

of infancy should make the alert and conscientious nurse and the clear-sighted and wise mother foresee the possibility of oncoming trouble. It may then be possible to secure the best means to prevent its development, and by the recognition of the earliest signs of departure from health permit of effective steps being taken whereby further disorder shall be arrested and the speediest possible return to health obtained.

Put another way we may say that minor ailments are important because:

1. They may, if neglected, lead to the establishment of major or serious ailments.
2. They may, by knowledge of their causation, be often prevented.
3. They may, by observation and prompt action to obtain proper treatment, be speedily arrested.

In previous lectures I have insisted on the importance of your studying the anatomical features and physiological characteristics of the infant. The terms "health" and "disease" are after all merely relative, and if you would do the best for your charge—infant, child, or adult—you must be willing and desirous of devoting all your powers to the study and understanding of individuals. Every baby has a distinct individuality, and you will never make first class nurses of babies if you forget this fundamental fact.

And so I urge you to study the healthy ordering of a baby's life so that you may be careful to prevent disordering influences bearing on it, and thus ward off many of the so-called minor ailments which are often so distressing to the infant as well as disturbing to its guardians.

A nurse should be acquainted with the process of growth and the progress of development. The state of the surface of the skin in the very young human subject is oftentimes not only an indication of the condition of its health, but also a sign of the sanitary care shown and the hygienic knowledge possessed by its nurse, and thus incidentally of the standard of her discipline and training.

THE MINOR AILMENTS OF DIGESTION.

From what I have told you in previous lectures, you will understand that a very considerable number of the comparatively slight derangements met with in infancy are connected with the alimentary canal and the processes of digestion.

Many of the most serious affections of infant life have their beginning in disorders of digestion.

Let me draw your attention to some of the more important signs and symptoms of these

departures from perfect health: So many of them are erroneously regarded as natural and inevitable, part of the process of development, little disorders to be left alone. All this is pernicious for the ailments are nature's danger signals, indications of on-coming trouble, cries of distress of the human organism. If we close our eyes, turn deaf ears to the voice of Nature, we do it at our peril.

FLATULENCE.

The accumulation of gas in the stomach and bowels is a common cause of distress and disorder in infancy. Many mothers seem to look upon "wind" as an inevitable and even necessary association with infancy. It is certainly often a very painful ailment for the baby, and the disturbance in and of the child means considerable disturbance of the peace of mind and rest of body of the mother.

Sometimes the flatulence is mainly gastric, that is, the accumulation of wind is chiefly in the stomach. In others the flatulence or distension with wind principally affects the bowels.

The symptoms of this condition are so well known to all here present that I hardly need mention them: The infant is restless, sleepless, and irritable. It is continuously tossing about and constantly crying. The abdomen is usually distended. Wind is often belched up or passed by the bowel as flatus, and usually brings more or less relief.

What are the causes of this condition?

1. Generally it is due to fermentation of the food in the stomach. Milk or other material imperfect in quality, or excessive in quantity, often gives rise to flatulence.

2. Sometimes it is dependent on the infant taking its food too quickly.

3. In not a few cases air is sucked into the stomach along with the milk. Not infrequently infants are seen sucking in air through an empty mouthpiece of a feeding bottle.

4. Many of the artificial foods, especially those containing much indigestible matter like starch, are accountable for flatulence.

COLIC.

Colic or griping pains due to spasmodic contractions of the bowel are usually associated with flatulence, but may sometimes occur without much wind being passed, and the cause of the trouble may thus be overlooked unless the nurse is on the alert. The symptoms are very characteristic. With the oncoming of the painful spasm the infant cries or even screams loudly. During the paroxysms the legs may be flexed on the thighs and the thighs drawn up on the abdo-

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