

The Home Doctor

Silly Superstitions that Slay Infants

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You are a young mother. You have a new baby. The baby cries and it worries you. Do you call in your expert physician to explain the various kinds of tears that babies shed? No, your dear mother—who has "buried five of her own," and hence knows all about children—dissuades you, or your owl-wise neighbor steps into the breach and prevents; so no doctor is summoned.

"The sweet thing is teething," says the grandmother, and "it has the colic" adds the neighbor, and you yourself know if you do not give expression to the fact that "the little angel is starved to death."

Now let us calmly examine the truth. Let us at the cost of offending our loving mother, and insulting our learned neighbor, examine conditions as they are. For the infant's raucous cries are due neither to teething, to colic or to hunger. Her shrieks of anguish even before the age of tears, cannot be relieved by any well-meant measures directed towards the relief of these nonsensical and catch phrase diagnoses.

The sins and maladies that are blamed upon the teeth of youngsters, are enough to condemn the whole human race to hospital treatment or the entire nine circles of Dante's Inferno. Beginning, as teeth are wont to do, to appear in the baby's mouth towards the latter part of the first year, they continue to come for two or three years after. Teething, in a word, is a continuous, everpresent condition, normally with no more signs or symptoms than the growth of the hair, the extension of the bones or the lengthening of the infant's finger nails. The normal babe, spreading in all directions at the rate of half a pound or so each week, is "teething" day and night, with never a sound from him. The ardent mother may as well expect the child to yell at each new stretch of its ever expanding skin, as to look for the cries of what an ancient and long perpetuated superstition calls "teething."

In all my extensive experience there has never come within my ken any case of crying, coughing, fever, bowel trouble, or other illness that if properly investigated, could be honestly and without a doubt blamed upon the eruption of teeth. Whenever grandmothers, friends, neighbors or even doctors, light-heartedly blame a child's malady upon the teeth, it is time to get a skilled physician, one capable of making a painstaking search for the real source of trouble.

As for the ubiquitous neighbor with her owl-like suggestion, that the baby's war whoop was due to "colic," she should be firmly, even if not politely, given a hint that her lack of ten years snooping around hospitals and maternity wards, disqualifies her from making even snap shot diagnoses.

True enough, said neighbor may have her children and grandchildren, as Saul had his thousands, at least by the dozen. Unfortunately for the advice she gives, she fails to tell you how many long and unnecessary illnesses her perpetuated mal-observations and errors, she had thrust upon her own offspring. The accidental fact of her children's survival is for her proof positive of the efficacy of her defective treatment.

The usual American child, born at full term, of healthy parents, is destined to suffer about ten times as many ills as nature intended. Why, you ask. Well, simply because of the ignorance of its mother, and the faulty logic, following the observations of other children, of its grandmother.

When the infant bawls forth a yell, "Colic" nods the mother. She then does one of two (terrible) things. She either nurses it and makes of the child a victim, or she does it with remedies, food or other tea, or even a drug, which is worse. Perhaps, I do some of these things an injustice. The old lady could have played with the babe, until he was sick at the stomach or vomited, or both.

So the universal notion that some of these things can be done, and that nothing can be done, is a preventable. Colic is a



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TO every home there comes a time when every thought, every hope, every prayer for the future centres on the recovery of one loved one. In that hour of anguish, every means to recovery is sought—the highest medical skill, trained nurses, costly treatment. Does the price matter?

It may be so great as to stagger the imagination—a sum beyond the possible.

But does anyone ask, "Can we do it?" Money or no money, they do it. And somehow they pay.

It may mean doing without things they think they need. It may mean privations, sacrifices, hardships. They make *unbelievable* savings, they achieve the impossible, *but they get the money to pay.*

To-day in this critical period of our nationhood, there is imperative need for MONEY—vast sums of money. *Only one way now remains to obtain it.*

The nation must save, every community, every family, *every individual Canadian must save.*

If anyone says "I cannot save" let him consider to what extent he

would pinch himself to relieve the sufferings of a loved one at home; and surely he would not pinch less for our fighting brothers in France.

Without suffering actual privations, nearly every family in Canada can reduce its standard of living, can practice reasonable thrift, can make cheerful sacrifice to enrich the life-blood of the nation.

You who read this, get out pencil and paper NOW. Set down the items of your living expense. Surely you will find some items there you can do without.

Determine to do without them.

Start TO-DAY. Save your money so that you may be in a position to lend it to your country in its time of need.

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