

The Nursing of Children's Diseases.

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LECTURE VII.

DISEASES OF THE BLOOD.

From the subject of diseases of the heart we can pass on to those affecting the blood and the blood-making organs as the spleen and lymphatic glands.

Anæmia, or poorness of blood, is a symptom of a large number of diseases, such as tuberculosis, kidney disease, heart disease, etc., but there are cases in which anæmia is the chief disease present. Such a patient may be fat or thin, but is pallid, with pale lips, tongue, and conjunctiva, the muscles are weak and flabby, and the child is listless and languid, and does not care to play with others of the same age; he may complain of headache, and, perhaps, vomiting; sometimes there is slight fever in the evening. The appetite is bad and the bowels constipated. In spite of all treatment some of these cases go from bad to worse, and may die.

The causes of these conditions may be bad and injudicious feeding, or food containing only some of the ingredients necessary for the needs of the growing child, or the child may have had exhausting diarrhoea, or be suffering from the presence of worms in the bowel. Some children have not been taught to masticate their food properly, but swallow it in lumps, which are not thoroughly digested, and often irritate, causing vomiting or diarrhoea; other cases, again, may be due to the presence of worms in the bowel, or to some form of hæmorrhage, severe diarrhoea, etc.

It is therefore the nurse's duty in a child suffering from anæmia to notice any errors in food or feeding, and acquaint the medical attendant. She should notice the stools in cases of suspected worms. Each motion should be thoroughly examined before it is removed.

There are diseases in which anæmia is the most marked symptom, the causes of which are not evident. In two of these, viz., splenic anæmia and leukæmia, there is an enlargement

of the spleen which can be felt as a hard lump in the upper part of the abdomen on the left side; the third disease, called Hodgkin's disease, produces anæmia with enlargement of lymphatic glands throughout the body as in the neck, armpits, groins, etc., and often of the lymphatic glands in the chest and abdomen; if the tumour be in the chest it may press on important organs there as the bronchi, etc., and obstruct breathing, or cause other pressure symptoms. The nursing of such cases is like that of other diseases producing anæmia, but they usually gradually get worse till death ends the scene.

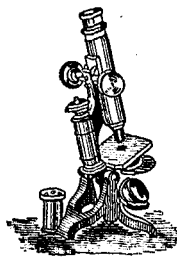
There is a curious disease called hæmophilia in which, from some unknown cause, there is a marked tendency to bleeding, either spontaneously, or from some slight cause. These cases must be most carefully nursed, the least rough touch or pinch may start a fresh hæmorrhage. If the bleeding come on the child should be laid down and the bleeding part raised, cold may be applied, and continuous pressure. Very often the bleeding is internal, viz., into a joint or from the kidneys. Bleeding is also a symptom of a disease called "Purpura," the bleeding may be under the skin producing purple spots or patches, and from the mucous membranes of the nose, stomach, bowel, etc. The nurse will have to keep the child in bed, and at rest as much as possible, and ice may be applied to a bleeding spot such as the nose or mouth, or even it may be inserted into the rectum when the blood is passed by the bowel.

(To be continued.)

Medical Matters.

THE STERILIZATION OF SILK CATHETERS.

M. W. HERMAN states (*Centralbl. f. Chir.*, January 19th, 1901) that if silk catheters be boiled in plain water they soon become damaged and unfit for use. If, however, they are boiled in a saturated solution of ammonium sulphate they remain unchanged. Boiling for three to five minutes in this solution is sufficient to sterilize extremely dirty catheters, but they may be boiled for five hours and retain their polish. The only change is that they become more elastic, and are, therefore, improved.



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