

## THE NURSING OF SICK CHILDREN.

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## VI.—SURGICAL NURSING (PART 3).

THE last article concluded with some hints for Nurses dealing with cases of tracheotomy; but these were by no means exhaustive, for that operation is so important, and the diseases with which it is associated so formidable, that the limits of a magazine article are too scanty for the subject. My aim was solely to put before the reader some of the experience gained through a great familiarity with such cases. A thorough training in the nursing of sick children must include a knowledge of these diseases, some of the most dangerous to child-life, and demanding on the part of the Nurse unceasing vigilance, presence of mind, readiness of resource, and an experience that can only be obtained in the wards of a Hospital. No child's Nurse is worthy of that name, until she is qualified to nurse diphtheria, and other affections of the trachea; and this not because she has had the care of one or two cases, but because she has learnt to watch these patients in the manifold phases of the attack, and can discern the sequelæ and complications that beset the path to recovery, for much, very much, depends upon the nursing.

Typhoid fever is another complaint, very common among children; rarely fatal unless there are complications, but making great demands upon the nursing skill of the attendant. The patient's skin is washed daily with some disinfectant. Sanitas is pleasant for this purpose; if Condy's Fluid is used, soap cannot be used, as it destroys the ozonic properties of the fluid. Much attention must be paid to the back, as there is a great liability to bed-sores, especially when, from extreme weakness, the evacuations are passed involuntarily. Bathing the back with a spirit lotion, and rubbing in vaseline or zinc ointment where there is a redness of the skin, of course using the dusting powder on all occasions, are good preventatives; but the essential of all is the most scrupulous cleanliness. The patient will be fed regularly, at frequent intervals through the twenty-four hours—one hour or two hours intervals, according to the amount of prostration; and to simplify the feeding, a table will be written for the Nurses. Thus the Sister of the Ward will know how much is being given, and in what quantities, and the Nurse will know that it is her business to get that amount of food taken. On this will, probably, turn the question of life or death.

It is a safe precaution to tie a bit of coloured

wool round all the vessels and cups used by a typhoid patient, so that they cannot be given to another patient. In the Children's Hospital, patients with typhoid are nursed in the general Wards; and with strict attention to disinfecting bed-linen and evacuations, also keeping all feeding cups apart, no harm is known to come of it.

In an article on nursing sick children, bathing and washing must be noticed, as soap and water are important agents in their treatment. The children of the poor are sadly neglected in this particular, and, especially when they are ailing, the poor mothers have a horror of washing them; so the first thing is to get them clean. Such being the child's bringing up, it will naturally be frightened at its bath, and a Nurse who knows her work will be careful not to force the child into the bath hastily. Something may be devised to amuse the child, and thus divert its attention; a cork, or some toy that will float, may reconcile it to the inevitable.

Think what must be a child's feelings, when some stranger comes, takes it out of its mother's arms, undresses it, and puts it into a bath, that to its frightened imagination looks big enough to drown it. All baths that are used for children should be painted white, or be white; then the child can see the bottom, and gain confidence.

Before the Nurse undresses her patient, she must be quite ready with a warm towel and a warm night-gown and jacket, and then, when she has ascertained the temperature of the bath by a thermometer, she is ready for her patient. If, after having placed the child in the bath, she has to run for soap, or some other forgotten need, the child may fall on its face, and be drowned; or it may play with the taps, and by turning on the hot water scald itself. On no account put the child in whilst the water is coming in: the consequence may be fatal. A child has been so scalded, for these little ones have no power of helping themselves.

A careful Nurse will pay great attention to the drying of her patient, especially of the hair, and then put him into a warm bed, well covered up, and there allow him to recover himself. It often happens that the effect of the warm bath is to soothe him off to sleep. All these operations can be carried on, on the bed, if the child is too ill to stand the bath, with the precaution of laying a warmed blanket under the patient, whilst washing him. A little babe will require the bath at least once a day; twice is better if the time will admit. Thus only will its skin be got into that beautifully soft and satiny condition, which is one of baby's great attractions.

It cannot be too often impressed upon the Nurse, that the skin is an important agent in the

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