


## Medical Matters.

### DIARRHŒA IN CHILDREN.



The *Journal of the American Medical Association* says: In outlining the course of treatment of diarrhœas in children Dr. J. H. Buffum, in *Vermont Medical Monthly*, states that in a general way all the infectious diarrhœas of childhood should be treated in a similar manner. The first essential is cleanliness, together with a cool, quiet room, and an abundance of fresh air. Early in the disease all food, even breast milk, should be withheld. During the first 24 hours nothing should be given except a little cold boiled water, with the addition rarely, in cases of great prostration, of a little brandy or whiskey. In some cases the stomach may be so irritable as to be unable to retain any substance, consequently it may be necessary to give stimulants hypodermically. If the case is seen sufficiently early, a dose of castor oil is recommended to clear the alimentary tract and, consequently, to shorten the course of the disease. When vomiting is severe, however, calomel in small doses is preferable. Irrigation of the bowels with a normal salt solution is of value, as it assists in the removal of toxic products from the intestines, and serves to quiet the thirst and to supply the necessary fluid to the tissues. The temperature of the fluid used should vary as indicated by the patient's condition. If the vomiting should continue beyond twenty-four hours, some authorities recommend washing out the stomach, and that this procedure be followed by administration of small doses of calomel. Hot packs are recommended in cases of prostration. In some cases the vomiting and purging may be so severe as to demand morphin and atropin hypodermically. When this is necessary he recommends morphin gr. 1-100, and atropin gr. 1-800, for a child one year of age. When, in the judgment of the physician, food can be borne by the stomach, Dr. Buffum recommends barley water or albumin water, together with beef, mutton, or chicken broth, either administered alone or in combination. These feedings should be two or three hours apart, and in amount one-fourth to one-half the normal. Bismuth is recommended to allay the vomiting and the tenesmus, as it is both a sedative and an intestinal antiseptic. In young children it should be given in mucilage, or in older children it may be given in powder form. He does not think much of the intestinal antiseptics commonly recommended.

### UNNECESSARY BLINDNESS.

In view of the admitted fact that forty per cent. of all cases of blindness might have been avoided by proper preventive or curative measures, and that one-quarter of this is due to ophthalmia neonatorum, an infectious, preventable and almost absolutely curable disease, Dr. F. P. Lewis, Buffalo, *Journal A. M. A.*, asks why this is so and what is the remedy. He finds the reasons for the condition in the practical neglect of the medical profession, the ignorance of the public and the indifference of the commonwealth. He would have ophthalmia neonatorum made a contagious disease, to be accurately reported, both as to its occurrence and its results. If thought necessary, an investigation should follow, and this possibility would insure the exercise of due preventive vigilance on the part of those responsible. Then he would have an authorised standard solution of the necessary silver salt prepared and distributed by the boards of health, the solutions and the accompanying card or circular prepared under the direction of a committee chosen by the President of the American Medical Association and sanctioned by its authority, and its purity and sterility vouched for by the State Board of Health. These solutions and circulars should be readily accessible to every accoucheur, physician, or midwife, and sent out on each report of a birth, the directions sent to midwives being printed in several languages. Statistics are given showing that such measures would be really economical to the State if carried out as suggested.

### THE EYESIGHT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN.

The Association for Supplying Spectacles to Children in Elementary Schools, which is influentially supported, is appealing for financial help, for which it makes out a good case.

The London County Council and the London hospitals have taken steps to obviate the danger of eye strain and the attendant consequences in school children. The County Council examines the children and selects those whose sight appears to be defective; the hospitals examine all children who attend, and prescribe suitable glasses. Here, however, the matter too often ends. The child returns to school without spectacles; and the trouble and expense incurred by the Council and the hospitals is, in many cases, altogether wasted. The County Council went so far as to take counsel's opinion, as to whether spectacles might be supplied at the cost of the ratepayers. The counsel's opinion was in the negative; and in consequence the Association was formed.

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