

CLINICAL LECTURE.

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INFANTILE CONVULSIONS.

I have had considerable experience during the last thirty years with medical students, and I am inclined to believe that he does not always have impressed on his mind the importance of convulsive seizures in infancy and childhood. Perhaps there is nothing that will go farther toward establishing the reputation of a physician than being able to show that you are master of the situation—that you thoroughly understand the principles of the treatment of convulsions. The truth is that the reputation of the physician is more likely to be established by the successful management of what may be called minor diseases than by severe and complicated diseases. The fact is, the young physician rarely gets a chance in the management of grave disease. As convulsions occur suddenly, and generally without warning, the family physician impossible to be found, the young doctor, sitting in his office waiting like Micawber for something to turn up, finds himself called to fill an emergency. He will generally find the mother or the nurse, and possibly both, have lost their head. His arrival on the scene will be hailed with expressions of satisfaction, and his management of the case will show his ability or otherwise. If he knows his work, he will then and there lay the foundation of future success.

Convulsions may occur within a few days of birth, and then are due to some injury of the brain, occurring during the labor. They may be general or involve only half the body. Two weeks from birth they usually cease. From that till six months infants are usually free from them, but onwards till the seventh year they are not uncommon. The onset of structural disease of the brain or its membranes may be attended with general convulsions. With this exception the etiology of infantile convulsions is obscure. At birth the de-