

A baby before treatment at University Settlement, Montreal

Combatting Casualties at the Mother's Knee

Save The Babies! They're The Country's Greatest Asset

By DORA LEMSFORD

IN the following article, the writer, an Englishwoman who has gone into the subject with considerable thoroughness, gives an insight into the way in which the war is revitalizing the women of England and awakening them to a newer, fuller sense of their national responsibilities and opportunities. We believe Everywoman's World is the first magazine on this side to present an account of what is being actually accomplished in the Old Country to-day. We do so as an inspiration to the women of Canada to do likewise and as a practical demonstration of plans which Canadian municipalities might well adopt.

THE EDITORS.



The same child after treatment. Note the healthy appearance



T'S a trite remark to say that the war is revolutionizing England; at the same time it is a fact. So great are the changes being wrought by the leveler that it is well nigh impossible for the greater Briton to grasp what is taking place; indeed, the average Englishman and Englishwoman themselves do not realize their magnitude. And, of it all, the history of the present, when it comes to be written will, I think show that the bulk of the transformation is the work of the women of the land rather than that of the men.

Life and duty are arraying themselves in entirely new colors to the Englishwoman of to-day, through the shadows cast by the death toll of the war, and this new light is penetrating every home no matter how lowly or how comfortable and secluded. Class barriers are not being roughly torn down, but they are being largely effaced by the common cause and the penalties exacted—rendering the world habitable for the citizens of the future. Perhaps one of the greatest strides made is the realization of one's neighbors. Hitherto the Englishman's home has been his castle, were he rich or poor, and the bulk of the assistance given the more needy has savored much of charity. To-day that same help, though magnified many-fold, is forthcoming, but as a rightful gift without the faintest stigma attaching to it. The more favored are simply extending the helping hand of friendship, and the needy are accepting it in a like spirit.

First and foremost the war has drawn attention to the absolute necessity of counteracting the casualties in every possible way, and inevitably His Majesty, the baby, has come to his own, and, whatever the social status of his parents, is being given every chance. "Save the babies" is the nation-wide cry, and such potent questions as "Do you know how many babies die every year in your district?" are being asked throughout the land. How many indeed! Investigation has proven the number to be almost incredible, even in comparison with the army casualties, and the women of Britain have awakened to the fact that peace has its terrors no less than war.

It has been shown that out of about 800,000 babies born every year in England and Wales, nearly ninety thousand die before they are one year old—one in every nine as against one in every twenty in New Zealand, a country of practically identical race and climate, where however, babies have had the benefit of a state educational campaign for years. To make matters worse, doctors assure us English women that nine out of every ten babies born alive in our isles are actually sound and healthy at birth, or at least capable of growing up into healthy men and women if properly cared for.

We have also learned that unnecessary disease, the traces of which linger for many years, often begins through want of knowledge during the first few weeks, or even days following birth, and that a far greater proportion of absolutely avoidable deaths take place than subsequently. Statistics show that of the 109 children per thousand living births who die in that first year, eleven die in the first four and twenty hours, and thirty in the first fortnight of life. Added to all this, a very large proportion of children on entering elementary schools are found on medical examination, to be defective in various ways, the bulk of which might have been avoided by proper infant care.

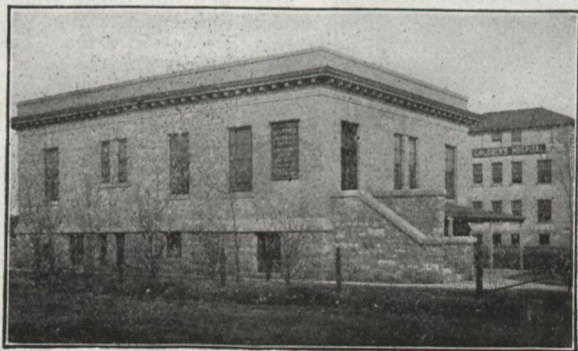
Appalling is almost too mild a word to apply to the cold fact that of our 800,000 annual births some 90,000 deaths occur in the first twelve months, to which must be added yet another hundred thousand babes who die each year during the prenatal period. A loss of infant and potential life of 190,000 a year has forced the women of England into arms to combat this "terror of the homeland"; and they intend to succeed, assured that success awaits their efforts.

Welfare Centres

AS a result, organized infant welfare work has taken hold of the whole country. Encouraged and even aided where necessary to the extent of half the financial outlay, by the Government, hundreds of welfare centres have sprung into existence. Up to September, 1917, there were no fewer than eleven hundred of them at work, of which approximately half have sprung into being since the war. Of Britain's hundred great towns of over

50,000 population, practically all have entered on the work wholeheartedly with, on an average, from six to ten centres in each. The records of medium sized cities of between 20,000 and 50,000 are equally good. There are 148 of them, and of these over 120 have taken up the work. Centres in towns of from 10,000 to 20,000 inhabitants number 150, while about one hundred more have been established in villages and rural districts. The control of these new institutions varies; some are worked entirely by municipal authorities, some by voluntary effort and the remainder by a judicious admixture of both.

Although we are now making such speedy strides in what one might almost term "baby-culture" England cannot claim credit for the origination of the science, for the first steps in infant welfare work were taken by our allies the Belgians, hard on whose heels followed the French. Nevertheless the work itself is hardly out of its infancy for it was originated in 1897—just one and twenty years since, by Dr. Eugene Lust, of Brussels, who established a depot for the provision of milk for, and the medical inspection of infants. This depot rapidly outstripped even its founder's hopes and was taken over by the Prince Charles Dispensary in 1904, at the time of the organization of the Belgian National League for the Welfare of Infants. Similar work was vigorously adopted by France, and as the success of these bodies became manifest to individual English economists, an initial attempt was made to staunch the leakage of human life at its source at a conference for the Prevention of Infant Mortality, held in London in 1906. Following this, the cities of Glasgow and Huddersfield entered the field, other cities following slowly until the spur of the war awakened the country. Once awakened and supported by both the work and well wishes of the women of the country, England is tackling the task wholeheartedly, as determined upon defeat of unnecessary death at home as on the defeat of the militarism abroad, which threatened to engulf the world.



Bureau of Child Hygiene, Dept. of Health, Winnipeg



A Baby Clinic, University Settlement, Montreal

The work done and the magnitude of the work still ahead can be judged from the fact that over seventy thousand babies are at present under the care of infant welfare centres, leaving the giant total of 730,000—almost three-quarters of a million, still unaided.

Of Interest to Canada

PERHAPS the women of Canada can best obtain an idea of the work being done, by a description of visits paid to three widely different centres—one in pulsating London, another in a sleepy old Cathedral city, where the ceaseless roar of the munition factory is unheard, and the third in one of the country's busiest smaller manufacturing towns.

The London Centre visited was the St. Pancras School for Mothers, one of the oldest in the Metropolis, it having been established for a decade. In the past year lady doctors were present twice weekly and 2,909 babies were in attendance. In addition 36 dental clinics were held. The results being achieved by this school since the war can be gathered from the figures for the past ten years. While the total births in the borough fell from 4,754 in 1915 to 4,530 in 1916, a decrease of 224, the proportion of deaths was far less, the infant mortality rate being reduced from 105 in 1915 to 85 in the following year.

The school is located in a big building in Amptill Square, and our first call on entrance was the dining hall, a bare room with one long table and forms on either side where an average of 24 expectant or nursing mothers are given a substantial dinner of two courses on five days a week, for the sum of 4d. (8 cents) a day (each dinner costs the school at least 8½d., 17 cents) and, should they have toddlers whom they cannot leave at home, they are allowed to bring them, and the babies are fed in an adjoining room for two cents each. To meet this expense the school is helped by private subscription and also by a grant from the "National Food

Fund," one of London's many war time charities.

We then inspected the weighing room, which also serves as a waiting room. The babies are weighed in basket scales on a table near a large enclosed fire by two voluntary workers, one weighing, the other recording. Unlike my experience with smaller centres, I found the wee lads and lassies did not entertain with a concert, owing to the greater comfort of the scientific scales with their almost imperceptible motion.

The third room was the day nursery, where about 15 kiddies varying from three weeks old to three years were being cared for. These were the unfortunate offspring from homes where proper care was almost impossible. They are brought at 9 a.m. and fetched at 5 p.m., and are tended by a qualified nurse, afire with enthusiasm, and coaxed back to health.

One wee man ran up to me and placed his hands in mine; his pale face was beautiful in its quality, and his eyes of violet pathetic in their longing. The secretary told me they had had him on and off since birth, that he was a very bright little man, and already showed inventive faculty. If they could manage to imbue him with sufficient strength she expected in later years, that he would be a real asset to the nation. The "inventive faculty" was evident before we left the room, for he had found a small half-moon shaped table set round with wells to hold the infants' plates which he informed us, he was about to turn into a fire engine. Economy was evident here as everywhere, for all the cots used were made out of old banana crates. The feeding bottles reposed in a deep sink filled with ever-flowing water.

From there we were ushered into the consulting room, Here Dr. Flora Shepherd sat at a table fitted with writing materials. Around her were a nurse and two voluntary helpers. The nurse attended to each case as it was called, and helped the mother prepare her child for the doctor. The assistants made the necessary notes and looked up information and past records from data kept in a case near by.

Some Typical Cases

THE one thing that impressed me was Dr. Shepherd's sympathetic kindness towards both child and mother, and the expression and manner of the mothers themselves, showing that they looked upon the doctor in the light of a friend. These places, I must again emphasize, are no charity, but the right of the poor, and this fact

above all was impressed on all by the physician. One mother brought in a mite nearly two years old. She told the doctor she had taken it to a nearby hospital and had been told there was nothing wrong. After examination, the doctor located a diseased hip, and immediately dictated a letter to a specialist, and gave the woman distinct instructions, even as to what to say when she saw the specialist. After the woman had passed out, the doctor turned to me and said, "That woman has a history. That is her tenth child, the first nine all having died at the age of three."

"What is the cause?" I asked.

"There are two," was the reply, "firstly a tubercular inclination, secondly, occasional periods of intemperance in the mother. These have been only occasional and bitterly regretted, but the nine have not been strong enough to endure against the resultant neglect. This child she is particularly anxious to rear, and we intend to help her to do so."

Another mother enters with twin boys.

"Ah, Jimmie," said the doctor, "now what's gone wrong?"

"That's not Jimmy, ma'am, that's Freddy."

A merry smile passes the doctor's countenance.

"Ah, how silly I am, of course it's Freddy. Got colds, both of them?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"What did you do last Friday night when the raid was on?"

"Got up and went to the 'tube'."

"Now, what have I told you! Did your husband go too?"

"No, ma'am, he called me a fool, refused to help me dress the boys even, and I got that nervous, I'm afraid I didn't wrap them up enough."

"So your husband stayed at home? Well Mrs. L., I'm a friend of your husband, and he's a friend of mine. You can only die once, why not die at home?"

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