

be gained, by further incentives to superiority being created. Our contemporary, in short, infers that a "high average of culture and practical skill" does not exist at present, and we simply conclude from that expression of opinion that its knowledge of the matter is—as it has many times previously proved to be—infinitesimally small, and infinitely erroneous.

THE NURSING OF SICK CHILDREN.

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I.—THE SICK CHILD.

A SICK child is so far removed from the ideal child, that it at once appeals to our pity; the life and joyousness have gone out, the brightness and vivacity that mark its every movement are no longer there; the little one is listless, heavy-eyed, fretful, only asking to be left alone, laying its head down to sleep and again starting up, unrefreshed; not knowing what ails it—yet looking round for help with sad, questioning eyes. And it is very difficult for the inexperienced to know what does ail it. The child can give no account of its sensations, or only a misleading one, so that the information must be gained by careful study of signs or consideration of the absence of signs, by a comparison of symptoms, and the general aspect of the patient. For this reason it is of such importance that the attendants of the sick child should be persons accustomed to the care of sick children, as the account that they are able to give of their patients will be intelligent, and of value to the Doctor.

There are certain natural ailments incidental to child-life, that need only such care as will steer them through the rocks that are about their course. Nature has provided for these crises in the economy of the child, and is best left alone to do her own work. Perhaps more harm is done by meddling at such times, than officious mothers and Nurses are aware of, for a weakened or diseased state of the internal organs may be thus set up, which will haunt the mature life until its end.

Besides these natural disturbances, there are many diseases that lurk around the child, the most fatal of which occur in the two first years of its life; then, indeed, it requires the utmost care and vigilance; any ailment should be watched and dealt with, and, above all things, taken in time, as time is the most important in these infantile complaints. Unfortunately, a Hospital Nurse generally receives these little ones into her

care, when there is but little left to do but to put them in comfortable circumstances, and make the rest of their life easy. Still, a sick babe must be never accounted hopeless. Though the vital powers are necessarily feeble and feel each demand upon them, still there is of necessity a reserve that may respond to well-directed and well-sustained efforts, and may reward those efforts by a re-establishment of health.

So much might be done by systematic feeding, and by carefully nourishing the feeble flame by warmth, stimulation, cleanliness, all of which have been perhaps lacking before, that no efforts must be omitted until life has absolutely flown. On the other hand there must be no fussiness, as the sick one cannot stand it. It is essential that the little one should be well washed, as the skin is an important agent in restoring the balance of health, a point too much neglected among the poor; so that a complete and careful wash between blankets with warm water will do no harm but good, so long as it is not made too severe for the feeble powers; then the next point to be attended to, is the feeding of the patient. This is a matter of so much importance that it will be the subject of a separate article; but this much may be said, that milk is the most natural and appropriate food for the infant's stomach, and will supply that which is most fitting to recoup the failing powers. The sick babe will require incessant watching at this period; the vital heat must be maintained by hot blankets and warm bottles in the bed and by a fire in the room, the little one, the meanwhile, being disturbed as little as possible. Its chances will be better if laid in a cot or cradle than if carried in the arms, as the rest will be more complete; but if it is sleeping well, it must still be gently awakened at regular intervals for its food, for on warmth and feeding depend the possibilities of life. It will soon go to sleep again, and sleep calmer for not being disturbed by the cravings of an empty stomach.

As very many of the infantile complaints take their origin in errors of diet, it is not surprising if, under a more rational system, when the babe is taken in hand in time, it improves rapidly; it is more than probable that the Nurse in her zeal for her charge will be giving it too much food. This is a mistake; the low vitality of the stomach as well as of the heart, requires the most careful handling, lest the balance turn the wrong way, so that a Nurse should not set about regulating the quantities of food to be given, unless she knows something of the capacities of the stomach she is dealing with. The Nurse's part, then, is to place her charge in the most favourable surroundings for its recovery, and by vigilance to maintain those surroundings, and to watch the progress of the case

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