

I would that I could always shield
Thy soul from grief and care;
But life its sorrows will not yield,
And thou must have thy share.

It may be that thou 'lt bravely stand
Before the coming blast,
And hold, within a conquering hand,
A victor's crown at last.

But ah! along the path of years
O'er which thy feet must tread,
Thou 'lt find that joys are mixed with tears
That hopeful eyes have shed.

Then, when the way seems long and drear,
Thou 'lt want a place of rest;
Ah, darling, if thy mother's near,
That place will be her breast!

The silver moon points out the way
The shining sun will take;
Sleep, baby, sleep, while yet you may;
Full soon thou 'lt have to wake!"

Health Department.

BY JNO. STAINBACK WILSON, M. D.

FOOD FOR YOUNG CHILDREN.—Milk is the only natural and proper food for infants and young children; Nature does not afford, nor can art supply, a substitute. As a general rule, the mother's milk should be the only food of an infant until the teething is completed, or, in other words, until Nature indicates her readiness, by the appearance of a full set of teeth, to dispose of more solid nutriment. And let it not be supposed for a moment that milk is *drink only*, and not food; for by reason of the butter, casein, and other solid ingredients that enter into its composition, it, when in a natural condition, contains all the elements necessary to the growth and development of every part of the child; it contains everything requisite for building up the nervous, muscular, and every other tissue, and also earthy matters and salts to give solidity to the bones; and Nature, in her wise arrangements, has not neglected to furnish this highly compound nourishment with heat-generating materials for the purpose of warming the bodies of her tender charge, through the chemical changes that occur in the act of respiration.

The mistaken notion that Nature does not understand her business, that the food furnished by her is not sufficiently nutritious, and that we can improve on her handiwork, has been largely influential in originating and in perpetuating the ruinous practice of stuffing young children with all kinds of vile compounds of flour, meat, wine, etc., in the form of pap, panada, soup, gruel, and—what not? Under this absurd and unnatural process of feeding, the little unfortunate, whose stomach is entirely incapacitated for such things, gets sick with a bowel complaint; has gripings, disturbed sleep, watery discharges; loses flesh, becomes jaundiced, and dies, a poor, pitiful, emaciated skeleton, notwithstanding—or rather because of—all the nourishing compounds with which it has been so diligently plied; and, alas! the evil is not traced to its proper source, but is laid on teething, worms, cold, "thrush," or the deluded mother, in her mistaken piety, consoles herself with the idea that it is a "mysterious dispensation of Providence," for

which she is in no way responsible, and to which she must submit with Christian resignation. And thus do the little innocents perish day after day and year after year, and thus are one-half or more of the children who come into the world every year removed that same year.

It appears to us that reason and observation would convince every one that we do not exaggerate on this point; and we trust that many will be induced to abandon the practice on which we have animadverted; but we fear that there are some who are so blinded by the prejudices of education, and by a false process of reasoning, that they will still persist in their errors. Some will be ready to exclaim: "Why, the man is mad; my mother fed me on fat meat, and gave me whatever I wanted, and I am alive and well even to this day; and more than this, I am the mother of children, and these have been raised after the same fashion, and they, too, are alive and hearty."

But, my dear madam, have you never known men to drink spirits and use tobacco all their lives, and yet, by virtue of a vigorous constitution, be able to resist for a long time the influence of these destructives, and live to an old age? And what does all this prove? Certainly not that alcohol and tobacco are not injurious. These cases only show that some constitutions can withstand destructive influences better than others, while there is every probability that those who long resist them would in their absence live to a very great age. In short, they only prove that some people are harder to kill than others. So of your children; because your stuffing and improper feeding do not kill them, it is no proof that such things are not wrong; and though the children may have survived and gradually become accustomed to the unnatural excitement to which you have subjected them, we venture the assertion that in most cases Nature violently rebelled against such a course, and that she was conquered through great tribulation.

In proof of this, we ask you to cast your minds back on the past, and to review those sad days and nights of weary watching, when you hung over the couch of little Johnnie, and Charlie, and Susie, when they had that "dreadful bowel complaint," or when they writhed in convulsions, or sunk in the deep stupor of brain fever. And let me ask, Why all this? *Are convulsions, and bowel complaints, and brain fevers natural to children?* Must they have them as a matter of course? Surely not—and yet how few escape these diseases, or some others!

These questions and answers lead us inevitably to the conclusion that the vast majority of the diseases of infancy are the result of mismanagement, and among the numerous errors that exist, improper feeding is perhaps of all others the most destructive. Of this more anon.

SLEEP OF INFANTS—OPIATES.—Infants require more sleep than older persons, because their tender frames could not bear without injury the various exciting influences to which they are necessarily subjected during the waking state; and, besides this, while all the voluntary organs rest in sleep, Nature is able to concentrate all her energies on the great internal nutritive processes, by which the growth of the body is hastened: for it is so arranged in the wise economy which regulates the human system that the vital organs of repair and nutrition are more active when all the other organs repose in sleep. It being true, then, that young children need a great deal of sleep, it follows that restlessness and wakefulness are injurious, and they are indications that there is something wrong. The difficulty in these cases can

generally be traced to improper feeding, tight clothing, excessive warmth, or confined air. Most of these subjects have been already noticed, but some of them may again engage our attention.

When a child is restless and sleepless, it is a too common practice to resort to opiates instead of inviting sleep by attention to those external surroundings, those *hygienic agents* which may generally be made effectual, and which are natural, healthful, and far safer than any stupefying drug. These may be admissible in some rare cases of disease, when administered by the advice of a very prudent physician, but we say without hesitation that such means should never be resorted to without such advice. And yet how common is it at the first appearance of restlessness to fly at once to paregoric, Bateman's Drops, Godfrey's Cordial, soothing syrups, and the thousand and one child-slaughtering compounds that may be found in almost every household! And, as incredible as it may appear, the administration of these dangerous articles is sometimes committed to an ignorant and careless nurse, who is but too ready to deal them out freely in order to prevent her own repose from being disturbed. And we have even heard of mothers who, in their desire to attend some place of amusement, have been so thoughtless, or so heartless, as to give a large dose of laudanum or some other potent narcotic to their babes, in order that they might sleep while these mothers were absent!

Surely such people as these, and all who resort to opiates on every trivial occasion, know not what they do; for we cannot believe that any mother who is properly informed would pursue such a murderous course. No! mothers could not, would not thus act if they knew the dangers attending the administration of opiates to children; if they knew how exceedingly susceptible are the brains of children to such impressions; if they knew that those brains are naturally prone to inflammation and congestion; that opiates, in all forms, increase this state of things, that the smallest dose will sometimes produce a fatal depression, and that the frequent use of such agents will inevitably result in a state of chronic or habitual engorgement of the vessels of the brain, that will, from the slightest cause, give rise to fatal convulsions, dropsy of the brain, or some more obscure but no less fatal disease. Yet all this is true, and *more*; for opiates spend their force on the brain and nervous system, which may well be considered as the main-spring and fountain of life, the great regulators of the whole vital machinery; and, therefore, it is just as impossible for the human machine to perform its functions properly when under the depressing influence of any kind of narcotic as it is for a watch or a clock to run properly when the main-spring is deranged in its action.

By the habitual use of opiates, the stomach is deranged, and thus all healthful supplies are cut off; from the same cause, the action of the heart is interfered with, and thus the blood is not properly distributed to the system; the breathing is also rendered slow and laborious, and thus the poisoned and sluggish stream of blood is not properly purified and vitalized in the lungs; and, as a consequence of all this, the poor overdosed and narcotized infant wastes in flesh, pales in color, becomes bloated and dropsical, or shrinks to skin and bones, and thus does the unfortunate victim of folly sink to the tomb under a multiplied train of nameless disorders, if it is not cut off earlier by some acute disease.

Columbus, Ga.

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