

SOME THOUGHTS ON INTESTINAL CATARRH AND CHOLERA INFANTUM.*

H. MORELL, M.D., C.M., SLAYTON, MINNESOTA.

AT this time of the year, when infants are more susceptible to disorders of digestion, a few remarks on intestinal catarrh and cholera infantum will not be out of place.

It is the general custom with many writers to group all diarrhœas of children under the name of cholera infantum. The contrast between cholera infantum and the other forms of summer diarrhœa is so great in its symptomology and rate of mortality that it should always be regarded as a separate and distinct disease. We should remember, however, that cases which may show symptoms of infantile cholera at the beginning, sometimes pass into a protracted intestinal catarrh. And others, in which, in the course of the latter disease, it is suddenly terminated by an attack of cholera infantum. It will be seen then that the line cannot always be sharply drawn between these diseases, but one is merged into the other.

Summer diarrhœa occurs most frequently, in this country, during the months of July and August, and it attacks infants between the ages of six and eighteen months. The disease is more prevalent in children brought up on other nutriment than mother's milk.

The most important etiological factors are bad sanitary surroundings, age and extreme heat, in association with improper feeding. The improper feeding may be in injudicious overfeeding; which occurs very frequently.

It may be well to remark here, that "Children brought up by hand suffer from a totally different kind of intestinal catarrh than those at the breast, for the exciting cause of the disease—the unsuitable nutriment—is not here a temporary one, but is continued for a long time and during the sickness."[†]

In infants brought up by hand, the nutriment is a (prolific) prolific cause of intestinal catarrh. This is not to be wondered at when we take into consideration the difference between woman's and cow's milk.

The casein of woman's milk always coagulates into small lumps and loose flakes, which are easily digested and readily assimilated.

* Read before the South Western Minnesota Medical Society at Mankato, Minn., June 15th, 1897.

[†]Vogel.