Practical Points.

Water Supply and Drainage.

Dr. Somerville Hastings, lecturing at the Institute of Hygiene, 34, Devonshire Street, W., said that water is one of the primary essentials of good health, and it occupies perhaps the most important place in the hygiene of the home. Unfortunately it seldom happens that people have the chance of choosing the water with which they are supplied, and even then they are often in ignorance of the pollution to which it is exposed. Nations, like individuals, learn slowly from experience, and it appears almost necessary to have such lessons as the terrible epidemics at Worthing and Maidstone to enforce the necessity of a sufficient supply of pure water for domestic purposes.

The purest water is that condensed from steam, but it tastes flat and metallic. Rain water, collected from the roof, is liable to contain an excess of solid particles, and therefore, should always be filtered, but otherwise it is wholesome, and is excellently adapted for cooking and washing. Very hard waters are inclined to render the skin harsh and to arrest digestion. River waters, and also that drawn from shallow wells, are very liable to become polluted; but spring and deep well waters, though frequently harder, are more generally safe and free from such danger.

It is calculated that thirty to thirty-five gallons is the daily supply of water for all purposes, per head of the population, but only about eight gallons is required for domestic purposes (excluding baths), which need be of absolute purity. It seemed therefore rather a waste, said the lecturer, to devote so much trouble and expense to purification and filtration when only such a small proportion of absolutely pure water was utilised or necessary. A double supply might not only be more useful and beneficial, but also more economical, and the natural consequence of such a facility would be more attention to the purity of the domestic supply and much greater abundance in connection with the public supply. Quantity is undoubtedly of more importance than quality for such purposes as washing streets and flushing drains, but we can never expect to have the purity in the one case or the quantity in the other while domestic and public supplies are served together from the main.

Water is a means of carrying, but also a valuable prevention of disease. Drainage, on the other hand, is a more prominent cause of trouble and deserves the greatest care and scrutiny in every home. A drain pipe should never traverse the basement when this can possibly be avoided, as when the main sewer is at the back of the house the pipes from sinks, sculleries, bath-rooms and closets can all be made to discharge without difficulty in the rear. All ventilating pipes should be at least three inches in diameter and carried right above the eaves of the house, and rain-water pipes should never be used as ventilating shafts. It is now being recognised that too much reliance has been placed on the efficacy of traps, and it should be remembered that the water in an otherwise efficient trap will absorb sewer gas on the one side and discharge it, but little changed, on the other.

A house should not be taken and tenanted until a plan of the drainage has been supplied or the drains have been thoroughly tested, and if the house is old all the greater caution is necessary. Rats in a house may frequently be taken as an indication that the drainage is defective—that there is leakage somewhere—and it would be very foolish to ignore such a hint to enquire into the sanitary condition of the home.

Hot Sand Bags.

We are all, says *Health*, acquainted with the virtues of the hot water bag, but many persons are not aware of the fact that a sand bag is even better. The way to prepare it is this: Get some clean, fine sand, dry it thoroughly in a kettle on the stove; make a bag about eight inches square, of flannel, fill it with the dry sand, sew the opening carefully together and cover the bag with cotton or linen cloth. This will prevent the sand from sifting out, and also enable the person using it to heat the bag quickly by placing it in the oven, or on top of the stove. After once using this no further recourse will be had to the hot water bottle or the brick. The sand holds the heat for a long time, and the bag can be tucked up to the back without hurting the invalid.

Infantile Ophthalmia; or, How to Save a Baby's Sight.

"Arual" writes:—How well I remember my first case in private work of ophthalmia, and how cheered I was when the doctor said, "Nurse, you have saved that child's sight by your continual attention."

The left eye was very severely affected, and developed the symptoms when the babe was just a week old. I used a fairly strong solution of boracic every few hours till the doctor came, but in less than twenty-four hours the white of the eye was bloodshot, and the eye very swollen, and full of matter and pus.

When the doctor came we at once bandaged the unaffected eye with cotton wool and Mead's adhesive rubber plaster, to keep away infection, then the doctor painted the affected eye with nitrate of silver for five days once a day, and I washed it out every hour (as the clock struck) night and day with perchloride of mercury (1 in 3,000),

Every few days I changed cotton wool on the eye which was well, and after five days of treatment an eye specialist was called in, and all was to be continued as regards the treatment, and at the end of three weeks all matter and pus had quite gone, and we had a complete cure at the end of five weeks.

The baby appeared to suffer very little after each dressing, except when the nitrate of silver was applied. I found when washing the eye out a small ear syringe of use, besides an abundance of cotton wool, which never touched the eye a second time. I was also careful to wash my own hands before and after each dressing. A feature of interest about this case was restricting the infection to the one eye, which I was told was not common. The baby did not after the first week seem to miss much sleep, as it hardly woke each time I did the eye.

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