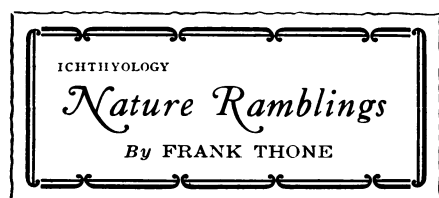


The most suggestive sign is stiffness of the spinal column and neck. The child will hold his head and neck rigidly and often he cannot sit up comfortably without propping himself on his arms.

Every stiff neck is by no means an indication of infantile paralysis, of course. The stiff neck of this disease is a rather special one. But if the mother finds such a symptom, she should at least suspect the disease and have the matter further investigated without delay.

The paralysis may set in anywhere from one to three days after the onset of the disease. The extent of it varies. When death occurs, it is from paralysis of the muscles used in breathing and not from the severity of the fever.

*Science News Letter, October 11, 1930*



*A Sarcophagus of Pearl*

**T**HERE is in the American Museum of Natural History in New York a most curious pearl-shell specimen. Embedded under the nacre, or pearl substance, is the clearly outlined body of a tiny fish, the only fish known that has so costly a sepulcher. It is not rare for other objects to be so imperaled. Every pearl starts with an irritation to the oyster—a grain of sand, a tiny parasitic animal, or something of that kind. Japanese pearl culturalists start pearls by inserting tiny beads between the lips of the pearl mussel's shell.

The story of the pearl-ensepulchered fish may be a drama of the oyster's conflict with a parasitic robber, or it may be a tragedy of the death of a comrade. Many small fish of the goby family love to lurk about in the shelter provided by larger animals instead of in natural rock cavities. "Messmates," some of them are called; others are known as "commensals." But commen-

salism may pass over, by insensible gradations, into sheer parasitism; and at least a few cases are known of small fish parasitizing large molluscs.

So the oyster that buried a fish in pearl was not necessarily giving mournful sepulture to a departed house-mate; it may have found the house-mate unendurable, killed him, and then sealed him over to get the carcass out of the way.

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## Prof. Babcock

*(Continued from Page 231)*

That feature satisfactorily settled, he sought for some way of getting the drops to the top to be measured, faster than they would float there naturally. He bethought him of our old friend centrifugal force. That is the natural force that keeps the water in a kid's play-bucket when he whirls it round his head on the end of a string—we've all done that trick.

When you whirl a mixture of things in a centrifugal machine the heaviest parts of the mixture go to the outside and the lightest come to the inside. The

faster you whirl the quicker this sorting is accomplished.

The watery-solution part of milk is heavier than butterfat. That is why cream rises to the top. Why not centrifuge the acidified milk samples, and thus make the butterfat drops get a move on?

That is what Professor Babcock did. Then he added the highly practical detail of so regulating the size and shape of the bottles he put into the machine to be whirled that the percentage of butterfat could be read off directly by the marks scored on their long necks.

Thus was the Babcock test given to the world forty years ago, and thus it remains to this day, without the change of a single essential feature. There are dozens of manufacturers of testers all over the world, making machines all the way from modest two-bottle affairs whirled by hand up to big ones holding a couple of dozen bottles, warmed by steam and driven by electric motors. But basically they are all alike. There is probably no modern invention that has so radically reformed a great industry with so little change in itself over more than half a lifetime.

*Science News Letter, October 11, 1930*

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