings are in the world, but not of it. They live, perhaps, in golden cages. They have every human comfort and enjoyment, but understand not what life and living mean. Rosy cheeks, muscularity, brightness of eye, firmness of

tread, sturdy independence are human attributes they may have heard about or seen, but have no more intrinsic knowledge of than my dog here has of the music of Haydn or the science of electricity. But I say, let any one of these world’s weaklings—rich though he may be—enjoy one day of bounding health, wholesome appetite, and genuine happiness, and to go back again to his gilded home and his *ennui* would seem like going to the dreariest prison.

Here is a truth which mothers too often forget : on the correct and judicious care and feeding of the infant or child, depend the health and happiness of his manhood if spared to grow up.

It is only in its early life that the foundation-stone can be laid. In infancy a child must build and build, and build. And he must be happy all the time he is building. If he is otherwise, morally he will be ruined as well as physically, for he will imbibe the bitterest pessimist ideas of life and everything and every creation around him. He will become selfish, morose, unaffectionate, self-conscious, and possessor of never an atom of sympathy to expend on the well-being of the fellow-beings with whom he must mingle in life.

The fact that health and happiness are synonymous terms cannot take too deep root in the memory of everyone who has a child or children to care for.

Now, an infant is not *naturally* peevish or irritable. An infant, if well, ought to be as full of joy and mirth and playfulness when well awake as a kitten or a baa-lamb. Whether rosy-faced or not, he should at least be happy-faced. The desire to take notice of everything and everybody around him should be expressed in his bright, clear eyes. Touch his cheek : it does not give to your finger in soft soddenness. Take his hand : you do not feel as if you had got hold of the tail of a dead fish. There is firmness in it, and a wholesome amount of warmth, while the fingers have a considerable degree of grasping power.

He will hardly let go the fore-finger you have presented him with.

"Wait a moment," he seems to say; "I want to collect myself, and find out what it all means. You may be a very good sort of fellow, but I haven't summed you up yet; and I can't think so fast as you."

When he has summed you up, perhaps he lets your finger free with a broad grin or chuckle, which, could it only be interpreted, would very likely be found to mean something far from complimentary to your general appearance and character.

Well, get hold now of this young fellow's calf, and give it a shake: you will find the knee-joints as firm as if leg and thigh were all one piece, and the flesh as hard and tough as vulcanite. Perhaps the skin is not even silky or over-smooth. All the better; he will grow up the stronger. Perhaps it is brown instead of satin-white. Better again; this means pure blood, with a good dash of iron in it, and plenty of oxygen all through. And as the leg, so the heart will be. A child like this, you will find, is a good hand with the spoon. Eating is to him the serious business of his young life, and all his observation is concentrated on the dish before him. He would be jealous even of the cat having a morsel till he himself were done. Then, with right good John-Bull heartiness, he will push the dish towards her, and scream with delight to see her eat.

Daddy and mammy may well be proud of such a "birkie" as this.

But here is a child of another sort. I sketch from the life—such life as it is, alas! The parents are both well-to-do, and dote upon the boy, who is just eighteen months old. He is in his mother's arms now: one arm clinging round her neck, the other hanging listlessly down. A bonnie boy in truth, with locks of soft amber hair, and eyes of himmel blue. But his face is flushed and somewhat hot, and the eyelids droop rather, and are thicker than they ought to be. There is a moistness in his skin that I do not half like, and his limbs are soft and flabby—unwholesome to the touch.

"How does he eat?"

"Not at all well, doctor. He used to thrive wonderfully well on a patent flour food, and took plenty of milk, but now he refuses that, and will only take food with coaxing."

"Meat and broth—perhaps?"

"And potatoes, yes. We feed him much as we do ourselves."

"Ah! there you err."

"And he is *so* feverish and irritable all day long. I pity even the nurse."

"So do I. How does he sleep?"

"He does not or cannot sleep at all, all day. At night he will sleep in the nurse's arms, but if she puts him down he wakes and screams. The sleep he gets does not appear to refresh him. He starts often, and has bad dreams; tosses his arms about, and grinds his teeth; and his eyes are often half-open. By day he refuses to be amused like other children, and is bitterly

cross at times without the slightest reason. Do you think he is dangerously ill?"

"I do not wish to alarm you needlessly," I reply, "but this is a case which may end in brain congestion, or even inflammation. You must do precisely what I tell you, and the child will get well."

The child does get well. One mistake has been the terribly destructive error of administering certain so-called remedies to produce so-called sleep. This is given up at once, and is the beginning of the happy *dénouement*.

But this irritability of brain I am talking of, this peevishness by day and sleeplessness by night, may—pray remember—be the precursor of some serious coming illness, so that if it lasts for any length of time, even for a week, you should consult the physician. Do not, as many mothers do, put everything down to the evils caused by dentition. Children do not cut a fresh tooth every morning, as some nurses would almost make us believe. Even delayed dentition itself, however, is an ailment that points to something wrong—some weakness perhaps of the constitution, or debility caused by errors in diet.

Indigestion is a too frequent complaint with very young children who are improperly fed. This will cause restlessness, tossing about in bed, and general peevishness. Do not imagine that if you can subdue these symptoms, and create a kind of sleep or stupor by the administration of some nursery drug, you have cured the child. More likely the infant will awake worse than ever.

A little dill-water will be a safe corrective; or a gentle aperient may do good. Further than this we do not advise mothers to venture in the administration of medicine without consulting the family friend—the physician.

If I have succeeded in making mothers or nurses believe that peevishness and irritability really are symptoms of a state of matters which may lead to serious illness, I am content and happy; for, believing this, they will get skilled advice.

Even a medical man will not be quick to jump at a conclusion or diagnosis. He must feel his way, and that right cautiously. Whatever medicine he may give or order must be unhesitatingly administered in the proper quantity and at the right time.

But do not forget that *rest* is often half the battle, and sleep by day imperative. If the head be hot and the face somewhat flushed, cold applied to the brow, by means of a rag dipped in water in which a little toilet vinegar has been mixed, will help to soothe the little brain and conduce to sleep.

Aperient medicine in moderation often does much good, and if you are far from advice a little grey powder, followed by some syrup of senna, will be needed; or even a simple dose of warmed castor oil.

As to diet, it must be nourishing and easily digested. Nothing that clogs the stomach should be administered. Milk is the sheet-anchor, though a little beef-tea is also warranted; and, if the child be old enough, a lightly boiled egg. Puddings too are nourishing.

In this paper, then, I have tried rather to show what should be avoided in the treatment of irritability in children rather than to inculcate any mode of cure. For different cases require different treatment. But

no mother can err who sees that her child sleeps warmly, but not in too hot a bed, that the room is quiet and well ventilated, that his food is nourishing and simple, and that real rest is obtained.

## IN AN AIR-LOCK: AN UNDERGROUND EXPERIENCE.

BY HENRY FRITH.



RIDING home on the top of a tram-car one evening in October, I encountered a pleasant-featured navy—a man of rank amongst navvies; apparently a ganger who was evidently on his way to work. His clothes were clean and tidy; he carried a basket with his supper in it, and seemed ready to undertake some night duty. It was about a quarter to six, and my curiosity was aroused concerning his destination, which I quickly learned was the "Swan" at Stockwell.

A remark concerning the progress of the subway over which our car was running led to conversation.

"Yes," replied my companion to my question, "the river has given us trouble—the Effra, that's it—there's where it runs," he continued, indicating a certain portion of the road.

"You are going down, I suppose?" was my next remark, tentatively.

"Yes; I'm goin' down for seven hours—in compressed air too," he replied slowly.

"Rather trying that, isn't it?" said I, recalling certain experiences of the Forth Bridge.

"Yes, the air-lock ain't comfortable when you ain't accustomed to it. We are."

"I should like to see it," was my reply. "Can I go down?—this evening, for instance."

"Well, I *could* take ye underground for a while," he replied doubtfully, as he prepared to quit the car at the "Swan." "Come along, sir; ye may as well see it."

A suggestion concerning a current coin was not repudiated, though not insisted on; and with this understanding we crossed the road and passed within the hoarding, where an engine, supplied by three locomotive boilers, is incessantly in action pumping compressed air into the workings.

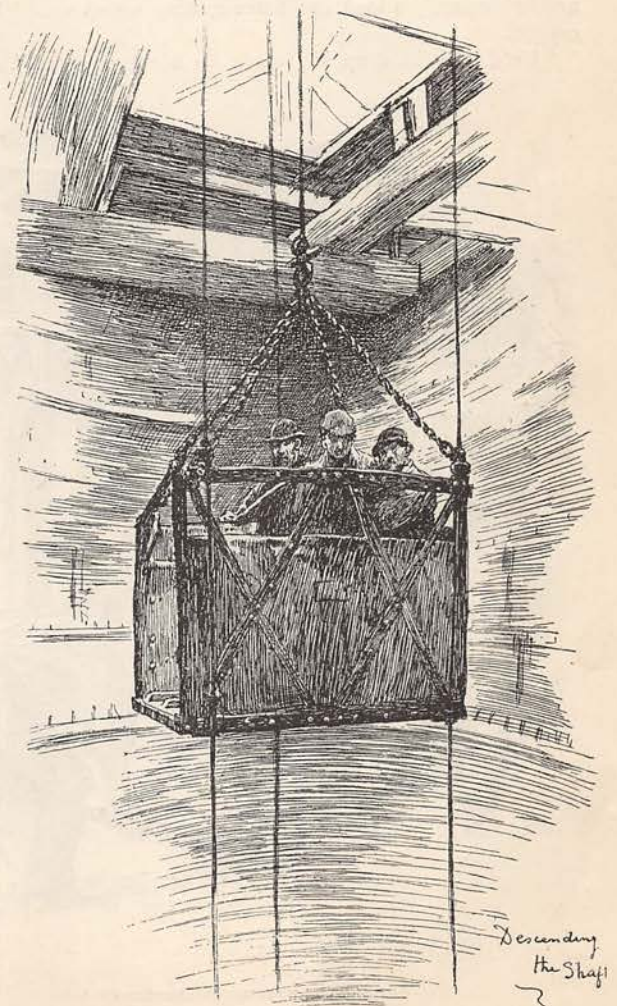
Some curiosity was expressed by the men on the bank as they stood in the flaring light. Certainly a tall hat, town clothes, an umbrella, and a parcel of books were not the best things with which to descend into a railway subway. The cage was coming up as I peered into the pit.

"Not quite so bad as mining," remarked my conductor. "Not so far down, and ye don't get so bumped! Stoop your head, sir."

I bent my back and bowed my head, as directed,

beneath the bar which affords a hold as it passes along the top of the "cage." In a moment we had descended, and carrying a candle stuck in a lump of damp clay, I trudged along the subway towards a group of men who were seated, holding lighted candles stuck on boards, along the wall of the tunnel, waiting for something or somebody.

We had met a gang of men going out; these others were perhaps the "new drift" going in. But whither? And why were they all seated in a line by the ringed



Descending  
the Shaft