

Practical Points.

Dr. Marion Craig Potter writes in the *Hospital Review*: It is a theory sufficiently proved by experience that irritability and unreasonableness in a child are caused by its being tired and needing rest. Often, but not always, such a condition can be met, and the child's temper controlled and spirits restored by compulsory rest. The late afternoon is a trying time for a child, especially one who has just outgrown the afternoon nap. This is also an impracticable time of day for a child to lie down. It may be sleepy, but instinctively resists sleep by every method its ingenuity can devise. In summer the room is warm, and the child, if forced to lie down, tosses and tumbles, and when it succumbs and is quiet, it is from sheer exhaustion. At the evening meal the child does not relish his food, and appears weary and uncomfortable until bedtime.

After working on this theory of rest cure for some time with varying results, it occurred to me that in the case of a patient who seemed to feel as the child acted, a "long neutral bath" had always given relief.

As an experiment, such a bath was given a child who was in a very resistive frame of mind. When placed in the water his spirits rose immediately, he called for his rubber balls and his boats, and was soon his old happy self, sailing the ocean. At the end of a half-hour he was full of play, and came to dinner with a smiling face and good appetite. At bed-time he dropped off into a quiet sleep.

The next time that the child showed signs of being abnormally unreasonable, and would respond to no diversion, he was hurried off to the bath, before the nerve storm had reached its full force. Visions of a long swim in his bathing suit, with his balls and boats and water wings, looked very attractive to him. His little brother pleaded to have on his bathing suit and join in the bath, and they were soon two jolly little sailors.

The bath thermometer was one of their boats, and they took great pride in helping keep the water the right temperature. Not long after, a young mother asked me what to do for her little Marjorie, when she was cross. My original theory of rest cure brought the response, "Put her to bed?" "She will not stay there." Then it was proposed to lock the door, to which she answered, "She kicked out one of the panels." The long soothing bath seemed applicable to the case, and advice was given to try it. The mother told me the results were most happy.

Another patient exclaimed that such a bath was "heavenly," and she would never feel so nervous again, for she would know now just what to do to prevent it.

In this short article we can only state a few facts, and cannot go into the scientific considera-

tion of what is known in the medical world as the "neutral bath."

The skin is full of little terminal nerves, all connected with main nerves like a system of telegraph wires. In case of undue excitement, the circulation is increased, and the activity of every nerve seems to be reinforced a hundred-fold. In the "long neutral bath" we have a potent remedy which is immediate, direct, and always soothing in its effect, without any damaging influences. This result is obtained through surrounding and protecting these myriads of little over-sensitive nerves by immersing the body in water near its own temperature, and thus almost entirely shutting away from it a variety of aggravating influences.

The bath restores the nerve tone by decreasing the heart's action and checking the loss of energy. Water accumulates in the tissues about the nerve endings. In this way the nerves of the skin become water-soaked, as it were, and the sedative effect is carried back to the nerve centres, producing a general soothing influence. Muscular irritability is quieted, and permanent good is done the whole system.

An anæmic or bloodless skin is more sensitive than a healthy skin, and a fretful, delicate child should be benefited by frequent treatment of this character. To secure the desired results, the "neutral bath" must be prolonged at least twenty to forty minutes, the temperature of the water accurately sustained between 92 and 97 degrees Fahr., and the child kept in the house for an hour afterwards.

Dr. Ross C. Whitman, of the Bacteriological Laboratory of the Department of Health, furnishes in the *Weekly Bulletin of the Chicago Department of Health* the following interesting hint:

Recent experiments conducted in the Laboratory have demonstrated that the typhoid bacillus, which may be found upon fruit or vegetables designed to be eaten raw, can be killed by immersing these articles of food in a five per cent. solution of tartaric acid for half-an-hour, and then removing the acid by rinsing in clear water. Such a solution of tartaric acid may be prepared by dissolving one tablespoonful of tartaric acid in a pint of water.

Tartaric acid is a fruit acid. It is derived from the grape, as citric acid is derived from the lemon. This acid is absolutely harmless, being an important constituent of cream of tartar, which the housewife uses every day. Such a solution of tartaric acid will kill all the typhoid bacilli that may be upon celery, lettuce, radishes, or other vegetables and fruit, as well as oysters or clams that are to be eaten raw. In this way all danger of contracting typhoid from these sources is absolutely avoided. The tartaric acid can be very readily removed by rinsing in clear water. This is a practical household method, and should be used by every housewife.

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