

party, or a visit to the Zoological Gardens, and wakes up horribly frightened, dreaming of bears and lions.

These cases are, however, the exceptions; they do not recur unless the particular excitement is renewed. The rule is that the brain disturbance has its source in the alimentary canal, and is either reflected thence or induced by irritant matter generated there.

If you carefully examine these children who suffer habitually from night terrors, you will almost invariably find well marked symptoms of disordered function in the digestive tract; the tongue coated, the breath, perhaps, offensive, the appetite poor, the patient sallow, ill nourished, dark under the eyes, and the bowels habitually confined; never open, perhaps, without an aperient medicine being given twice or three times a week, and the patient subject to periodical feverish attacks with headache. In some instances there is simply constipation, without disorder of health in other ways, a good appetite and clean tongue, with plumpness of body. This, however, is exceptional.

*The rule* is, coated tongue, poor appetite, sallow complexion, dark rings under the eyes, want of flesh, with constipation, prominent upper abdomen, and often skin eruptions of lichen papules and urticaria.

#### CAUSES OF THE DIGESTIVE DISORDER.

The disordered state of the digestive tract is often due to overfeeding. Nurses and mothers are apt to press food upon children with poor appetite, particularly milk, until the digestive organs are overtaxed, and this is especially true where the appetite fails owing to some fault of liver, or stomach, or bowels; and the disordered organs, instead of having their work lightened to give them a chance of recovery, have their burden increased, with the result of greatly aggravating the condition. You will see this especially in the well-to-do and luxurious classes of society.

Be the cause of the liver inaction, coated tongue, constipation, and loss of appetite, what it may, this condition is, in the vast majority of cases, the source of evil, the fault which lies at the bottom of the brain disturbance during sleep, and the proof lies in the fact that the night terrors, the talking, and tossing, and restless sleep, disappear when the bowels are kept in order and the tongue gets clean. Appetite returns, the child begins to gain flesh and colour, and it thrives.

(To be continued.)

## Medical Matters.

### SOOTHING SYRUPS.



IT is a well-known fact amongst medical men that no inconsiderable amount of ill-health amongst infants, and no small number of premature deaths, are due to what are euphemistically termed "soothing syrups." These are largely employed by careless and unconscientious nurses, and even mothers, in order to prevent infants from crying—regardless of the common sense fact that no baby cries for the fun of the thing, but only because it is in pain or discomfort. In other words, it is suffering from conditions which a little attention to its diet, or to its excretions, or to its gums, would probably remove. These syrups almost invariably contain some preparation of opium, a drug which is given, even to adults, in minute doses, and is known to possess most powerful effects and to cause most detrimental consequences to children in any dose, however small. Many children, therefore, to whom such medicines are administered, speedily exhibit the characteristic evidences of poisoning by this drug. The skin becomes pale, harsh, and dry, the pupils extremely contracted; the urine becomes scanty and thick, and constipation is often extreme. The latter consequences alone are sufficiently injurious to the general health and nutrition, but the poisonous effect of the drug upon the brain and nervous system too often result in rapid failure and death.

### GIVING HIM GRUEL.

IN former times, this expression was employed to designate a process of considerable unpleasantness to the recipient. But, in the case of babies, its literal acceptance has not hitherto been understood. According to the evidence given at an inquest at Woking, last month, a midwife, as soon as she had washed a newly-born infant, administered some gruel to it because she "had been in the habit of doing so." It was a well-formed and well-nourished child, weighing eight pounds, but it died about eighteen hours after its birth, and it was then found that the stomach was greatly distended with gruel and gas, but that there was no other cause for death. The midwife in this particular case admitted that she had never had any education for her work, but, nevertheless, she

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