

The Nursing of Children's Diseases.

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LECTURE III.

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DISEASES OF THE MOUTH AND NOSE.

Thrush is due to the presence of a vegetable fungus in the epithelium of the mouth. It is chiefly seen in infants and young children who are suffering from some wasting disease or some affection of the stomach or bowels. It attacks the tongue, lips, cheeks, and soft palate, and forms white patches like curdled milk; but it cannot be readily removed; and when removed, leaves a red excoriated surface. To a considerable extent the nurse can prevent the occurrence of this disease by careful, regular, and complete cleansing of the infant's mouth; but if, in spite of this, thrush appears, a little glycerine of borax painted on the patches with a soft brush or a piece of wool is generally successful in removing the fungus.

Stomatitis is an inflammation of the gums or other part of the mouth, of which there are many varieties; they may occur in infants who are toothless, but the worst forms are seen in those who have teeth. They usually cause some fever and general symptoms and much tenderness in the mouth, owing to which the little patient dislikes any food on account of the smarting its presence produces. In these cases the child's mouth must be frequently cleansed with Condy's fluid, or Sanitas and water, or some similar antiseptic. If the case be more severe and these remedies ineffectual, medical attendance is necessary.

Sore Throat.—A child rarely complains of sore throat; yet this may often be the cause of feverish attacks, and if the throat be not examined, the condition may remain unsuspected. It is generally easy to obtain a fair view of the fauces and tonsils of a child, when the tongue is kept down by the handle of a spoon. Sore throat is an early symptom of many infectious diseases, such as scarlet fever, diphtheria, mumps, rheumatism, or typhoid fever; or it may be produced by some inflammation within the month, or arise in the tonsils themselves.

The tonsils are situated at the junction of the mouth and pharynx between two ridges, called the pillars of the fauces, which descend

from the soft palate to the posterior part of the tongue. They are very prone to inflame, causing redness of the surface, swelling, and pain in swallowing, enlargement of the lymph glands beneath the jaw, and more or less fever. In cases of this kind, a doctor should always be sent for at once; as the tonsillitis may, perhaps, be the first sign of one of the fevers mentioned above. In all cases of sore throat the diet should be liquid or semi-solid in order to lessen as much as possible the pain and difficulty in swallowing, and a little ice to suck may render the parts less sensitive, for which reason also the food should be given tepid or cold. Hot fomentations or cold compresses are useful externally, and whichever are most comforting to the patient may be used.

Chronic enlargement of the tonsils is, as a rule, a sequel of repeated acute attacks, and causes a susceptibility to sore throat. It also causes obstruction to breathing which is often snoring in character, especially when asleep. As the child cannot breathe freely through the nose, which is the natural mode of breathing, the mouth has to be utilized for that purpose, and so is constantly kept open, giving the child an imbecile expression. The speech is often nasal, and frequently deafness and discharge from the ears are also present. Owing to the imperfect breathing the chest is badly developed, and pigeon breast may result, whilst the growth of the whole body is stunted.

The treatment for this disease is to remove the tonsils, a little operation which is practically free from danger, and is followed by immediate relief of the symptoms. In fact there is no operation in which the relief given is more striking than in removal of chronically enlarged tonsils, so, if such symptoms as have been described above are noticed, a doctor should be called in without delay.

Adenoid vegetations consist of an overgrowth of the mucous membrane at the posterior part of the nose behind the soft palate. They may occur alone, but enlarged tonsils are also present in the majority of cases. They cause the same symptoms as enlarged tonsils, and, in addition often cause a chronic discharge from the nose, and occasionally nose bleeding. The treatment for such a condition is removal of the growths.

Nose Bleeding or *Epistaxis* is very common in children, and may be due to the insertion of foreign bodies up the nose, injury, adenoids, &c., or the bleeding may be due to hæmophilia a disease which is characterised by a con-

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