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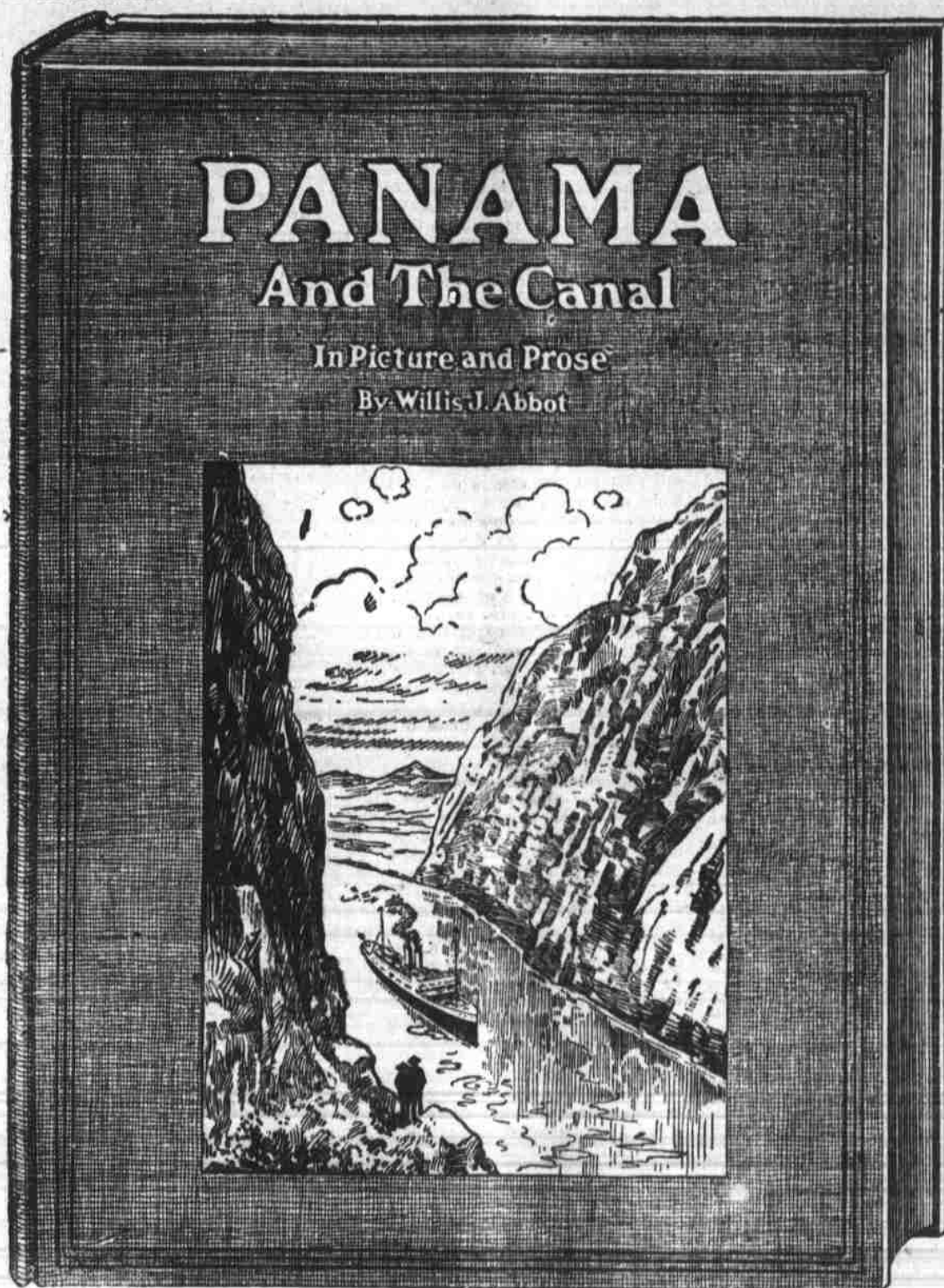
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- THE PANAMA RAILROAD
- THE SACK OF OLD PANAMA
- REVOLUTIONS AND THE FRENCH REGIM'
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- SANITATION OF THE ZONE
- THE INDIANS OF PANAMA
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Little Talks on Babyology; in Which Fresh Air and Exercise Figure

(By Anna Steese Richardson,
Director of The Better Babies Bureau
of the Woman's Home
Companion.)

The very best tonic for a baby is pure air. It should be supplied twenty-four hours in each day. Fresh air, properly inhaled, is the preventive of catarrh and tuberculosis. Pure air is the baby's just due. No mother has the right to deprive her child of this precious, health-giving boon.

In the darker ages of motherhood, babies were literally deprived of air. To this fact may be traced part of the White Plague curse of today. I can recall seeing babies wrapped up, head and all in dusty little shawls, so that not a breath of fresh air could penetrate the supposedly delicate lungs. I have seen babies thus wrapped up, tucked into a cradle or huge armchair behind a kitchen stove, where the choking odors of cooking and coal gas were added to the generally impure air of the room. The average mother in fact was convinced that not a breath of what she called "cold air" must reach her baby's lungs.

Is it not wonderful that so many of us have lived to—raise babies more sanely?

This is a fresh-air age. But this does not mean that a mother should go to extremes in supplying the air her baby needs nor in "hardening" its body as some faddists maintain. The baby should not be chilled nor exposed to a direct draught, but the air in the room should be cool and pure, not hot and fetid. In this one respect, strangely enough, the city baby has the best of the country baby. The average city house is uniformly heated by steam or furnace, and easily ventilated. The country or farm house is still heated largely by stoves. One room is very hot, others very cold. The warm rooms are places of refuge for the entire family and they are kept too hot, often every window is closed tightly and the air is sadly vitiated.

It is a significant fact that all the Better Babies Contests this year where the Better Babies Bureau offered two championship prizes, one for city babies and one for country babies, the city babies scored higher than the country babies and showed a better chest development.

The country baby should have the best of air to breathe, but it does not, because its home is seldom well ventilated, and because its busy farm mother has so little time to take it out in the fresh air. The city mother is always being reminded of dangers from impure air, by newspaper writers, by talks at clubs and social centers, and at clinics. Even her older children come home from school, preaching the gospel of fresh air for the family baby. She is ashamed into ventilating her house properly and taking her baby out for a daily airing.

The country mother keeps her house closed in winter to shut out cold and in summer to ward off heat, dust and flies. Her baby has small chance to breathe fresh air. From the beginning, the baby, city or country, should sleep in a ventilated room, window open top to bottom, at a temperature of from 65 to 70 degrees F. A thermometer is a better investment than cough syrup. A baby raised in a uniform temperature will not need cough syrup. The crib should not stand in a draught but be protected by a screen. If the room is very small, opening on a larger room, let the ventilation come from the larger room. Happy, also, that mother whose house can boast an open fireplace. This room should be chosen for baby's nursery. Open fireplace ventilation is ideal.

Whenever possible the baby should be tucked warmly into a carriage and allowed to sleep outdoors in the daytime. Only extreme cold and inclement weather should prevent this sensible plan. Nor should the baby's face be covered while sleeping outdoors. A sunny corner of the porch is an ideal day sleeping room, with the carriage screened from the sun. In summer, a mosquito net should protect the baby from flies, gnats, etc.

Never should a child be allowed to sleep in a room with gas or lamp burning low. The fumes from such illumination are extremely bad for the lungs. They exhaust the oxygen which the baby needs so sorely.

The farm mother who can't take her baby for a daily airing has no excuse for not letting it sleep outdoors. If she has no carriage, she can have casters put on the crib and roll it out on the porch, or even a deep box can be padded and baby can be made safe and comfortable by adding a firm hair mattress and warm blankets. When the baby begins to sit up and play, a similar padded box or small fenced enclosure should be built on the porch for a nursery. It is a positive injustice, nothing short of criminal, to keep a delicate baby in the kitchen.

Many a mother worn out with a fretful baby will secure rest for herself and good health for the baby by making it comfortable outdoors. The sleep in fresh air is restful, and babies that will not sleep well indoors acquire the habit if placed on the quiet porch or under a shady tree.

The sturdy baby should have its regular airing, weather permitting, from the age of two weeks. At six months, the airing in his carriage, exclusive of sleep, understand, should last an hour and the time should be gradually increased until at five or six years, he plays the greater part of the time outdoors by habit.

If the day is inclement, rainy, blustery, at least open the nursery window and dressing the baby in cap and all, as for his daily ride, let him breathe the air for a half hour or more. In winter, the daily ride should be given in the sunniest time of the day. In summer, choose the cooler hours, early morning and just before bed time.

Contests. They form part of that important factor in a baby's upbringing—exercise.

The normal, healthy baby, properly clad, given legitimate freedom will choose its own form of exercise and gain strength through a God-given instinct. The parent who retards its activities or stimulates them makes a grave mistake.

For a few weeks after its birth, the only exercise a baby has or needs is crying. Crying in moderation is good, healthy exercise. At two months old, if he is still sturdy, he should begin to have what might be termed play periods. All his clothing expect the belly-band or shirt should be removed. Then with the temperature of the room at 70 degrees F. he is laid on a bed protected from the draught, and permitted to kick and roll at his fancy dictates. When he is tired, he will stop. Babies know better than grown-ups how to conserve their energies.

At four months, the healthy baby holds up his head and shows a tendency to sit up with support. At six months he does sit up with a pillow at his back. At nine months he should be able to sit alone on the floor, with no pillow supporting his back and about this time, he will make occasional efforts to creep.

This is a critical time in baby's career. He is so cunning, so enticing, that parents and relatives are very apt to urge him on faster than Nature decrees. As soon as he begins to creep, adult hands offer to help him stand erect. He is over-persuaded to take the funny, tottering steps before the bones and muscles are strong enough to support his growing body. This may result in bow-legs, knock-knees, flat feet, pigeon-toeing, all sorts of defects in gait that are sad crosses to bear in later years.

Encourage, but do not urge your baby to activity during these months of rapid development. Let Nature direct his progress. She knows the condition of his bones and muscles better than you do. When he discovers that his feet were made to walk on, he will drag himself to an upright position by a chair or stool.

If he is walking at twelve months, he is developing rapidly enough and taking sufficient exercise. If very heavy, and he does not walk until fourteen months, do not worry. Nature is watching and guarding him. But if he is not walking at eighteen months, his condition should be examined by a physician. He may find backward mental symptoms.

One thing which often retards a baby's walking is heavy, bunglesome diapers. At one year, a baby's habits should be such that diapers can be laid aside for drawers and rompers which facilitate walking.

Another factor of daily life which interferes with baby's development is the pressure of duties on the average mother. She has so many other things to do that she cannot superintend her baby's exercise. So long as he is safe from danger and amused and quiet she does not realize that he is suffering from lack of exercise. I have seen babies strapped in carriages and high chairs for long stretches of time, without any change of position, without any opportunity to use their muscles, simplicity because they were amused and quiet, not disturbing "mother". An occasional change of toys, a cracker, or a sweet, even a "pacifier" are offered in lieu of what the child needs, exercise of its cramped muscles. This sort of child does not learn to creep or walk as it should because it is given no opportunity.

Many women ask me whether their babies should be "exercised." If this means a system of rubbing, working of muscles, artificial exercise and stimulation for the normal baby I should say most emphatically "No." Calisthenics of any sort should not be forced on a young child, and many a well-meaning father with physical culture fads has developed a normal, healthy child into a nervous, pallid baby by attempting to give it exercise designed for sluggish adult systems. Even a good thing like physical culture can be mis-applied.

If a baby is listless, puny and backward, consult a physician, do not apply your own particular methods of stimulation. What your child may need is better nourishment not exercises that will weaken it further. The next talk will answer this question:

"What should you know about your baby?"

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HUMORS OF THE ALPS.

Nearly every adventurer upon the Alps nowadays carries a camera. It is a sign of the times; people have become obsessed with the importance of realities, and the camera is the only possible agent to enable you to show realities to your friends. It is not of much use to tell them about some strange sight, or of some curious conformation of Nature you may have met with in your climb. You must show it to them.

A feature of the High Alps today is the number of worthies who earn their bread by means of the camera. There is an old gentleman at Grindelwald, for instance, who makes quite a comfortable competency by standing in front of his chalet when visitors laden with cameras are coming up the side of the mountain, and blowing a tremendous horn.

"How very quaint!" exclaims the unsuspecting tourist. "The dear old shepherd is calling home the cows." The dear old shepherd, however, is a man of sound business principles. He doesn't drag his antiquated instrument about his house for the fun of the thing; neither does he perform upon it for the benefit of his flock and herds, for he owns none. But he will tell you frankly, when you ask him to stand "quite still" that he will very willingly pose in whatever manner you like, but you must first pay him a couple of francs for his trouble. That old gentleman is probably the best-known character in the Grisons, and the hero of many local tales.—From the December World Magazine.

These questions are frequently asked of physicians at Better Babies