

washing, mangling, and drying that so often goes on where there is an anxiously tended chronic invalid. If proper use is made of drawsheets and—where necessary—mackintoshes the bedding will rarely require changing more than once a week. Drawsheets also help to prevent bedsores. It is desirable with chronic patients that a different nightshirt, dressing-jacket, &c., should be worn in the daytime, and if this rule is carried out the double set will last a fortnight.

Water beds are by no means a *sine qua non*, even for heavy and completely bedridden persons; but if there is any tendency to bed sores every effort should be made to obtain the loan of one. For most patients an air cushion is sufficient, or a ring cushion made of bran, and I have known many helpless invalids whose skin was kept in perfectly healthy condition simply by washing the back twice a day and rubbing it with methylated spirit and a little powder. The spirit must not be painted on, but rubbed vigorously.

The blankets should be the newest in the house. The counterpane must be light in weight and cheerful in colour. Plain white ones look soiled in a day, and they are best made of a double width of washing cretonne with a fringe of the same material round the edge.

Any pictures intended for the pleasure of the patient should be hung where he can see them. This seems obvious, but I constantly find them hung at the head of his bed. Some patients like to have a clock always in front of them, others detest the sight of one, and arrangements must be made accordingly.

In very poor households I always recommend that the chronic invalid, unless suffering from infectious disease, and if not in sufficient pain to be rendered irritable and morose, should share the living room of the family. It must be remembered that many bedridden persons so far from being elderly people gradually inured to loneliness, are young boys and girls and even children, and they ought as far as possible to continue to share family life, family interests, and even family troubles. Moreover, where there is poverty, or even narrowness of means, this arrangement entails a great saving of fire and light, and reduces the fatigue of nursing attendance. Even if the house is only on two floors the stairs are often so bad that the exertion of carrying things up and down is exhausting and dangerous. Privacy can always be secured by a screen, the frame of which can be purchased very cheaply, or a clotheshorse covered with an old counterpane can be used.

Once established in the living room and supplied with a steady bed table, the cripple can often take a share in the housework or cooking, peel potatoes, chop suet, wash up tea things, clean lamps, &c., besides "minding" the younger children, helping the older ones with their home lessons, and sometimes joining in an indoor game.

As rooms in poor people's houses are nearly always badly lighted, a good lamp is of great importance. Half-a-crown will buy one powerful enough to light a small room brilliantly, and with oil at eightpence a gallon it will burn twelve hours for a penny. If coal cannot be afforded in a bedroom, coke can be used; I knew one old man who kept up a good coke fire day and night for his invalid wife at a cost of one shilling a week.

The relatives must be advised and encouraged to get the patients up every day if the doctor permits, more especially if they are young; many persons who need only have been a little less strong and active than their fellows have been allowed to slip into helpless invalidism. The trouble of "getting them up" may be very great, but the profit is greater.

It is generally waste of money to send cut flowers to an invalid; a growing plant would cost little more, and give infinitely greater satisfaction. Birds are often a great source of pleasure, but a canary is the only bird that any lover of animals can endure to see in captivity. All things considered, a cat makes the most companionable pet for an invalid.

The fireplace is a frequent source of discomfort, and the district nurse can hardly direct her energies more profitably than in trying to improve the draught; sometimes the chimney simply wants sweeping; not unseldom there are structural defects that can be remedied by lengthening the shaft; or the "contrariness" can be conquered by supplying ventilation, or by laying a fire that will blaze up fiercely for the first few minutes.

The district nurse must believe, and make others believe, that comfort is not so much a matter of money as of thought and contrivance applied to a special end. Many expensively furnished rooms are utterly comfortless, though their failings in this respect may escape notice until illness occurs; and on the other hand many an invalid, lying in a room the furniture of which may have cost ten pounds and certainly would not sell for thirty shillings, may have all that is necessary for comfort, alleviation and mental satisfaction.

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