

we must think too of measles and typhoid fever. In young children diphtheria, measles, and scarlet fever are common ailments, and simple tonsillitis is rare. The action to be taken is the same with all. Isolate and then send for the doctor, but give no medicine.

As a rule, mothers take the occurrence of a sore throat with a rise of temperature fairly seriously, but this is far from being the case with the next group, where the child has a stomach ache. Here very many mothers and children's nurses fly to an aperient, and the child is dosed with syrup of figs or castor oil.

I wonder if they know that this is just what a careful physician or surgeon *practically never does*. He always waits until he is sure of the absence of some serious abdominal illness. The child may have appendicitis, for instance; if so, an aperient may be as dangerous as a bullet. It will certainly aggravate the illness considerably, and not infrequently determine the bursting of the inflamed organ, so that an immediate operation affords the only possible chance of saving life, and is often a poor chance at that. One often wishes when one sees the constantly recurring accounts in the daily papers of the death of a child from appendicitis that the public would think whether they would not more justly ascribe the blame to the ignorance which impelled the nurse to give an aperient rather than to the operation that was performed in desperation—too late!

No; the proper way to soothe the aching stomach of a child is to apply a hot fomentation, or even a linseed poultice, until the doctor comes.

Aperients are, of course, amongst the most useful and justifiable of domestic medicines, but the time to give them is when the child is simply constipated and has no pain.

The three commonest conditions (in children) which are associated with stomach ache and a rise of temperature are appendicitis, typhoid fever, and inflammation of the lungs. More rarely we may have obstruction of the bowel from some cause or other. The only one of these in which any surgeon would give an aperient is inflammation of the lungs—and not always then.

In conclusion, our "advice to mothers" is to bury or burn the domestic medicine book, or, better still, sell it and buy a clinical thermometer with the proceeds. Let it be a good one, however—not the kind that comes from the nurses' bonnet shop—and let the mother use it to tell her whether some of the ailments which I have mentioned are *possible*, always premising that the absence of fever does not mean that the child is *not* seriously ill.

"SCIATICA."*

By CHARLES PRESTON-BALL, M.D.

(Concluded from page 293.)

As soon as the acute symptoms, but not before, have passed off, the Treatment should be more active, and both *Massage* and *Electricity* are very useful. Also when the case has become chronic, and in *all* chronic cases, *massage*, carefully employed, is of very great benefit. We have noted how, especially in those cases in which the disease is due to arthritis in the Hip, there is considerable wasting of the muscles around the hip and thigh.

All these muscles should be individually massaged, so as to endeavour to restore their tone. Indeed, massage is, in my opinion, of more importance in this form of rheumatic trouble than in any other condition I know of, because if, after a long bout of acute Sciatica, a patient does not get proper massage, the affected leg will in all probability be permanently weakened, and indeed there may be adhesions and contractions formed, and some actual shortening of the leg. The only matter of great importance for you to remember is never to attempt massage in an *acute* and early case of the disease, remembering that perfect rest is the best treatment. In all cases of long standing, however, and these are the common cases we meet with mostly, massage is a very valuable form of treatment, as, indeed, is also Electricity and passive movements.

In these cases also I have great confidence in the electric Radiant Heat, and I have known many cases which have received great benefit from Electric light baths. If they are combined with massage they are, of course, of more value. I have not seen any very great success from "High Frequency" in cases of Sciatica, except in those Patients who are Neurotic and whose pain in the legs is more imaginative than real. It is extraordinary how many of such cases one meets in practice.

To classify the most important and perhaps the most beneficial treatments for chronic cases is a difficult matter, but the treatment is of such great importance that I will endeavour to enumerate *all* that have been recommended; but please recollect that these treatments are not for the acute cases, but for those Patients who come for treatment having suffered for some time.

(a) *Vaccine treatment*, either by autogenous vaccines or by Phylacogens.

(b) *Massage and passive movements*.

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