

CARING FOR SICK FAMILY MEMBERS - MID 1940`S

By E. Mallet.

In the 1940`s when I was growing up in Blenheim, there were not many remedies for common illnesses. About the winter of 1945 my Father got pneumonia and he was nursed at home by my Mother. In those days few married women did outside (paid) work so they were at home all the time and free to care for their sick. My Father was ill for several weeks and as far as I can remember he had to stay in bed for some of that time. The Doctor would call at the house and give advice but on a whole it was bed-rest and careful nursing that brought about his recovery.

The following year my auntie was ill with pneumonia and at that time her family lived fat Kekerangu forty miles out in the country. So my grandmother asked her brother who had a car to take her to Kekerangu and bring my sick auntie back to Blenheim for my Mother to nurse back to health. The poor doctor must have been overworked in those days as I remember my Mother waiting for him to call and eventually went to bed, only to have to rise when he arrived very late to visit his patient.

Around the era of those family events, there was a war-widow neighbour caring for three children and one of them got whooping cough and bronchitis. This little girl was very, very sick and unable to eat, so the doctor told her Mother to give her anything that she would drink and add a teaspoonful of brandy in it. She says that she must have had sufficient alcohol to last her lifetime as she has had no desire for it as an adult! Doctor`s instructions were that someone should be with this sick child all the time so the Mother and Grandmother (who lived nearby), took turns at staying with her all night.

How times have changed! Modern medicines and modern hospitals make such illnesses reasonably short- lived these days.