



[Elizabeth Kenny Papers.](#)

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(my marks — v.c.)

Sister Kenny's first introduction to the disease, and treatment.

This was my first introduction to a disease that had puzzled the minds of medical men from the time of the Pharaohs to the present day, and upon looking back I can understand how difficult ^{was} the prospect before me. Any medical reference to the disease had disclosed just the opposite symptoms to ^{the which} ~~what~~ I was now observing.. Fortunately for the world, I was completely ignorant of the orthodox theory. The disease had not been discovered by any of the members of the profession with whom I had associated. In those remote days it had not been prevalent and if it occurred it was left unobserved by the country ~~practitioner.~~ ^{practitioner.} However, I was very much perturbed at the agony endured by the patient. The cruel shortening of the muscles affected. The poignant fear expressed in the once laughing blue eyes. The tenseness and terror of contact even with the loving arms of the almost heart-broken mother was sufficient to cause an almost unendurable ache in the heart of the on-looker. In the absence of earthly help, my soul sought that divine guidance that has steered my earthly barque through life's troubled sea down the avenue of time, and I immediately set to work to relieve the very evident distress pictured in the whole being of this disease-tortured child. I saw the effort put forth by the patient to protect the painfully contracting muscles from stretch, which would increase the pain, and knew if this contraction could not be overcome deformity and perhaps other most undesirable complications would be the sad sequelae. I knew the power of heat to ~~relax~~ ~~xxxx~~ matter and hastily heating some salt on the frying pan put it in a bag and applied it to the point and anxiously waited for the result, which was not satisfactory. I then applied a linseed meal poultice, and saw then that the weight had increased the spasm. [My last effort was to tear a blanket made from the soft Australian wool into suitable strips and wring them out of boiling water, and gently to wrap the poor tortured muscles in soothing warmth. The whimpers of pain ceased almost &

immediately, and after a few applications the tired eyes closed and
"sleep, gentle sleep, Nature's ^{"soft"?} sweet nurse", came to the aid of the
lonely watchers. However the little slumberer after a while grew fret-
(opening his eyes with apprehension)
fully awake, and cried out on the night, "I want them rags that wells
my legs!" And so the little bush boy of the out-back of Australia
had acknowledged the soothing affect of the beginning of a method that
was to one day ~~become~~ the subject of ~~discussion~~ in the halls of learning
throughout the world, and revolutionize all previous conceptions of a
disease responsible for one fourth of the crippling of the children
of the ~~men~~ world.