

tion. As a result collapse ensues, the temperature, at first high, becomes sub-normal, the extremities are cold and flabby, thrush invades the mouth, and the infant passes into a condition of stupor, and then of death.

THE TREATMENT OF THE DISEASE.

In the treatment of the disease, the first essential is to eliminate all poisonous material. Castor oil should be first administered in the early stages when there is some diarrhoea. Never make the mistake of endeavouring to stop the diarrhoea. Give a good dose of castor oil, with the view of assisting the elimination of poisonous materials. To counteract the tendency to collapse, alcohol is very valuable—five to ten minims of brandy may be given, according to the age of the infant, in a teaspoonful of warm water. Small and frequent doses of calomel are frequently given with great advantage in counteracting the decomposition that is going on. In cases of vomiting, stomach washing by means of the stomach tube is useful sometimes, but the most valuable is the irrigation of the colon. The apparatus consists of tubing and a douche can containing one quart of normal saline solution at 100 degs. Fahr. Some physicians recommend antiseptic solutions in these cases; my own experience is that antiseptics are very little use, and sometimes do harm. The only effect of colon irrigation is the physical effect of removing material inside the colon. I am not disposed to recommend the addition of any drug except the amount of salt to make normal saline solution. The buttocks should be elevated so as to ensure the flow of the fluid into the colon. This is best effected by laying the infant on a table and bringing the buttocks elevated by pillows to the edge. It is very important to guard against hydrostatic pressure, which would rupture the colon. The douche-can should be very gently raised, and the elevation should not be greater than necessary to admit the gentle flow of the solution into the colon. A very important practical point is that no attempt should be made to pass the tube past the rectum until the fluid flows readily out of the tube into the colon. In infants of six months a pint should be introduced before the solution returns. As a rule not less than four pints of the solution may be used, and frequently this amount may be doubled. With such a complete washing as that, you may rid the colon of a large amount of material, and you will further induce the small intestine to pass the injurious matter rapidly on to the colon, and thus rid the baby of the putrefying material which is poisoning it.

This, then, is the first and most important part of the treatment—the elimination as far as possible of the contents of the whole of the intestines, small and large. Any attempts to feed the baby will be of no use whatever so long as the food you are giving can combine with the putrefactive material inside the baby. It simply means that you are providing more food for the bacteria to decompose, and you are assisting the bacteria which are threatening the life of the baby. By getting the whole of the material away, you are getting the bacteria away, and the material upon which they thrive.

The pathological processes never take on their most serious and fatal form unless the small intestine has become alkaline. As long as the whole of the small intestine is acid, the development of the poisonous bacteria cannot take place. The processes causing this disease cannot flourish in an acid medium, and consequently diarrhoea occurring in cases where the contents of the small intestine are acid, is not serious. The next most important point to bear in mind is—Keep the baby warm: hot bottles, hot packs, anything which will keep the baby warm, and protect it from the collapse which threatens in these cases.

What should we do when we begin to feed the baby? The first thing is very dilute food. As a result of the illness, the baby's digestive tract is in an irritated condition, and there is great liability to decomposition of the food if it is not properly absorbed by the baby. A little albumen water is one of the first things to be administered. Following upon that, whey is a very useful food, and you may gradually increase the food materials by adding milk in the small proportions that I illustrated in one of my recent lectures.

Whenever we have to deal with such a disease, we must remember that all our treatment must be radical and immediate. With the onset of the disease the procedures I have described should be carried out without delay, and having carried those out, then we should give our attention to the precise dietetic requirements.

Professor W. S. Handley, F.R.C.S., in a lecture delivered before the Royal College of Surgeons, referring to the extremely painful swelling of the arm, frequently occurring in breast cancer, stated that as the result of his work in the cancer research laboratories of the Middlesex Hospital he had been able to devise a simple operation for the relief of this condition. The method consisted in draining the swollen arm by a number of buried silk threads, which carried away the excess of fluid by capillary attraction.

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