

partment pointed out that his work had been greatly helped by the handsome present of radium which was given to the laboratory some little time ago.

Infant Feeding and the Conference of Women at Brighton.

Hardly any public utterance of the past few months has been more sensible or comes more directly to the practical consideration of some phases of the baby question than the address on "Infant Feeding," by Florence S. Willey, M.D., of London, before the conference of women at Brighton, Eng. "The feeding of infants," she said, "is one of the most important subjects with which the people of a country can concern itself, for it helps determine the full or the incomplete development of the race and hence the position which that country can hold in competition with other nations." The paper was one dealing with proper feeding, the natural and the artificial kinds. There is one kind of food, the speaker noted, that is usually left unconsidered, although of vital importance in the nourishment of the child, viz., oxygen. No arrangement for the feeding of children is complete which does not take into consideration the proper supply of fresh air and sunlight, whereby the system is afforded oxygen and the means of carrying it to the tissues to burn up the waste products. "A moment's consideration," said Dr. Willey, "will remind any one who knows the homes of the poor at first hand, that not one in a hundred children has even approximately the amount of oxygen it needs for full development, and it is further true that unless this air supply is furnished at the same time that the food is improved, much of the effort will have been in vain.

In referring to the natural food, the speaker commented on the fact that among the poorer classes this is commonly furnished, but in spite of it a majority of the children are ill-developed. One reason for this is suggested in the fact that the mother's milk is too often supplemented by solid and indigestible food which cannot nourish the child and which at the same time makes it unable to assimilate the milk that should be its food. Then again, and this is an important matter, the

mother's milk may be of poor quality so that in itself is not sufficient nourishment.

In the first matter much is now being done by health authorities, and the work is worthy of much greater development, to teach the parents that milk itself is a perfect food and that the other things are harmful. Much progress has been made in this kind of education during the past ten years. The danger of poverty in the mother's milk has not attracted very much attention, although in France there are some regulations whereby an impoverished mother may get food free while the child is young. The French are quick in recognizing economic conditions of the kind, and by them it is the child that is considered first. The question of legitimacy is not raised for a moment; it is a child, and the mother must be nurtured. In other countries failure in the child to develop properly is oftentimes laid at the door of the child, when the difficulty lies with the mother. Even the virtue of motherhood is not able to manufacture something out of nothing, although this belief is one that appeals to the poor. It seems to be the cheapest way of filling the new mouth, and the longer it can be cared for in this way by its mother the longer will be postponed the necessity of making an additional expenditure for food. Feeding of mothers is a most important factor to the health conditions of the babies of the poor, and the question of infant feeding in a community cannot be considered as solved until some means is assured that the nursing mothers shall be adequately nourished. When this is accomplished there is secured for the child a fair chance to begin the normal development towards healthy manhood or womanhood.

In her discussion of the question, Dr. Willey did not point out means to this end; this being a social problem to be worked out by each community according to its own conditions; but she did emphasize the fundamental principle that you cannot make bricks without straw, and that there cannot be built blood and bone and brain and muscle without a suitable supply of the elements out of which these structures are made.

The second portion of the address of Dr. Willey related the story more familiar to everyone — the question of the treatment of milk for infant food. Attention is