

bodice of some stiff substance. The underclothing should be entirely of wool, but in cases where this was found too irritating to the skin, a cellular cloth, manufactured of cotton or silk, might be advantageously substituted. The clothing of children should likewise be improved. The large heavy bonnets now worn by little girls were not healthy for the small heads, and should be changed for a hood of Donegal frieze edged with fur. For little boys the sailor costume was the best, and for little girls the Kindergarten dress with a divided skirt. Fashion was already setting in in the direction of greater simplicity, and this movement should be turned to the fullest account by the advocates of rational dress. Mrs. Oscar Wilde added a few words in conclusion in support of the aims of the Funeral Reform Association. She deprecated the wearing of expensive mourning, and the conventional ideas which have hitherto prevailed on this subject. Many ladies would prefer, as she did herself, to wear black at periods of grief; but it would be found a much better plan if every lady kept a black dress in her wardrobe, which would be available when necessary, instead of buying a complete trousseau of black, as at present. Remarks were afterwards added by several other speakers, including Mrs. Leatham Bright and Miss Sharman Crawford.

A VERY curious craze in fashion has just arisen in a fancy on the part of some for underclothing, as well as sheets and pillow-cases, made of soft black silk. It is so funereal and grim-looking that at present it is a very "exclusive" fad. Historically speaking it is not at all a new idea, for at the end of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth centuries the ladies of Florence were seized with a mania for the suits and trappings of woe, and wore black to their very skins, and ornaments of black enamelled silver consisting of skulls and cross-bones.

CATHERINE DE MEDICI, when she became a widow, ordered a mourning bed, and Mons. de Bonaffé, who has collected a wealth of curious information regarding this Queen, describes it thus:—"The bed was of black velvet, embroidered with pearls, powdered with crescents and suns; a footboard, headboard, nine vallances, and coverlet of state, similarly bedecked with crescents and suns; three damask curtains with leafy wreaths and garlands, figured upon a gold and silver ground, and fringed along the edges with broderies of pearls. This somewhat dismal couch stood in a room whose walls were hung with cloth of silver, adorned with the Queen's monograms and devices in cut black velvet, while the dressing-room to correspond was hung with black satin and white gimp ornaments."

## A RECORD OF INVENTIONS.

### NEW AND USEFUL NURSING APPLIANCES.

WE have received several very useful inventions from Samuel Clarke and Co., of the "Pyramid" and "Fairy" Light Works, Cricklewood, N.W., and much regret that the extreme pressure upon our space has hitherto prevented us from reporting upon these and the other appliances mentioned below. For adults, the most useful of these will be the Adjustable Bed Tray. It consists of a tray with a miniature box at the end, open in front and above, and intended to receive a lamp; the three sides shielding the light from the eyes of the invalid. It is capable of being fixed by easily adjusted screws to one of the headposts of any bed, and by means of a sliding bar can be drawn out about two feet. Hinges on the bedpost end permit the tray to be moved in any direction. It is, therefore, an invaluable invention for those who have no attendant, as it obviates all necessity of getting out of bed; all small things required for use can be placed on the tray, and drawn to or pushed away from one, by the slightest touch.

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CLARKE'S newly-designed Pyramid Nursery Lamp Food Warmer will be especially useful in the Nursing of children, both in health and sickness. It is light and very portable, but at the same time, very strongly and well made. It may be described as a stand, in which can be placed a night-light with a glass shade, and from the sides of which rise three curved tin rods, supporting a wide tin ring, into which can be fitted a tin saucepan, which in its turn holds an earthenware mug. When all these are placed in position, a little water in the tin receptacle, and milk or beef tea, as the case may be, in the china jug, the small night-light will not only give light around, but by its heat keep warm the water in the tin pan above its flame, and so keep the milk or beef tea at the required heat.

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FROM Messrs. Hutchinson and Co., we have received some Black Antiseptic Sheeting, which we have carefully tried, and strongly recommend to the many Matrons of Hospitals and to the many Private Nurses included among our readers. It is quite the best, most durable, and cleanly of any waterproof preparations we have used. For convalescent patients after wasting diseases, we have met with nothing better than the Air Cushions made by this firm. The ones submitted to us are vulcanised, and therefore, unlike most of those in use, will wear equally well in any climate. Nurses in need of such articles as the above, cannot do better than recommend the purchase of these excellent productions.

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