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SOMETHING HOMELY.

"MARY, give that man a penny," said John Smith to his wife, as an Italian organ-grinder came before the window, playing the sad sweet air, "Home, sweet home."

"Would you believe it," continued John, as his wife came in again, "I like that tune better than the grandest one that can be played? It makes me think gladly of our own happy fire-side—our own dear little home. Not a penny will I give to beggars, but I do like to spare one sometimes for a tune."

"Well, and I'm sure," said Mary, "I got a shilling's worth of pleasure in giving that man the penny. He could not speak a word of English; but he looked so pleased, it did one good to do him a kindness. That, now, I do call real and hard, to wander about, a stranger in a strange land, playing 'Home, sweet home.'"

"Ah!" replied John, "haven't we got reason to be thankful for our better lot? Get your sewing, and sit down, Mary; I want you to help me to think. Whilst the organ-man is tiring his arm over his homely tune, let us try to think over our many home blessings."

Quiet little Mrs. Smith sat down, and began darning away at a stocking—not, however, at her usual nimble rate, for, as her grave subdued

look told, her mind was full of the thought John had called up. A sweet picture it was—that good little woman, in the neat pleasant room, with everything around, from puss lazily stretched on the rug to the baby asleep in the cradle, seeming suggestive of peace and kindness, and comfort—while the evening sun-beams came lovingly in to give a gilt frame to the whole. I am not sure whether many grand gentlemen who paint pictures would have cared for such a scene. Indeed, I am almost afraid they would have turned quite contemptuously away, saying, Mary Smith was no beauty, and that the room was only a common front kitchen. I only know, Mary had the loving thoughtful look which tells of the beauty of holiness; I only know, that the neatness and order of the room told of orderly inmates and a peaceful home life; and I must still say, it *was* a sweet picture. At any rate, all seemed to the perfect satisfaction of John Smith, as he sat looking at that quiet downcast face.

“Mary,” he said, at length, “do you know what Thursday week is? Seven years ago come Thursday week we were married. It’s of seven years ago I’m thinking—of the old garret in Houndsditch—the few things we had there—the low wages—and that hard winter. When I think of them times, and that home, and then of this, I do feel thankful.” And John glanced round the neat snug room, and leaned back in his chair with a feeling of honest pride and satisfaction, such as can only be felt by a working-man who has got a comfortable home and fifty pounds in the bank by the sweat of his brow, as he had.

The quiet was interrupted by a knock at the door, and the entrance of Eben Williams, one of John’s fellow-workmen, who, with his wife and two children, lodged in the upper part of the house.

“Evening, mate,” said Williams; “may I come in a bit? I want a word with you—I think you can tell me a thing or two. I want your advice, that’s a fact.” He paused awkwardly, and a crimson flush passed over his face to the very roots of his hair as he went on. “Fact is, I’m real and miserable. The missus and I don’t hit it; somehows or other, ever since we was spliced, things get worse and worse; what’s a man to do? Instead of getting richer, we get poorer; instead of getting happier, we get more miserable. I don’t know who’s to blame; but it makes me right down savage often—just now, when that fellow set up a-playing ‘Home, sweet home,’ I felt ready to fling the bellows at his head.”

“No, no; gently,” said John. “But what can we do for you? I’m sure we’ll do anything we can—eh, Mary?”

“That I’m sure we will.”

“Well, mate, what we want, is your advice. My wife, just before I come down here, says to me, says she, ‘How is it that the Smiths get on so well? He only earns the same as you, and yet see their place—it’s better furnished, his children’s always better dressed, and all of them seems richer by half than us.’ ‘Well, bothered if I know, says I. If I don’t go down and ask Smith how he manages.’ So, here I am; and perhaps while we has a chat, the missus’ll go up

a bit and tell my wife how to turn a four-penny piece into a sixpence."

"Well," said Mary, "I don't know that I'm so good a housekeeper as to set up teaching other folks; but it's true, I'm older than your wife, neighbour, and I had a mother as was one in a thousand to teach me; so may-be I can tell Jane a thing or two." And after a look at the baby, and a strict charge to John to call her down if it woke, she went upstairs.

"Now, mate," said Williams, when the two men were alone, "tell me how it is you get on so much better than us—what's your secret?"

John looked grave, and was silent a minute. "Williams," he said at length, "you know I'm a man of few words, and I'm no preacher; but if you ask me, I must say the truth, and that is, I know of no reason of the difference between us but one. You remember when we were boys together in Brook Lane Sunday School—your life chances seemed as good as mine then—you remember the things the teacher, him with the pale face, used to tell us. Well, I've never forgotten them, and sure enough I've found them all true. Whatever of good or of happiness I have, comes of God's blessing on my poor strivings to know and serve Him. 'Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all things shall be added unto you.' I can't say all I would, but do think of this."

"Well, well," said Williams, "I knew you would tell me this; I don't mind a bit of a sermon, neither, from you. I know you means it kind. But somehow this don't seem to be the point. I can't see that any quantity of psalm-

singing and prayer-meetings, and such like, can make a man's wages go further, or his home more comfortable."

"Now, Williams, you are only parroting the infidel sayings you have picked up at the workshop, and you don't believe them all the while. You know as well as I do that religion is not mere 'psalm-singing,' as you lightly call it. You know it's honest manly obedience to God's laws; and doesn't He teach us to be kind, and thrifty, and industrious? And doesn't all that go to make a man's home comfortable? Because we are taught to pray for daily bread, you know it doesn't mean that the bread's going to be rained down from the skies upon us, without our ever working a stroke."

"Well, no—no, not exactly that," said Williams, feeling half-ashamed of his own former speech.

"Not *exactly* that! No; nor nothing like that. God helps those who help themselves. We are to work as though we did all, and trust in Him as though He did all. He has given us heads and hands, and expects us to use them. But I need not go on at you about industry; I'm sure you are as regular at work as I am, or anybody. You take every chance to earn an honest penny; it's seldom you lose a quarter, anybody knows. But keeping to work is not all, though that's a great thing. There are some folks who are always work, work, working, from morning to night, from week's end to week's end, and like a mill-horse, never get any further."

"Well, how do you account for it?" said Williams.

"Why, it's as plain as the nose on your face; such folks don't know how to take care of their earnings, or to spend them wisely. They are the sort the prophet tells of—they earn wages 'to put them into a bag with holes.'"

"Ah!" interrupted Williams, bringing his clenched fist heavily on the table, "them words fits me. Why, mate, you might as well try to keep water in a sieve as money in my pocket!"

"Well," said John, "you want a lesson in *saving*. Take this short one:—*Two-pence a day saved is £3 a year; every pot of beer costs two-pence*. Many's the man without a penny or a home, who might have had a house of his own and money in the bank, but for too much beer."

Williams was one of the so-called "good fellows," to whom no amount of beer or public-house company comes amiss; and he felt John's words keenly—more keenly than he chose to show. He merely laughed a forced laugh, and said,

"Mate, you would make a capital teetotal lecturer."

John knew he had hit home; and he knew Williams' peppery temper too well to hit twice on a tender place.

"Well, Williams," he continued, leaving beer alone, there's hundreds of other little daily expenses as might be saved—little things as make money dribble away, nobody knows how. Take my advice, and look out for these; set your wife an example of carefulness. If a man does not help his wife in her struggles to save, he deserves to have an empty pocket."

"Ah," said Williams, "little things does run up, 'specially when one goes on tick, and remember all that is owing."

"Tick!" exclaimed John, "well, I can only say, them as go on tick deserve just what they get—always to feel the misery of debt, and to be cheated into the bargain. Trust my Mary for going pottering to the chandler's shop every time she wants a pinch of tea or a scrape of butter! Not she; she does all her marketing Saturday morning, and goes to that great grocer's shop in Holborn, where she buys a decent quantity at a time, pays ready money, and so gets things cheaper and better. As for debt, thank God, we don't know what it means: 'Owe no man anything;' that's what our Book says."

Williams sighed.

"Then," continued John, "there's a deal beside paying ready money for everything. One must learn to spend wisely."

"Well," interrupted Williams, "I never thought as it wanted much nouse to spend money. It may take a *man* to earn; but surely any fool can spend."

"Just so," said John, drily; "perhaps that gave rise to the proverb, 'Fools and their money are soon parted!' I know men who seem, as the children say, to be afraid their money will burn a hole in their pocket. No sooner have they got it than they go standing treat, and scattering it about like the lord mayor. They go buying things they don't want, just because they are 'bargains,' as they say. The end of these famous bargains is the pawn shop, where

they go, most likely, to buy the man a dinner before a month's end.

"Well, then, talking of taking care of money, let me tell you, I've found if a man means to get on, he must learn to take care of another thing quite as much. I should like to say one word to you about that."

"Go a-head, pray."

"Well, it's health I mean. Ever since I joined the evening classes I have been waked up more to learning things from books. My brains are none of the best; but still, I have picked up more than one good notion through these classes. About health, now—two winters ago, one of the great doctors from the West-end gave us six lectures about fresh air, food, and drink, washing, and such-like. He talked real good stuff, such as all of us understood—none of your crack-jaw. See that square of zinc with tiny holes in that window? Well, I put that up next day I heard the first lecture. That lets the fresh air in, lad, without draught enough to hurt a fly; that's for ventilation. Then, too, I bought half a butter firkin for a bath, and now I always have a good wash down every morning from top to toe, that takes off all the perspiration which chokes up the skin: nothing so good for the preservation of health."

Whereupon, having safely delivered himself of all these long words ending in *'ation*, John leaned back in his chair, put his thumbs in his waistcoat, and looked—must we write it?—a little conceited. Alas! that to no true tale-writer is it given to sketch perfect people! As the stern true sun, which photographs wrinkles and scars,

so must our pen be; we must confess that our friend John's newly-gained knowledge *had* made him just a little conceited. Poor man! he had worked hard for it in weariness and painfulness: we must forgive him. People are like that when they know a little, but get humble as they know more.

"Why, you will wash all the goodness out of you," said Williams, laughing.

"Ah, nay; there's little to wash. But, without laughing, Williams, I do believe some things I heard at them lectures have done a deal to keep me off the sick list. I never knew till then the harm it does a man to breathe hot, dirty air, or to go about day by day with his skin choked with dirt. Nothing, I do believe, so bad for health, as dirty air, and dirty clothes and skin, except it is"—and John paused thoughtfully—"dirt at one's heart."

"Well," said Williams, "I must say as you talks like a book; but it aint no ways clear to me but what there's a deal of gammon in this fuss about air, and washing, and such-like, as we hears so much on now-a-days. Anyways, you look well enough, though."

Truly, John *did* "look well." Just as that man looks to whom has been given the inward purity and peace which lead to all outward order and cleanliness, and comfort; just as he looks who earns his bread honestly, and eats it in temperance and thankfulness; just as he looks who sleeps the sleep of God's beloved—whose pillow is a good conscience, whose curtains are angels' wings. Just as such a one looks—and no other.

"Thank God, I am well," John replied; and

so far from the things as are said about health being gammon, I believe they are some of the truest things going. Why, ask my Mary, she will tell you; our second—our little Benny—him as lays under the daisies at Highgate—the strong voice faltered and the big chest heaved—“well, he might have been here to-day, if she had known then what she knows now about health. Mary’s a good scholar—her head’s worth two of mine, any day—and she takes on to these notions about health wonderfully. The lady, at her mothers’ meeting, has given her some little books about them; and so we have learnt many a good thing.”

“Ah, Smith, guess your wife is the secret of half of your gettings on,” said Williams.

So profoundly was John convinced of that fact, that he hardly knew how to talk about it, so, after the manner of men thus impressed, he rarely spoke of it at all. Instead of saying soft, pretty things, he got up on cold mornings, and *did* them, in the way he went on to explain to Williams.

“Well,” he said, “I aint the man to be ashamed of owning how much I owe to my wife; everybody knows she’s a woman of a thousand. Then, of course, I try to help her a bit to keep things so straight and comfortable. She would work to skin and bone, she would, if I would let her. But, you see, I get up of mornings and help her a bit—light the fire, and do a turn or two about the house.”

“Nonsense, man, *do* you?” said Williams.

“I should think I do, and *ought*. Why, there’s a deal we like done to the children before they

go to school, and then that youngster,” pointing to the sleeping baby, “he knows how to give trouble. The children are all too young to do for themselves, and my giving a little help to Mary in the morning is no great plague, while it forwards her a deal, and adds no end to our comfort.”

“Whatever time do you turn out, then?” asked Williams.

“Six, this time of year. We always get up early, else all gets wrong of a morning: get up early, and there’s time for everything. While Mary gets breakfast, I trim myself a bit, and we all sit down comfortably together. Our fare’s plain enough—you know what my wages are—yet, I dare say few men get more comfort. Mary knows how to make a little go a great way, she does. When I go home at night, I always know there will be a nice bit of fire and supper ready for me, and the little ones all eager for the first kiss. You should see them flattening their noses against the window, looking out for me, and cutting about when I come in, one setting my chair, one bringing my dry shoes. Then we have a bit of supper, and when the children are put to bed, there’s a spare hour or so. This I pass different ways. Mondays and Tuesdays, generally at home, reading, and talking to my wife, as you found us to-night. Wednesdays, we both go to the week-evening service. Thursdays and Fridays, I go to the classes or lectures at the Working Man’s Association, in Essex Street. Saturdays, I find plenty to do getting ready for Sunday. That’s how my evenings go.”

“Well, and see how this evening’s *gone!*”

said Williams, "I must be moving. My head's pretty nigh full of what you have been saying, and I do believe there's a great deal in it all. Leastways, I will think it over, and see if I can't square my life a little, and get a little comfort."

"Do, but remember what I said, 'Seek *first*'—you know, good-night."

And Williams went up-stairs to his own room, and John turned to look at his sleeping child. He stood looking at the sweet little face for some minutes, and then knelt quietly by the cradle. Happy was he, finding in his own fatherly love so sweet a pledge and symbol of the love of *his* Father, that he sank unconsciously to his knees in prayerful thankfulness. "Our Father."—Two children—which was happier, or more at rest?

We will follow Mary Smith up-stairs to Mrs. Williams' room. It is not often Mary's shadow darkens that door, near as it is to her own. Like some other whimsical people we have known, she had a strange fancy for fresh, pure air. Mary was not strong, and she feels faint and queer when she gets into a room like this, where the window is never opened, where the air is hot and close—a sort of essence of dirt, tobacco, red herring, and washing-day—where everything is mess and muddle and confusion. She was a clean body, and to breathe dirty air, out of other people's lungs, was to her mind about the most disgusting thing she could think of; depend upon it, she never did it from choice, but now duty calls her. Perhaps if Mrs. Williams had been told that Mary or anybody else considered her or her rooms untidy, she would not have

replied very amiably. "Sure, now, and how could anybody be always in apple-pie order, with only two rooms? Sure, now, was not she always on the run from morning to night—was not she always slave, slave, worry, worry, worry? Sure, now, didn't she always have a regular cleaning up every week, as well as anybody?" so she would have replied. So far true; but, poor soul, she little knew or thought that half her work went for nothing, through want of order and method and forethought: she little knew how much her head might have saved her heels. She little knew that the boasted weekly "cleaning up," was really but a weekly stew and mess, and turning house-out-of-windows, which only made "confusion worse confounded." Yet, judge her not hastily; how could she know better? How could she, the daughter of a careless, slovenly mother, who died while her children were young—she who had married at seventeen, in the giddiness of youth—know better? Another thing, too, I knew of poor Jane Williams—spite of all that was wrong and thriftless and disorderly in her, there was much that was noble and beautiful. Under that soiled untidy dress, lay a true woman's heart, full of love and tenderness; under that tawdry flaunting cap, throbbed a brain ever busy with confused thoughts and hopes for the good of others. No mother loved her children more—seldom as she washed their faces; no wife loved her husband better—sadly though she neglected his buttons and dinners. More, she was frank, humble, and confiding. We always liked her, and felt sure that whenever she obeyed the voice of the Great Spirit of Wisdom and Order,

she would make a very noble and loveable woman. Judge her not hastily.

Let us look at her now. She hears Mary Smith's footstep on the stairs, and begins trying to put the room to rights. See, she snatches up a dirty comb from the table, and pops it under her chair-cushion. She takes a heap of children's clothes, dirty and clean, and shoves them into the cupboard, to the butter and sugar. "Get up," she says to Johnny—little Johnny, so quiet in the corner. Was ever a little man of two years so silent, unless in mischief? No, surely. Johnny arises, frightful to behold; grim with the coal dust with which he has been adorning himself these ten minutes—legs, hands, face, all in a state of chimney-sweep. If a child gets into mischief through the mother's carelessness, who shall be punished, she or the child? The child, Mrs. Williams thinks; and Johnny is slapped accordingly, and sets up an exceeding great "boo-hoo."

"Come in, Mrs. Smith," she said, as Mary's gentle rap was heard amidst the storm. "Now, was ever a woman so tried? These children worries the flesh off one's bones! See this boy, what he's been and done! Clean frock this morning—clean socks an hour ago—now look at him! But pray sit down."

"Yes," said Mary very quietly; "children *will* get at the coals. I always keep mine out of the way."

"Oh," replied Mrs. Williams, "keep one thing out of his way, he gets in mischief with another; never was such children as mine! I'm sure I don't know how you manage yours; sure

we hardly hears a sound of a child in the house."

"Well," said Mary, "they're out pretty much, but they are as good as most. Johnny, he's a bit of a Turk; but my husband helps to keep him under."

"Ah, now, that's the way," replied Mrs. Williams; "why, there's Eben, I'm sure he does nothing but spoil, pet, and coddle the children one minute, and swear at them the next; then he goes on at me because they are unruly. Men's so unreasonable. Ever since we have been here, he's always nagging about you and Smith. He says Smith's wages are no more nor his, and yet you manages twenty times as well. And, dear me, I begins to see as there's more in managing than I ever thought! Why, poor mother, she worked at a factory, week's end to week's end, and how could she teach us anything like managing? It's only a wonder as I have rubbed on as I have. And Eben says to me, says he, 'Now, why don't you try to neighbour more with Mary Smith? Try and see how she manages, and take a leaf out of her book;' and so he asked you up to-night."

"Well, Jane," said Mary, "it's little cause I have to talk of my managing, or to think much of myself for it."

"No, you are no ways botty, I always says; and that's why I never minds asking you things, as I do some folks. Now, tell me anything as it strikes you I might do to better things, and to get these rooms a little comfortable."

"Well, if you ask me, I will tell you one thing as seems to me to stand much in the way

of your comfort, that is, want of what poor dear mother used to call method. 'Polly,' she would say to me, often and often, 'never set about your work in a helter-skelter, hurry-scurry way; method lightens labour;' and sure enough, I have found it true. The Bible says, 'Do all things decently and in order;' and I know there's nothing like it."

"Well," said Mrs. Williams, "I know I always works as well as ever I can. I always puts my heart into what I do, and I'm sure I am always at it."

"That I'm sure of," replied Mary; "but still, to get through work anything like, wants one's head as well as heart. Seems to me you are always doing, but seldom thinking; seems to me you don't plan, and forecast, and arrange work enough; and I know without that one's always in a mess—always doing, and never done."

"Well, may be; I never thought much of that; yet I don't see clear how to do better. How should one plan things?"

"Poor dear mother used to say—just as if I hear her now—'Polly,' she used to say, 'plan your work as the parson divides his sermon. Think, in the first place—WHAT IS THE WORK TO BE DONE? Second—HOW TO DO IT? Third—WHERE ARE THE THINGS TO DO IT WITH? And that's how I plan my work up to this very day."

"*Dear me!*" said Mrs. Williams, "I have got but a poor head-piece; I could not think any plan out."

"Oh, that you could," replied Mary, cheerily. "Just let us try now together to think out your work—to think out the cleaning of these rooms

that way. First—WHAT IS TO BE DONE? Well, I should think the ceiling wants whitewashing, the walls of the bed-room want fresh colouring, and the wall paper here wants a rubbing."

"Oh, bother all that; let the landlord do it!" said Mrs. Williams.

"But you know he will not do it again yet for a very long time. It's two years since he did our place; and when we asked him to do it again last spring, he would not. We must either leave the place, bear with the dirty walls and ceilings, or clean them ourselves. Of the three evils, we chose the least—did the job ourselves; and it's well worth the trouble. Then, I should think the doors, window-frames, and wainscots want washing, the grates blacking, floors scouring, windows cleaning, furniture rubbing, brass, tin, and iron-ware brightening."

"Well, yes," said Mrs. Williams, turning red in the face, and looking at her feet, "I can't say but just now the things aint quite nice. You see, Johnny, he's had the hooping-cough, and I have lost my rest; and I have been obliged—"

"Oh," said Mary, kindly, "you know I am not finding fault; we were only going through our plan. Well, second—HOW IS THE WORK TO BE DONE? According to the text, we must do it 'decently, and in order.' I should say, take care that every place is not in confusion at the same time. Clean one room at once, so that the other may be dry and nice for the children to be in. Do the bed-room first, so that the floor may have time to get quite dry before night-fall. Damp floors are very dangerous, especially in

bed-rooms: my sister, Martha, was down with rheumatics last year, through no other thing. Above everything, pray don't have a mess when Eben comes home. It's shameful how some women drive their husbands to the public house, as one may say, by having the place all dirt and litter and confusion, when a man comes home, dead beat and tired, of an evening, wanting a little comfort. Such women have small right to complain of drunken husbands, seems to me. Then, before the ceilings are whitewashed and bed-room walls coloured, the furniture of one room must be put into the other, or covered with old newspapers. That done, the dirty whitewash should be thoroughly washed from the ceilings, and the dirty colouring from the walls. When the ceiling and walls are dried, the whitewash and colouring should be laid on with a clean whitewash brush. To do them well, two coats of the whitewash and colouring would be wanted; but the first ought to get quite dry before the second is put on. There's nothing like often white-washing and colouring ceilings and walls, to keep away the bugs, and other vermin."

"Then, I am sure," said Mrs. Williams, "our rooms ought to be done, for them creatures teases us above a little: I suppose they can't be helped in London."

"Oh, but they can, though!" replied Mary. "When we first took the rooms down-stairs, we found these horrid things in the walls; but now there is not so much as one. I was always on the look-out for them, night and day. I caught and killed all I saw, and then I rubbed chloride of lime, mixed with water to the thickness of

cream, into every crack and cranny in the walls and boards. Then John exchanged our old wooden bedsteads for iron ones; iron's so much colder and harder than wood, that vermin is not nearly so likely to harbour in it. I took away all the bed-curtains and valances, too; they only harbour dust, and keep the bedding from getting freshened by the air. Then, of course, for a while, I kept every place extra clean, and in about five weeks we had no more trouble. It's dirt that breeds these horrid creatures, and if one's place is not clean and sweet, none of the poisons that are sold can keep it free."

"Well, I will try your plan," replied Mrs. Williams.

"To clean the papering on these walls," continued Mary, "I should first brush them down with a clean broom, and wipe them gently with a clean dry cloth, to get off the loose dirt, and then rub them with the crumb of a stale half-quartern loaf cut in halves. This will get off a very great deal of the dirt."

"Then for the paint, how do you clean that?" asked Mrs. Williams.

"With warm water and soap and flannel."

"Do you use any soda?"

"Sometimes, if the water's hard, but it is not well to put much, or it eats off the paint."

"These floors will give you a good deal of trouble. That great patch of grease there must have fuller's earth put on it over-night. The rest of the floor I should scour with warm water, soap, and a little sharp sand. The windows want a good clean with whitening; and the furniture wants washing with lukewarm water, a little

soap, and a soft cloth. Then, when it's dry, I should rub it with a little boiled linseed oil, on a bit of flannel, and polish with a dry cloth, and plenty of what dear mother used to call 'essence of elbows.'

"Ah, well," said Mrs. Williams, baring one of her large arms, "I can give plenty of that, at any rate."

"Now," continued Mary, "according to dear mother's plan, we come to ask, third,—WHERE ARE THE THINGS TO DO THE WORK?"

"Ah, *where* are they indeed?" replied Mrs. Williams. "I shall have to borrow most of them."

"Oh no!" said Mary cheerily, "we shall not want so much as you expect; and it's a waste of time, and a bad plan every way, to run about borrowing little things that are often wanted, or that spoil much in using. I think you might ask the landlord, though, to lend you a whitewash brush; sure he will do that, though he would not send us a man to whitewash when we wanted."

"I dare say Eben will try to do it," replied Mrs. Williams.

"Oh, yes! only tell him to stroke the brush always in one direction, and to lay the colouring on even."

"What shall I do for a step-ladder?"

"Well, that's a thing we manage without: John puts a box on the table, and stands on it. We shall have to buy lime and sharp sand; they can be got at the builder's yard round the corner. Then the copperas, whiting, black lead, linseed oil, and soda, I generally get at the druggist's. That's all we shall want to buy; so that will not

be ruination. Let's see, lime 1d., sharp sand $\frac{1}{2}$ d., copperas $\frac{1}{2}$ d., whiting 2d., black lead 1d., linseed oil 1d., and soda $\frac{1}{2}$ d.

"Why, then, sixpence will buy all!" said Mrs. Williams, half surprised to find that the materials for a thorough cleaning could be got so cheaply. "Well, now, to-morrow the children's going to see their grandmother. I've a good mind to begin a bit of a clearing-up then, and I would finish on Friday."

"Pray don't spoil a good mind then," replied Mary, smiling. "I would let Jane run out for the lime and other things, ready to begin early in the morning, if I were you, and may-be, I will run up and help a bit. Perhaps, let her go at once; going late to shop is so cruel to the shopmen; I try never to do it."

Jane was then sent off, and Mary continued the chat.

"As we are together so quiet to-night, I should like to say one or two more things," said she, "especially this—if you clean the bed-room to-morrow, and this room, Friday, and get all once nice and straight, you had better try to get into a regular plan of work—HAVE A PROPER TIME FOR EVERYTHING, AND DO EVERYTHING AT ITS PROPER TIME, that's my rule."

"Well, now," replied Mrs. Williams, "I'm beat! There's so many little things to be done in a house where there's young children, I can't see how anybody can fix a time for everything."

"It's true," replied Mary, "every fid-fad can't have a time fixed for it; but if you think a little about it, you will find most things can. Oh! and it saves a world of worry."

"Well, please tell us how you plans your work, and I will try if I can't take a leaf out of your book. I have often wondered how you gets through things so easy."

"I will. Just consider, now, that every week-day, in a general way, we get up at six, have breakfast at eight, dinner at one, tea at six, and go to bed at ten. All this causes certain work that should be done every day, and other work that should be done once a week."

"Will you tell me, then, about the every-day work?"

"Well, the first thing I do in the morning is to get *myself* thoroughly ready for the day's work. I always get a good wash from head to foot first thing. Our doctor told me to do it when I was so poorly three summers ago, and I find it such a comfort, I have never given it up. If I came down as some women do, all unwashed, heavy and sleepy, I could not half do my duty: it's like a workman beginning work with a blunt tool. When I am dressed, I open our bed-room window wide, strip the bed-clothes all off our bed, spread them over two chairs, and leave them for the fresh morning air to blow on them awhile. I then go down and get the fire alight, and the kitchen swept up. Then, I go and get the two children up and ready for school—baby generally sleeps till after breakfast—they too have a good wash all over. Then we get breakfast by eight."

"But goodness, Mrs. Smith," interrupted Mrs. Williams, "however can you find time for all that slopping and messing before eight o'clock!"

Mary smiled. "It's a great mistake," she said, "to think washing children all over, means

keeping them standing about ever so long, till they are cold and blue and shivering; that does harm. But if a child's sponged every day, and has a thorough wash in warm water on Saturday, so that it does not ever get very dirty, it can be washed in a very few minutes, and the quicker it's done the better.

"After breakfast is over and the things washed up, I dress baby, and then go up-stairs to make the beds and put the bed-rooms straight. The beds and bedding have got well aired and sweetened by this time, and I am very careful to turn everything, mattresses and all, every day, to keep all nice and sweet. Through that, as I told you, we are now quite clear of all those horrid little visitors.

"Then, if I have any little marketing to do, I do it, and give baby a breath of out-door air same time. I next see about dinner. However little we may have, I always make it a rule to set the dinner table as neatly as I can, on a clean cloth, just as if I expected company. Sure, have I not got company that I care a deal for? I should not like the two children to get into piggish, untidy ways at meals; sure I should not like to get into them myself.

"Dinner over, I busy myself washing up dishes, saucepans, and things. I am very careful not to pour any bits of cabbage and such like, down the sink, else there is great danger of stopping up the trap, and getting all sorts of horrid smells from the drain."

Mrs. Williams started. It just occurred to her that a "horrid smell" in her own kitchen, which she had attributed to a "dead rat," might

perhaps be blamed to certain live rats with two legs.

"Well," continued Mary, after cleaning up my kitchen, I go up and tidy myself; and then I'm free for needlework, or any extra weekly work, till tea-time; and when tea is over, and the children put to bed, I'm free again till bed-time. In this way I generally get about an hour and a half in the morning, three hours in the afternoon, and two hours in the evening, for extra weekly work."

"Well," exclaimed Mrs. Williams, earnestly, "I do declare it does anybody good to hear you talk; you seems to arrange everything beautiful, like clock-work! Pray tell me now about this 'extra weekly work,' as you call it."

"To begin, then," replied Mary, "with Sunday—there's a deal I should like to say about that, which I can't now; however, we do very little work then, just enough for decency and order, that's all.

"On *Monday* I look up the dirty clothes, put them in soak ready for washing the next day, and lay the copper fire, and see that I have soap, soda, blue, and all ready. I never leave clothes more than a week; if they are left longer, the dirt's harder to come out; and besides, they get such a heap, they stand no chance of getting well done.

"*Tuesdays* are my washing days. I light the copper fire before breakfast, but I don't begin washing till after my husband and the children are gone. John takes his dinner to the workshop, so I see no more of him till tea-time,

when all's done, and so he's never vexed with the steam and smell of suds."

"How is it you gets through so soon?" asked Mrs. Williams; "do you use any of them washing powders?"

"No, never. They only rot the clothes, and as to washing things without rubbing, it's nonsense—they can't be sweet and wholesome ditched up that way. No; there's no way yet—whatever there may be one day—like plenty of soap and rubbing, and a good lot of water: and if one begins washing in good time, and works with a will, there's no need for any of your slovenly make-shiftly powders.

"On *Wednesdays*, I iron and air the clothes, and do all I can in the way of mending, especially little places, and putting on strings and buttons. All I have not time to mend then, I put into a basket, to do in evenings or odd times. I always try hard to mend all up by the week's end, or I should never manage at all. A rag-bag, for holding bits of calico, cloth, and such like, is very tidy, and comes in useful on mending-day. Holes in stockings I never mend."

Mrs. Williams opened her eyes in wonder.

"No," said Mary, smiling, "never, because I never let them get into holes. I always darn all the thin places. It is a good plan to run the heels of new stockings, and to fell a bit of tape flat on the seam of the heels.

"On *Thursdays*, I give an extra cleaning to the bed-rooms. I always take care to move and sweep behind boxes and everything in the rooms. I try now never to put any boxes or lumber under the beds. If one makes a sort of lumber cup-

board there, as some do, the fresh air can't blow freely to sweeten the under-side of the mattresses; and one's very likely to leave that part of the room unswept, till it's a regular dust-hole. Besides, to keep a parcel of old shoes, dirty clothes, and such like there, taints the air of the room."

"But," said Mrs. Williams, "our room's so small and lumbered up, I'm obliged to put things under the bed."

"Well," said Mary, "at any rate keep no more than can be helped there, and only such as can be easily moved, so as not to interfere with sweeping. I generally scour the bed-rooms well every Thursday; but as damp floors are so dangerous, if it's a very wet, muggy day, when they don't dry well, I only wipe them lightly over with a clean cloth, just wetted in cold water, to sweeten them a bit. On Thursday, too, I clean the windows, and make a stock of brown bread enough for the week.

"On Friday, I clean the kitchen and passage.

"On Saturday, I scour the shelves and floor of the wash-house, and give an extra rub to the tins, candlesticks, and such like. Then I always give the children an extra good wash, in warm water, and clean their hair, for the every-day wash in cold water is not quite enough—children in London get such grubs. In the evening, I do all I can to save work on Sunday—clean shoes, lay out clean clothes, and so on. You know now my plan of work, but it is not so easy to explain all the comfort it gives—how much worry it saves."

At this moment, Mrs. Williams' attention was

diverted to Johnny, who, with an earnestness which made him extend his little tongue far out of his mouth, was, in imagination, sawing off the chair-back, with the comb he had pulled from its hiding-place under the chair cushion. "See, now," she exclaimed, snatching the comb from his hand, "what that child's been and done! Six teeth broke out!—naughty boy!"

"It is vexing," said Mary; "but, do you know, it just gives me a text to finish up my sermon on order. A comb's to do hair, and not for a child to play with; and one great rule for order is, HAVE A CERTAIN USE FOR EVERY THING, AND KEEP EVERY THING TO ITS USE. If everybody acted on that, there would be a great deal of mischief and breakage saved. If Ann Webb had used her kettle only to boil water in, and not for her children to drink from, her Bobby would not have got so dreadfully scalded; so with Johnny and the comb, and a hundred other things."

"Well," said Mrs. Williams, "that's true enough; and that just reminds me if I had kept this fork to its right use, I should not have broke it this morning, getting out a cork. But children's always getting hold of what they have no business to; that comb, now, I did not give him, he furriged it out his-self."

"Perhaps," rejoined Mary, "it was not in its proper place, though; and that brings me to another rule—HAVE A PLACE FOR EVERY THING, AND KEEP EVERY THING IN ITS PLACE. Now you are going to make a clearance, try to find a suitable place for every piece of furniture and everything about you. Try to carry out this

rule even in the smallest matters. Sort out and arrange all the things in every box and drawer, so that you may always know where to lay your hand on what you want. This saves no end of time, trouble, and vexation. I have known many a man get put out because his wife could not find a bit of string, or paper, or a button, when wanted."

"Yes, that's true," said Mrs. Williams; "there was Eben only yesterday vowed he would go to work without his dinner, because I could not find clean paper to wrap it in. I keeps a little cloth on purpose for him, but I could not find it till he had gone off swearing. Men's such fidgits."

"Well, yes," replied Mary; "but really there is, in a small way, few things so teasing as to have to hunt up and down for things wanted in a hurry. In this, as in many other things, home peace and comfort depend very much on trifles. There are many more little matters I should like to say a word or two about, but we will talk them over another time. Whenever I can be of use to you, do step down-stairs to me: living in the same house, we ought surely to try to help one another."

"Thank you kindly; I'm sure you *can* help me a deal. It seems to cheer me even to know I have got such a friend in the house."

"Ah!" said Mary, gravely, "talking of a friend brings me almost to what I have been paving the way for, and trying to say, the whole evening; but it's never easy for me to say all I feel about that. I mean that this talk of cleaning and clearing up will be quite vain, after all,

without something higher and better. One can't be really orderly and clean and comfortable in outside things, till one gets purity and peace and comfort within, in one's heart and mind. You want a better Friend than me, Jane, to help you;" and Mary's eyes filled with tears, as she thought of Him, the Loving One, who had watched over that heart through all its life-long wanderings. "But we can't talk more to-night, its striking nine. Come in, Jane, and have a cup of tea on Sunday. I can't go out in the evening because of baby, and so we can have a long chat."

"Thank you, kindly; I will." So, with a cordial "good-night," they parted.

Our "homely" sketch draws to an end: we have but little space, and, alas! little power to tell the rest. We cannot well explain all that passed after tea that Sunday. When Mary, in her own sweet simple way, told Jane of the Heavenly Father, who in loving severity had made her life of disobedience a disordered and suffering one, that she might learn obedience through the things she suffered—when she told of the Saviour Friend Jane needed—when she told of the in-dwelling Spirit of purity and love, from whom all outward purity and order come—how Jane listened and wept and believed it all, as she never had before—how she felt that Father to be a Father indeed—how that Friend was very nigh—how that Blessed Spirit overshadowed all, and comforted and refreshed the inmates of that homely little room. Nay, none could tell, for

none could hear all that passed that night—save One who hears and answers prayer, though it goes forth but in sobs and groanings that cannot be uttered.

Our dull gross mind can better understand what came of that evening's talk. Plainly from that time forward Jane Williams gradually found power to bring order and peace and comfort within, into her own heart and mind, and without, into the daily work and daily trials of her home. Then, after long months of anxious waiting, she had the joy of seeing her husband too turn to the same path of peace, and the same loving Saviour.

Slowly, but surely, the good seed sown in the two minds sprang up and grew; and from the leaves came blossoms, and from the blossoms came sweet fruits—love, joy, peace, order, and all the pleasant things which flourish in that garden of the Lord—A CHRISTIAN HOME.

Ladies' Sanitary Association.

ON THE EVILS

RESULTING FROM

RIISING TOO EARLY

AFTER

CHILDBIRTH.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY THE LADIES' SANITARY ASSOCIATION,
14A, PRINCES STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE,
AND BY
JOHN MORGAN, 10, PATERNOSTER ROW.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

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It is a curious fact that, although women, in the generality of instances, pay the most scrupulous attention to diet after delivery, abstaining from all animal food for days together, and also take the greatest care to close all possible inlets through which draughts of air might pass into their chambers, they regard of slight importance the most essential point of all, viz., that of remaining in a recumbent posture for a certain time after the completion of labour. It is true that in former days women used to remain in bed too long, thereby producing debility and fatigue; but in modern times they have gone to the other

extreme, for they do not lie down for a sufficient length of time, and of the two extremes the latter is by far the most hazardous, inasmuch as a broken constitution, annoying maladies, and even death, may result from such an infringement of the laws of nature; whereas mere debility and fatigue, which result from remaining in a quiescent position for an unnecessarily long period, are soon remedied by time and a due amount of exercise.

It is becoming quite common to meet with persons who get up on the third day after delivery, or leave their rooms at the end of a week, and some even make a boast of such a breach of the ordinary rules of prudence; but these women often find at a subsequent period of life, through complaints which they suffer, that they have little cause to be satisfied with their past imprudence and self-confidence. Medical practitioners know well the various dangers and almost indefinite number of diseases which accrue from leaving the horizontal posture at too early a period after delivery. It would be impossible, indeed, for medical men, who are constantly having such cases brought under their notice, to ignore the fact; and there are very few who do not warn

their patients against making too early exertion after their confinement. Yet what little heed is paid to their kind and judicious injunctions! The question then naturally arises: How is it that, while women so often suffer from exerting themselves too soon after delivery, they will not follow the dictates of experience? Why, for the simple reason that they do not trace the effects to their right causes. If any illness arise after confinement, it is generally referred to one of these three following causes:—

1. To some mismanagement on the part of the medical man during the labour.
2. To mere chance or accident.
3. To having caught a chill or cold, or to having committed some imprudence in diet.

Ignorance, in the majority of cases, is the chief reason why women so lightly esteem the advice given to them by the medical attendant, while, in a few instances, sheer obstinacy and a wilful determination to have their own way make women do acts the penalty of which is sometimes death, in other instances a broken constitution; or they entail diseases which may not in themselves be dangerous to life, but are most distressing to the

sufferers, and very often difficult to cure. I therefore trust that by giving a short account of the most obvious dangers and diseases which arise from leaving the recumbent position too soon after childbirth, how and why they occur, I shall rouse the attention, and produce a firm conviction in the minds of women as to the great importance of remaining in a horizontal position for a certain time, however healthy the constitution may be, or however simple the labour, or however uninterrupted the convalescence may have been.

The most effectual way of impressing the mind with certain truths is to appeal to the common sense. I shall, therefore, first describe, as briefly as is adequate to the purpose, the anatomical and physiological condition, after delivery, of the womb, from which source the various dangers emanate.

If the womb after delivery were exactly in a similar condition as before conception took place, there would be no necessity to remain in bed one moment after the completion of labour; but it takes three weeks or a month to return to its original state.

The womb, as soon as the labour is completed, contracts (for it is a muscle) to about the size of the same organ at the fourth month of pregnancy,

and can readily be felt at the lower part of the abdomen, of about the dimensions of a newborn infant's head; and although it is very wonderful that, after the enormous size to which the womb attains at the last month of pregnancy, it can reduce itself to one so comparatively small as soon as the labour is completed, of course this is not the usual size of the organ in its unimpregnated condition. The womb, therefore, has to diminish still further, which second diminution is effected also partly by contraction, but chiefly by a vital process which is very complicated, and would be unnecessary to describe here. It suffices for our purpose to say that this process is comparatively slow in effecting the second and final decrease in the size of the womb, and it is during the time which elapses from the termination of labour to the completion of this change, that the majority of the dangers presently to be mentioned are liable to arise; and the most fertile cause of these evils is too early exertion during the period of convalescence; therefore, as long as this diminution remains incomplete, the patient ought to remain in a recumbent position, and the two great indications of this change not having been perfected are the presence of a flow and a sensation of bearing

down. The womb during pregnancy and after delivery contains numerous and large blood-vessels, which divide and subdivide through every part of the organ. The flooding which sometimes occurs after delivery is generally prevented by the womb contracting into a smaller space, and thus pressing the sides of the blood-vessels together, and partly by little clots of blood plugging up the mouths of the vessels which open into the interior of the organ. Lastly, there are certain ligaments whose office is to keep the unimpregnated womb in its proper place. During pregnancy these ligaments are very much stretched, as may easily be imagined from the extraordinary height to which the womb attains at the last month.

This sketch of the condition of the womb immediately after delivery is very imperfect, yet it suffices to show clearly the vast difference of the womb after delivery and the same organ before conception, in size, weight, size and number of blood-vessels, and condition of its natural supports. I wish particularly to enforce upon the minds of those who should happen to read this pamphlet, 1, that the womb, after delivery, has to undergo a marvellous vital change in order to be brought to its proper size and condition; 2, that this change

takes a certain time to complete; 3, that it is during the time, as I have already mentioned, which elapses between the termination of labour and the completion of this change, that the dangers and diseases are liable to arise; 4, therefore, until the completion of the change is perfected, the patient ought to remain as much as possible in a horizontal position.

I will now proceed to consider the dangers and evils which are liable to arise from leaving the recumbent posture at too early a period after confinement; and it must be remembered that I only intend to treat on those which are the most striking, and most easily understood by the non-professional part of the community.

Sudden Death.—This appalling result is fortunately rare, because women are seldom so rash as to sit up during the first two or three hours after delivery. Still it does happen. Perhaps the medical man has not long left the house when the patient, without thinking for a moment of the imprudence of the act, sits up, and almost immediately falls back in a fainting state, from which she cannot be rallied. All is consternation. The doctor is hurriedly summoned, and on his arrival finds to his astonishment that the

patient, whom he left a short time before doing so well, is now no more! Sitting up or standing erect soon after the termination of labour may produce a fatal issue in two ways. 1st. Women suffer more or less from shock to the system after delivery. The amount of shock depends upon the constitution, whether it be strong or weak, also on the duration and kind of labour. It is evidenced by the feeling of debility and languor, and by the inability to bear noise or light of any kind. The cause of the shock is due to many influences, such as the violent muscular efforts made during labour, the bodily and mental suffering, and the more or less loss of blood after the completion of delivery. In all these instances the heart acts with less power, evidenced by the diminished strength of pulse. The heart acts with sufficient strength to keep up the circulation while the person so suffering is kept quiet and in the recumbent position; but if any exertion is made, as of sitting up in bed, the heart's action is overpowered, and is either arrested or does not send blood with sufficient force for the due performance of the functions of the brain, the result of which in some cases is fainting, in others death. 2nd. After delivery more or less blood is lost, and exertion of any kind always increases the

amount: therefore if the patient sits up, the womb, instead of being contracted, relaxes; the little clots of blood are dislodged from the openings of the blood-vessels, a violent outpouring of blood takes place, and the same result may follow as from shock, viz., fainting away and death.

The depressed state of a woman just delivered shows how important it is that she should be kept quiet in every way, her head low, and the body kept in a perfectly horizontal position; the room darkened, and last, but not least, the exclusion from the room of all persons except one or two of the immediate relatives of patient. How distressing it is to a medical man to notice, on making his next visit to his patient, the lying-in room full of officious friends and relatives, some stimulating her to speak by asking her how she feels, what kind of time she has had, &c., while others are keeping her up in a state of continual excitement by giving her their advice at a time when she can ill bear the additional stimulus.

Flooding.—It is natural for every woman to lose a certain amount of blood after her confinement. The womb, as it contracts, expels the blood contained within its blood-vessels; but when the loss of blood is excessive its source is then derived from

the body, and therefore the effects are the same as if the surgeon had taken his lancet out and bled the patient to excess from the arm. Though the excessive flow of blood is generally arrested before it has gone far enough to produce death, yet it invariably leaves the patient in a great state of debility. It is very easy to withdraw blood from the body, but it is another thing to replace it, and a long time generally elapses before the constitution in such cases returns to its original strength and tone. The patient who has suffered so severe a loss remains pale in countenance, liable to palpitation, headache, dimness of vision, loss of appetite, humming noises in the head, sensations of giddiness, and faintness at the least exertion, inability to sleep, &c. Certain diseases are also more liable to occur in such patients; as, for example, that which is popularly known as white leg, or milk leg, more often occurs in women who have lost a large quantity of blood than in those who have not. Exertion of any kind invariably increases the loss; partly by dislodging the little clots closing up the open mouths of the blood-vessels, which is one of nature's means of arresting the bleeding; partly by increasing for a time the action of the heart, and thus sending more blood

to the womb. If exertion is made during the first two or three days the quantity of blood lost is generally very great, and takes place in a very short space of time; so that sitting up or getting out of bed is extremely dangerous for the first three days after confinement. After that time, in ordinary instances, the flow begins to change in colour, and becomes pale; but if the patient sits up or walks the discharge again becomes red, and if she does not return to the horizontal position will very often continue for a month or six weeks; and though the loss of blood may be little at a time, yet the flow continues so long that the effect upon the system is exactly the same as if a large quantity had been lost suddenly. A very good standard rule (and I shall have to repeat it in considering the question of how long the recumbent position should be maintained after delivery) is the following: As long as the flow is coloured, *i.e.*, red, showing that blood is escaping, the patient ought to remain in a horizontal position, and likewise if the pale discharge has again become red. Many women get up on the seventh day, or later, who feel very well; but the flow is still red, and day after day they are surprised to feel themselves becoming weaker and weaker, and at the end of a month or

six weeks become totally incapacitated for their usual domestic duties. They then require medical assistance, and have to return to the horizontal position; whereas if they had only remained lying down for a few days longer the flow would have probably changed in colour, and very much diminished in quantity: they might have then sat up in safety, and their convalescence would have been progressive instead of retrogressive. Another danger in sitting up too soon is its liability to produce an internal flooding; *i.e.*, blood is poured out into the interior of the womb, and instead of passing away, forms a clot. In some cases the clot comes away; then the patient is safe; while in other cases it remains, and endangers life, at first by keeping up the flooding, and in a few days by becoming decomposed just as if it were outside the body: inflammation of the womb and bowels, and a protracted convalescence, are the general results of these cases.

Inflammation of the bowels may take place without any rash act on the part of the mother, but is much more liable to occur when any unusual exertion is made. I mentioned before, that in order to make a good convalescence after childbirth there is nothing so essential as rest

of mind and *body*. Women are dreadfully afraid of taking any animal food for some days after their confinement, for fear of bringing on "inflammation;" and this popular error is carried in some instances to such an extent that injury instead of good is done to the patient; whereas exertions of various kinds, which are very liable to produce inflammation, are made without the least compunction or fear. I cannot refrain, in passing, from saying a few words regarding the water-gruel system of feeding women after delivery in the present day. Although I just now called this system a popular error, I do not wish it to be understood that I recommend my patients, as soon as the labour is terminated, to eat a steak or mutton chop, and drink a glass of porter; but I do assert it is an error, and a few medical men participate in it, to keep a woman on nothing but gruel, and like farinaceous food, for three, four, five, six, and even seven days together. It will not do harm, but materially do good, to allow the patient to take *good beef tea* and other meat broths as soon after delivery as she likes; then, after the third day (the bowels having been opened, and unless the medical attendant orders otherwise), to take some well-boiled mutton, fowl,

or rabbit. Many of the poorer class cannot afford to buy meat; but they are accustomed to the deprivation of animal food, and it is in their case one of necessity. The water-gruel system is, however, as rigidly adhered to, if not more so, by the richer classes. The poorer classes adhere to the vegetable diet *really*, because they cannot obtain animal food: the richer class eschew this latter from fear of producing inflammation. Stimulant drinks should be left to the judgment of the medical attendant; for unless the patient is in a very low state they are not necessary. If it be kept in mind that most of the inflammatory diseases occurring in women lately confined are of a low type, it will not be so difficult for an unprofessional person to comprehend that, by keeping a patient very low after confinement, there will be a greater liability for inflammation to arise than if her system had been invigorated by nutritious and easily digested animal food.

To return, from what may be apparently a digression, to the portion of the subject which we were previously considering, viz., the danger of producing inflammatory affections from too early getting about after delivery, I have merely further to remark, that by leaving the recumbent

posture inflammatory affections may be produced in two ways. 1st. By the exertion which standing or walking requires. The womb at this time being very large, and containing a great deal of blood, and undergoing throughout an important change, will not always brook with impunity the joltings which are liable to be given to it by exertions of any kind. 2nd. Exertion may produce inflammation by subjecting the body to a variety of temperatures; and the patient is thus made to catch cold, the effects of which are always severe or slight according as the interval which has elapsed since delivery has been of long or short duration.

The next evil to which I shall allude is one which is well known to mothers; viz., an enlarged state of the abdomen, giving the patient an appearance of being four or five months gone in pregnancy. This enlarged state may be kept up for many months together, if not properly attended to, to the great annoyance of the patient. Its cause is referred generally by the sufferer to some "mismanagement at the time of the labour;" whereas in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred it is due to too hasty exertion during the period of convalescence, or some failure on the part of nature. I have mentioned once or twice

before, that immediately after delivery the womb was about the size of the same organ at the fourth month of pregnancy, and that, in order to be brought to its ordinary unimpregnated dimensions, it underwent a further reduction by means of a certain process. Now, in those instances where the abdomen remains unusually large months after confinement, this process is arrested, and the womb remains in the same, or almost the same condition as immediately after delivery. In some instances nature is at fault; but it is as often the exertion which the patient uses in walking or standing too soon after childbirth that arrests the completion of the natural changes going on in the womb; and one of the most important points in the treatment is a rigid adherence to the recumbent posture.

Falling of the Womb.—The last evil I intend to mention is the “falling of the womb,” which is a most common affection, not dangerous, but very distressing, and, if of long standing, very difficult to cure. The causes which produce the descent of the womb are very numerous, but by far the most common of all is that of getting up too soon after delivery. The explanation is very simple. After childbirth the womb is large and heavy; the

ligaments, which are for the purpose of keeping it in its proper position, are in a very stretched and lax condition. The result is, that if the patient resumes the erect posture while such a condition of things exists, the laws of gravity, of necessity, come into force, the large and heavy womb descends, the lax ligaments are not able to prevent the descent, and in this manner “falling of the womb” is effected. The chief indications of this affection commencing are, a pain in the back, and a sensation of bearing down. I should recommend, as another standard rule, that in every instance where the patient (after having kept the recumbent posture for a due length of time) feels pain in the back, or a sensation of bearing down, on sitting, standing, or walking, she should return to the horizontal position for a few days longer, and until the pain of bearing down is no longer felt on standing. To cure the tendency of the womb to descend, lying down on the bed or sofa is a most essential part of the treatment; and women who have suffered severely from this affection after former confinements, have sometimes been quite cured by lying down for an unusual length of time after the birth of the last child. It must be kept in mind that, though a mother

may suffer severely from this affection after the birth of the first child, it is much more common for the disease to be mild in such instances, and to become aggravated after every subsequent delivery. This is chiefly the reason why young mothers do not see the necessity of keeping the recumbent posture: they feel little or nothing of its effects until they have had a large family. The falling of the womb has been getting worse after the birth of every child; but the slight annoyance felt at first has not been sufficient to strike the attention of the mother, and make her take the necessary precautions to prevent its further aggravation. It is allowed to go on until, after repeated childbearing, the affection has become very severe: the mother then sees why the doctor so urgently enjoined the recumbent position after delivery, and she has indeed cause for regret in not having followed the kind and judicious advice of her medical attendant. There is no doubt that if the various ailments arising after delivery were always as severe after first confinements as they are after a woman has had four or five children, the importance of rest would be more readily understood and more rigidly carried out; but young women, finding that they

have been able to get about soon after the first two or three confinements, *apparently* without any ill effects, are not easily made to believe the imprudence of too early exertion after delivery, and it is not generally until they have had a large family that they are taught by painful experience the utter necessity of the recumbent position.

These remarks are intended for such ailments as "falling of the womb," which, though it may be slight after the birth of the first child, yet nevertheless has its foundation laid then, and it merely wants time, and a continuance of the same imprudences after subsequent confinements, to be matured into a most annoying and difficult malady to cure. To show the effects of childbearing in the production of this affection, experience teaches us that it is very uncommon in single women, or those who have never had children; while, ask women suffering from this ailment as to when they first noticed the complaint, and they will nearly always refer the commencement to one of their confinements; and, on further questioning, the fact will be ascertained that they had got up, or returned to their domestic duties, very much sooner than was proper. There are other maladies, of which flooding is the best example, that are

just as liable to take place after first deliveries as after subsequent deliveries.

The number of diseases which may result from resuming too early the erect posture after childbirth are almost indefinite; but I have merely alluded to those which are most easily understood, and, except in the rarer case of sudden death, occur most frequently.

In order to enforce and strengthen still more the various statements which have been made, and to show what experience has taught some of the most eminent obstetric physicians of the day as regards the importance of rest after delivery, I have abstracted from five works nearest at hand the remarks made by their authors on the subject under our consideration. I have converted some of the medical terms into those intelligible to unprofessional persons.

Mr. BAKER BROWN, in speaking of the causes which produce "falling of the womb," says, "One most common cause is the too early adoption, or too long continuance, of the erect posture after delivery or miscarriage, before the womb and its connections have recovered themselves in position, size, and tone; *i.e.*, speaking generally, before the end of the third or fourth week."

Dr. MEADOWS.—"The recumbent posture should be most strictly maintained. . . . This is necessary, for, from the at present large size of the womb, and the relaxed condition of its supports, displacement downwards, and flooding, are pretty sure to follow neglect of this rule."

Dr. RAMSBOTHAM.—"After a fortnight she may begin to put her feet to the ground, and she may take an occasional walk about the room; but the liberty allowed in this respect must depend very much on the continuance of the flow. So long as that discharge is flowing at all profusely the necessary changes going on are by no means perfected."

Dr. TYLER SMITH.—"Rest, especially in the early part of the puerperal state, is of great moment. Those who get up too early suffer from flooding, owing to the absence of valves in the veins of the womb, and the momentum downwards. They are also liable to falling of the womb, from its weight, and the relaxation of its ligaments."

Dr. CHURCHILL, of Dublin.—"The patient cannot assume an upright position without a certain amount of displacement, and a risk of flooding, or possibly of sudden death." Then

again, in another place, "*Far more mischief results from premature exertion than from all the errors in diet put together.*"

We now arrive at the consideration of the question, as to what period after delivery should the patient commence to leave the recumbent position. In writing I can only give general rules; for it would do more harm than good, and would be a dangerous dogma, to state a definite period, after which, in every instance, the erect posture might be resumed with safety. In cases of great debility, of course, a person cannot use exertion so soon as one in health. Then, again, the convalescence may be retarded by many causes, and thus prevent or make it unadvisable to resume the erect posture as early as might be wished. These cases must be left to the judgment of the medical attendant; but in ordinary cases, where the mother has good health, an easy and uncomplicated labour, and an unretarded convalescence, the following rule may be followed out in safety: *Lie in bed one whole week, and on the outside of the bed, or on a sofa, if there is one in the room, during the next; but by no means sit up or stand about the room before the fortnight has elapsed. The child should be applied to the breast in a half-sitting, half-lying*

position; and when the patient is taken out of bed for the first time, in order that it may be properly adjusted, which may be done on the second, third, or fourth day, according to her strength, she should not be placed in a sitting posture, on a chair, as is done in the generality of instances, for this is very unsafe; she will be sure to suffer considerable uneasiness in that position; and it very often produces a flooding, or faintness. If there is another bed in the room, the mother should be carried, and laid upon it until her own is put to rights: if not, she should be placed in a position half-sitting, half-lying, by which means these inconveniences will be avoided. On the eighth day after delivery the patient should lie on the outside of the bed for a few hours only, and then return to bed again; every day the number of hours should be increased gradually until the patient may lie outside the bed during the whole of the fourteenth day. But this rule must be broken through if, at the end of the first week, there is still a red flow; the patient must then remain in bed until the colour has changed; or else the red flow, as I mentioned before, will continue for a month or six weeks, leaving the patient in exactly a similar condition as after a flooding.

Then, again, if on resuming the erect posture a bearing-down or pain in the back is felt, the mother should lie down again for a few days longer, as those sensations indicate the descent of the womb, and the recumbent posture must be maintained as long as any bearing-down is felt on standing.

I will just mention a few of the excuses which are most frequently made to the medical attendant when the patient is accused of having got up too soon. If the patient belongs to the poorer class and has had four or five children, the excuse generally made is that she must get up to look after her children, and to cook her husband's dinner. In the majority of instances this excuse is an idle one, for she stays in bed, say for four days or a week, during which her domestic affairs have run smoothly, her children have been washed, and the family meal has been duly prepared without her assistance. Some kind neighbours have performed all these little domestic duties, and would gladly continue them for another week or so if it were necessary; but it does not matter whether she has the assistance of a kind neighbour or of a nurse provided by a Ladies' Society; she is unacquainted with the changes going on within her frame, or

the dangers and risks which she incurs by too early exertion; she will say that she feels quite well, and that the weather is warm; therefore she does not see the harm of sitting or standing. She knows the doctor says it is wrong, but his fears must be imaginary; however, lest he should be offended by his orders not being followed out, she pleads poverty. Now poverty is a strong plea when made to a sensitive mind and unaccustomed to the ways of the world; but the practical physician, who looks at every side of the question, easily sees through it. He argues thus—"Now, my good woman, you say you got up because you must look after your children and other domestic duties; just tell me what you can do for them." Patient: "Well, sir, I cannot do much, that's sure, but I can do a little, and get my strength back sooner, for I feel at present very weak, and my back aches so, and I thought by getting up I should not get so weak as by remaining in bed." Doctor: "I assure you, my good woman, you are mistaken; you feel weak because you have been lately confined, and by sitting up and exerting yourself so soon you will be longer in getting your strength back, and your back-ache will get worse. This is making the best of matters; but suppose you get very ill, and have to stay in bed

six weeks or more; would it not be better for you to lie down a week longer, and get your strength back, than to get up now, and in a few days have to return to your bed, perhaps suffering from some dangerous affection which will make you keep your bed for weeks? Your kind neighbour will look after your family with pleasure, I am sure." The poor woman, after her first confinement, cannot make the excuse of having a large family to attend to; but she tells you that the weather is warm, and that she feels as well as ever she did in her life, and that she considers the bed very weakening. The doctor answers, "You are right in saying that the bed is weakening to a person in good health, and not under similar circumstances to your own; but you have been confined only a few days, and that makes all the difference in the world. In your case, instead of the bed weakening, it strengthens you, and preserves you from the great risk of many dangers and diseases." Another excuse very frequently made is that the patient knows some friend who always gets up as early after her confinement; and because her friend does it with impunity, therefore she thinks she can also. This argument is a futile one, because, as I have mentioned before, many of the ailments are not

sufficiently severe to attract the attention of the patient, or make her more careful in future confinements until she has had a large family; but the foundation of the affection has been laid from the first. Let the patient ask her imprudent friend, after she has had a large family, if she does not suffer from falling of the womb, or from debility, &c. The answer will be, with rare exceptions, in the affirmative.

The ninth day.—There is quite a superstitious, and very erroneous idea prevalent among women regarding the ninth day after delivery. It is thought by many to be highly dangerous to be out of bed on the ninth day, as if there were critical days after childbirth, as there are after fevers. I should not have considered it necessary to touch upon this point at all had not such notions given rise to dangerous practices. It is a common circumstance to find women, especially amongst the poorer orders, getting up on the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth days, and going to bed again on the ninth; for they think they can do many rash acts with impunity so long as they do not do them on that day. Some even think that no animal food should be taken until after the ninth day. In one of my visits upon a poor patient, about the

eighth day after her delivery, I found her getting weaker, and yet there was no accountable cause until I asked her as to her diet, and to my surprise and disgust the poor woman told me that some officious, though no doubt kindly intentioned lady, had told her by no means to take any animal food until the ninth day was over. The ninth day is of no greater importance than any other day after confinement; in fact, it is of less importance than the preceding days; for undoubtedly it is during the first week that the most dangerous ailments are liable to arise, and the longer the period which has elapsed since the delivery, the more likely is the convalescence to continue uninterrupted.

In conclusion, I sincerely hope and trust that mothers, whether rich or poor, if they value life and health, and a healthy family, will endeavour, to the utmost of their power, by force of example or of teaching, to check the dangerous modern fashion of rising too early after delivery. There is no necessity whatever to go to the other extreme of remaining in the horizontal position for a too lengthened period, as I have given general rules which are quite sufficient in the greater number of instances; and in cases of doubt there is the medical attendant to apply to for advice. If

women would only keep in mind that, it does not matter how strong their constitution may be, how easy a labour they may have gone through, or how well they may feel during the first two or three days; in order to have a good and uninterrupted convalescence, they must remain in a lying-down position, for the simple reason that there is an important change going on in the womb, which, when taking place in a healthy and natural manner, they are perfectly unconscious of, except by external signs; that this change takes a certain time to complete; that it is during this time that the dangers and evils are liable to arise, and that getting up, walking, or standing, and in fact exertion of any kind, are the most fertile causes of the various ailments which have their source in the womb during this period. I repeat, if these facts were borne in mind, the importance and necessity of the recumbent position would be fully felt, and the practice rigidly carried out. I have said little or nothing about the treatment of the maladies which have been mentioned in this pamphlet, as it has been written for the sole purpose of inculcating the golden precept that—PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE.

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