

OUR BABIES.

(By HYGEIA.)

Published under the auspices of the Society for the Health of Women and Children.

"It is wiser to put up a fence at the top of a precipice than to maintain an ambulance at the bottom."

In order to give practical emphasis to an appeal made in this column three years ago for the provision of a free flow of pure outside air through our houses at night we published the following list of Popular Fallacies.

In view of the fact that the great majority of bedrooms still remains stuffy and insufficiently ventilated, we feel it is our duty to bring the matter again before our readers in the hope that some few at least will have the wisdom to accept henceforth this the most essential of all health-giving agencies, if not for themselves, at least for the children entrusted to their care.

POPULAR FALLACIES.

That Country Air is Pure and Town Air Foul.

City air is unduly abused. Serious contamination is nearly always mainly an indoor condition. The air of bedrooms in the country is often ten times as foul as the open air of the densest city; indeed, there are very few bedrooms in which the pollution every night does not greatly exceed that of any ordinary outside air. There is no excuse for this. Air can be kept pure and healthy in the smallest town cottage by providing a sufficient inlet and outlet, and thus ensuring a free current all night. This would be provided by an ordinary open fireplace and a sash window wide open—not merely opened a few inches—and unobstructed by any blind or curtain. When the bedroom itself has no fireplace, the door leading out of the bedroom and into the kitchen can be left open. Then if the kitchen window be shut, the air to supply the chimney must enter through the open window of the bedroom. If windows are kept open on both sides of a cottage, and all the doors are kept ajar, fairly good cross ventilation can be established without the aid of a chimney. In the absence of any means of establishing a regular cross current, a window uncovered by blind or curtain and kept wide open top and bottom is the best substitute.

If people had the slightest appreciation of the added health and happiness which would result from such simple measures, they would make nothing of overcoming the trifling objections which tend to obstruct themselves, such as the need to keep out cats or other intruders, or the need to prevent strong winds blowing on the sleepers. A wide mesh wire netting, which can be bought for a few pence a yard, will keep out intruders, and any handy man can improve a cheap, effective draught screen (see illustrations and text pages 55 to 60, "Feeding and Care of Baby.")

That Wooden Houses Need No Ventilation.

This is often said, but it is absurd. Wooden houses need as much ventilation as any others, and by rights every passage or hall should have a ventilating shaft at least a foot across, taken right up through the roof and not merely opening into the space under the galvanised iron.

That Night Air is Dangerous.

The reverse is the case. Night air tends to be purer than day air. A humorist has aptly said: "Night air is only dangerous if you keep it bottled up in a room all night!" However, the popular fear of night air is almost universal, and has arisen from the fact that in certain countries it is apt to give rise to ague. This is not really an account of impurity of the air itself, but, as has recently been proved, because it is infected by mosquitoes, which convey the disease.

That Cold Air is the Essential Cause of Colds.

This has been disproved in many ways. (1) Arctic explorers don't catch cold until they return to stuffy, germ-infested houses.

(2) Consumptives who have become debilitated by repeated colds find they no longer "catch cold" after a few weeks in a sanatorium, where no fires are allowed, and where the entire side of a room may be removed so that the patient sleeps either on an open balcony or something equivalent to it. These sanatoria are often established in high mountain regions, where the cold is intense.

(3) Tender, delicate babies cease to take cold if kept out in the open air as much as possible, and if, when indoors, constant ventilation is maintained by means of an open window and chimney. This is the condition at the Baby Hospital near Dunedin, even in midwinter, though the air in the bedrooms sometimes falls as low as 40deg. Fahr. Of course, every care is exercised to keep the babies out of direct draught, and to ensure that they are adequately covered. Further, sudden changes are never made. It may take a week or more to accustom to pure, cool air a delicate baby, or one who has been previously coddled.

Colds are really catarrhal fevers due to rapid growth of germs. Cold is not the essential cause of these fevers, though chilling of the surface predisposes to an attack under certain circumstances. Thus persons who habitually coddle themselves, and live in warm, stuffy rooms, and who fail to take enough exercise, become readily debilitated by being chilled in any way, and in this depressed state their tissues may be unable to repel invasion by hostile germs.

That Airing a Bedroom Overnight Suffices.

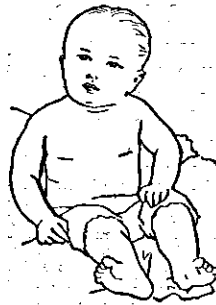
This fallacy is almost universal. People imagine that if they start with pure air it will not become injuriously fouled in the course of the night. This can be disproved at once by entering such a bedroom direct from the fresh air an hour or so after the occupant has gone to bed, or a fortiori, when he is about to get up. The room will be found offensively stuffy, and chemical analysis of the air would show it to be loaded with carbonic acid gas and other poisonous matters. A few ascertained facts and figures should satisfy anyone. For the last half-century it has been recognised that for health each human being

should be supplied with at least 3000 cubic feet of pure fresh outside air per hour, or 24,000 cubic feet in the course of an eight hours' night. The ordinary 10-foot bedroom has, of course, a capacity of about 1000 cubic feet, and if no fresh air be admitted during the night the allowance for one occupant will be only 1000 cubic feet for eight hours, instead of 24,000ft., his proper allowance. Indeed, the capacity of the room makes little difference, the vital question being whether there is a free flow of pure air through it or not. One can secure a sufficiency of fresh air in a ventilated coffin, and one would die under the dome of St. Paul's if it were sealed! Remember, that a child should have as large a sup-

Would Scream for Hours With Eczema.

Baby a Dreadful Sufferer. Could Not Keep Him from Scratching. Every Joint Affected. Used Cuticura Soap and Ointment and He Is Well.

"Enclosed find my son's photo., and I feel by writing these few lines to you I am only doing my duty, as my son was a dreadful sufferer from eczema. At the age of two weeks he began to get covered with red spots on his legs and groins, which mother thought was red gum or thrush; but day by day it grew worse until every joint and crevice were affected and baby started screaming for hours day and night; such a thing as sleep was out of the question. I took him to two of Sydney's leading doctors; one said it was one of the worst cases he had seen; the other did not think it so serious; one ordered ointment for rubbing in, the other a dusting powder. I followed their prescriptions for over four months, and still baby kept getting worse. I could not keep him from scratching, so great was his agony.



"When he was five months old I tried the Cuticura Remedies, and I am very thankful to say my baby is to-day free from all his suffering. His groins were bleeding when I started, and other parts affected were the lower parts of his body, under the knees, arms, in arm joints, eyelids, and neck; but after twice using Cuticura Ointment I began to see a difference, and by the time I had used one tin, along with the bathing with Cuticura Soap, baby was nearly cured. I still kept on using the Cuticura Soap and Ointment, and now, thank goodness, he is quite well, and, although he is now ten months old, has not had any further return of the trouble." (Signed) Mrs. G. Martin, 2, Knight-street, Erskineville, Sydney, N.S.W., March 31, 1911.

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