

Special Baths.

BY MISS H. M. TURNER.

The following baths are classified as special: Vapour, hot-air, mercurial, mustard, starch, bran, salt-water, alkaline, sulphur, electric, the graduated (cold, tepid) bath and the continuous (hot) bath, carbolic, izal, lysol.

Vapour and hot-air baths act as diaphoretics helping to promote free action of the skin.

Vapour Baths.—Sheets and pillows having been removed and the bed covered with a large mackintosh and blanket, all clothing is taken off the patient and a blanket spread loosely over him. Wicker cradles are placed from feet to neck, and over these mackintoshes and blankets are arranged.

At the end of the bed the foot-plate or stool is placed, and on this the proper apparatus (Allen and Son, London) for giving a vapour bath. This consists of a protected spirit-lamp, with a boiler above to contain the water. The vapour is conveyed into the bed by means of a long funnel, which is directed to the patient under the cradles.

A thermometer should be hung from the centre of the cradles. The temperature may be from 100 to 115 deg. Fahr. When all is prepared the blanket is removed from the patient.

Hot drinks may be supplied to the patient during the application to assist perspiration.

The duration of the bath is usually from twenty to thirty minutes, and when it is discontinued the patient should be allowed to cool down a little; after which all damp bedding should be removed, and the patient be well dried with hot towels, a warm flannel bedgown put on and the bed remade with warm blankets. When a vapour bath is being given a patient should never be left—a constant watch should be kept upon him for fear of faintness, or too great increase in the heart's action.

Risk of burning or scalding the patient must be carefully avoided.

This bath is usually given for cases of albuminuria.

Hot-air Baths.—The arrangements for these are practically the same as for vapour baths, hot air being supplied instead of steam.

I have found it best to give this bath out of bed, using the galvanised steel cage (Allen). This is securely fixed and covered over as for a vapour bath. A chair is placed inside for the patient, who should be covered with a swans-down or flannel cloak. With the exception of his head he should be entirely under cover in the cage; a protected spirit-lamp is placed under the chair (Allen's lamp with the boiler removed is the best), and a thermometer

is hung inside the cage. Dry heat can be borne better than moist heat, so the temperature may be raised to 130 degs. or more. A towel wrung out in cold water may be wrapped round the head.

The same precautions as to the patient and apparatus must be used as in the case of a vapour bath. After a sufficient action of the skin, the patient is put back to a warmly prepared bed in a warm flannel gown.

This bath may also be given in Bright's disease and chronic rheumatism.

Mercurial Bath.—This is given as a vapour bath. A vaporiser in conjunction with this is used to contain the necessary amount of calomel (one drachm or more as directed); the calomel will disappear after burning for twenty minutes, or thereabouts. Clarke's pyramid vaporiser is suitable for this purpose. This bath is used for certain forms of skin diseases.

Mustard.—The proportion for this bath is 1 oz. of mustard to a gallon of water. The mustard is mixed with tepid water to form a smooth thin paste, and afterwards with water at 100 deg. Care must be taken when the skin is tender, as in the case of a young child and when there is any abrasion, it should not be used, as a sore may be caused and is difficult to heal. It is necessary to avoid splashing mustard-water into the eyes of the patient.

A mustard bath is given as a stimulant, and as a means of making the skin act well. With young children, in cases of diarrhoea or pneumonia where there is collapse, this is very valuable. An immersion of ten minutes is sufficient.

In the following baths about thirty gallons of water is usually used.

Starch.—Make two to three pints of boiled starch, add to a warm bath, and mix well. Given as a soothing treatment for some skin diseases.

Bran.—Boil 4 lb. of bran in a gallon of water, strain through muslin and add to a warm bath. Given in certain skin diseases.

Salt Water.—Dissolve about 12 oz. of Tidman's sea-salt or bay-salt and add to bath, hot or cold. Given as a tonic.

Alkaline.—Dissolve 2 oz. to 4 oz. of carbonate of soda, or potash; add to hot bath at a temperature of 100 deg. to 105 deg. Given for rheumatism.

Sulphur.—A porcelain bath only must be used; add 4 oz. of sulphide of potassium to a hot bath. Given sometimes for scabies.

The graduated cold bath.—The patient is immersed in water at a temperature of 100 deg., and cold water or ice is added gradually until the required temperature is reached; this is

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