

*Nineteenth Century* on the feeding of the aged when he says that many a valued life has been cut prematurely off by the mistaken kindness of the loving wife and daughter who urge their victim to take more food than he can possibly consume, but we maintain that many a thousand infant and child is hurried to an early grave through the mistaken love of its mother.

In Montreal, which is among the healthiest cities in the world, but which apparently has one of the largest death rates (28 per thousand), the high mortality figures are almost entirely due to the reckless manner in which infants are fed.

The extraordinary fecundity of the French-Canadian people is proverbial. It is the exception to find a family among them numbering less than twelve, while fifteen and twenty children are quite common occurrences. But it is quite as usual for them to lose half of their offsprings before the age of five years. We are in a position to state positively that this enormous death rate is entirely due to improper feeding.

These mistakes in feeding begin almost at the hour of birth, and continue for those who successfully run the gauntlet until the age of five or six when they are saved further danger by being sent to school. While the accoucheur is attending to the after-birth some old woman has carried the infant into the adjoining room and surreptitiously administered a mixture of butter and dirty brown sugar, which sets up acid fermentation in the baby's stomach.

Then instead of putting the infant to the breast, as nature meant should be done, as soon as born, it is kept away from the breast for three days, thereby depriving it of the benefits of the colostrum which would have cleaned out the meconium from the digestive tract and had the latter sweet and clean for the reception of the first milk. On the contrary, the butter and sugar has been followed up by some starch or sugary liquid which keeps up the merry fermenta-

tion until the little bowels are bursting with carbonic acid and other gas, and the infant screams with pain. These cries are of course mistaken for hunger, when it gets another dose, perhaps every quarter of an hour. When it is put to the breast the alkaline milk is immediately soured, and the child vomits the curdled casein in lumps. At this stage its life is sometimes saved by a dose of castor oil which cleans out the digestive track and gives it a fresh start. But every time it cries it will surely be nursed, "little and often." Now let us ask, what takes place in the stomach when a child is fed, let us say every quarter of an hour, which has been the average interval in many cases to our knowledge?

Will the digestion of the first lot be completed and out of the stomach in a quarter of an hour? Certainly not. Will the entrance of the second and third lots interfere with the digestion of the first? We would like to hear this question answered by one more competent to do so, but common sense tells us that they will, and that the whole process must be begun over again as often as a fresh supply comes in.

The horrors of the feeding bottle with a long rubber tube are, we presume, sufficiently well understood. On passing a druggist's window the other day we noticed a gross of them stacked up as an advertisement; but the image of the bottles was soon replaced by the vision of a hundred little coffins filled next July with their little wasted occupants.

In one of the out-patient's rooms of a Berlin Clinic the walls are decorated with nearly three hundred feeding bottles with rubber tubes which have been taken from the mothers of sick infants as the preliminary step towards saving the latter's lives. The habit of irregular feeding is continued as the infant grows, so that many children never eat a regular meal. The mother's excuse for the wrong doing is, that as the child did not eat its dinner she could not refuse it a cake an hour later. And when it is