

hensible practice of scratching it off with their finger-nails; the right way is to use a lubricant, either cold cream or vaseline, and it will come off with perfect ease, and no pain to the baby. If the meconium has not been voided at or soon after birth, you must attend to this matter of changing about two hours after the infant has been laid in the cot.

*Flatulency.*—This familiar trouble of infancy begins soon after birth, and we may say continues during babyhood. We can readily understand why air should collect in the intestinal tube, partly from the passing away of the meconium that partially filled it, and partly from the recumbent position of the infant impeding its escape in a downward direction. The distension of the tender infantile stomach by "wind" causes spasmodic pain, and often symptoms of choking or suffocation occur from pressure on the heart. These temporary troubles are at once relieved by raising the infant up, turning him face downwards over your arm, and patting his back. These simple measures aid the escape of air from the stomach, and bring relief to the pressure symptoms. The accumulation of air in the intestine leads to distension of the bowels, and pains, the familiar "gripes," or infantile colic, which has led to measures of relief (?) that to my mind are often more hurtful to the infant than the initial malady itself, for careless feeding is one of the causes of the trouble, and if that cause is removed, instead of being temporised with, it would be far better for baby's health; besides which, Nurses and mothers are apt to fall into an inveterate habit of "dosing" for the simplest cause, and repeating the error upon every recurrence of the cause, until poor baby's stomach is made a little doctor's shop of—and the "wind" gets in just the same. Position and gentle friction with the warm hand over the abdomen is a simple and comforting method of dispersing the air from the intestines, or even the stomach, that rarely fails, and can do no harm. The most commonly resorted to carminatives are dill-water, aniseed, peppermint, and carraway; and these again are given indiscriminately, whether the seat of the pain be gastric or intestinal. In the latter case I have found nothing better than ten drops of best pale brandy to two teaspoonfuls of warm water, slightly sweetened; give one teaspoonful at first, and another half-an-hour afterwards.

Whilst upon the subject of infantile ailments, I will just touch upon another that often occurs as soon as baby takes his milk food, whether from

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breast or bottle, and has been made the occasion for injudicious and injurious "dosing"—acidity of the stomach, which is often nothing more than the result of a natural process of digestion, is at once regarded as a *malady* to be met by baneful alkalies, the most popular being the two forms of magnesia, fluid or in powder. The former is what is called a caustic alkali, and even when diluted, unfit for the tender infantile stomach. The effect of frequent doses of magnesia, often without the slightest attention to *exactness* as regards *quantity* (which should in all cases be *very* small) is the formation of *concretions* in the digestive tube, from the effect of the acids of the digestive juices. Infants have died from obstructions caused by these hard immovable masses in the small intestine, that have been discovered by *post-mortem*. Bland fluids, such as barley water or thin gruel, in change with milk, will soothe "acidity" better than drugs. If any "corrective" is required, lime-water put to the milk is the safest; the carbonate of lime held in solution in the water is taken into the system and made use of for bone-forming purposes, not hardened into injurious substances.

There is another matter I will just bring before the notice of my young Nursing readers whilst we are upon the subject of infant "woes," or rather "wrongs," that may in a measure be called medication. I allude to a practice, happily dying out, but far from dead, and that not so many years ago was very generally adopted, especially by the "Gamps" of our profession, of rubbing the baby's head all over with brandy or whisky, according to the nationality of the "Gamp," as soon as the process of the *first* washing and dressing was over. The pretext for this doubtful manipulation was to *prevent* baby from feeling the cold on his head; rather an odd way to put it, for as a rule spirit lotions are considered to cool the head, and used for that purpose. Mothers were as much in earnest as Nurses in this "whisky-ing" baby's head, and that and brandy was liberally supplied for the purpose. The spirit was thus used: the Nurse poured a portion of it into the palm of her hand, and rubbed over the *fore* part of the head principally; of course spirit ran into baby's eyes and gave rise to pain and cries, they were received with approval, as showing strength of lungs! Thousands of infants have been subjected to this treatment, and the baneful practice goes on still. Whilst upon this subject let us say a few words upon the infantile cranium, which differs in many respects from the adult,

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