

## WHAT KILLS THE BABIES.

This diagram shows the chief causes of death among children under two years of age and the ratio of each cause to the total deaths in this age division. In each 100 deaths among children under two years of age 37 are caused by diseases of the digestive system; 23 by the impure air diseases; 19 by defects and accidents at birth; 9 by acute contagious diseases; 3 by diseases of the nervous system; 2 by tuberculosis; 2 by violence; 1 by venereal diseases, etc. 70 per cent. of such deaths can be avoided—through proper care:

## TEACH THE GIRLS ABOUT THE BABY.

There is a general feeling that we shall not make the progress that we might in preventing Infant Mortality until we teach the proper care of the baby where we teach everything else, viz., in the school. Dr. Janet Campbell's monograph is a step in the right direction, and no doubt already—though it was only issued in the end of 1910—not a few English girls have learned from it. It is only necessary that Dr. Campbell's ideas should reach the teachers, and they will be anxious to impart this knowledge to their pupils. A Bill on this subject was introduced into the House of Commons in July, 1910, by Dr. Addison, providing that all children attending public elementary schools shall, each week during school term, be provided with simple instruction in hygiene and the care of health, while each girl of the age of 12 years or more shall be adequately instructed in the care and feeding of infants. Every year about 120,000 children die in England before completing twelve months of existence as the result of improper feeding, while large numbers suffer from inadequate attention and maternal ignorance. The death-rate is very much increased in neighborhoods where the mothers have to go out to work and can only nurse their offspring morning and evening. The infants, between these periods, are looked after by older children of the family or girls hired for the purpose. Nearly one-third of the infant death-rate is due to various complaints which arise from improper feeding.

Dr. Addison says: We have no opportunities for teaching mothers of the present day, although good work is being done in some places by voluntary agencies. I consider it very necessary, in order that the next generation of mothers should understand how to feed their children properly, that instruction should be given to girls at an age when they will not be possessed by various prejudices. We find it very difficult to persuade many women of thirty years of age or more to give up feeding their children on sop and other deleterious substances. Milk is the only proper food for an infant, and I am persuaded if we can get girls to believe this, and to remember even this only, we shall reduce the infant death-rate in the next generation by 25 per cent.

Dr. Reed says: "Of course, there are many contributory causes of excessive infantile mortality, most of them preventible, but there is one which far exceeds all others in potency—namely, the prevailing ignorance among mothers as to the proper feeding of infants.

"No real headway will be made, however, until the rising generation of both sexes are systematically taught elementary health principles at school."

Dr. R. A. Lyster, the School Medical Officer to the County of Hampshire—a country in which the low infant death-rate of 83.6 per 1,000 births in 1908 may well be a subject for envy with less fortunate districts—has the same message. He says in his report for 1901:—