

A Plea for the Babies

IT HAS been truly said that it is twice as dangerous to be a baby as to have smallpox. Infant mortality is alarmingly high in our large cities, especially in the poorer quarters, where the people are crowded in tenements that are conspicuous for their lack of sanitary equipment. Naturally the mortality is highest where such conditions exist, but unsanitary surroundings are not alone, to be held responsible for this slaughter of the innocents, which has reached such proportions that it is stated that the infant death rate is twice as high as that of untreated typhoid fever.

Maternal ignorance is a far more potent factor in this terrible destruction of life than any kind of environment, nor is this charge confined to the poorer section of the population. Many women, otherwise well informed, are lamentably ignorant on the subject of infant care. Compared with adults, children have a disproportionately small amount of vital force with which to resist disease, but their capacity for recuperation is also greater in proportion. Were it not for this fact, the mortality among infants would be appalling. Prevention is always better than cure, but with children it is pre-eminently so, hence the necessity for mothers, both actual and prospective, to seek instruction on this most important subject.

Gastro-intestinal troubles are the principal ones that beset children, and are as prominent a cause of infantile convulsions as teething. One form of this class of troubles is especially common, namely, diarrhoea, but this is almost invariably due to infection of food, principally milk. This statement is borne out by the fact that the children of Jewish parents, no matter how poor they may be, are practically exempt from diarrhoea, because Hebrew mothers always nurse their own children. Here is where precaution is particularly applicable. Mothers should suckle their own offspring, or if that is a physical impossibility, then the milk should be safeguarded in every possible manner by being pasteurized under strictly hygienic conditions.

But when disease presents itself, ignorance or carelessness frequently tends to make recovery problematical, or, at least, to aggravate the trouble and retard recovery. Mothers are prone to resort to some remedy that has been recommended to them by some one, equally ill-informed, or to some panacea that has a reputation among her friends, as a wonder worker in childish disorders. Laxatives, even when composed of such seemingly innocent ingredients as simple herbs, become dangerous by habitual use. Constipation in babies may usually be relieved by the injection of a teaspoonful of sweet oil, or even by the introduction of a soap pencil, but if the milk is carefully looked to, little trouble in that direction will be experienced.

Perhaps the most dangerous foe to infant life is that ready resort of the careless or ignorant mother—the soothing syrups. The number of lives that have been sacrificed through their use can only be faintly estimated. Not less harmful is paregoric. Many mothers and nurses who mistrust soothing syrups will administer paregoric, because, at least, the constitution of this drug is known, but its use is detrimental to the child's health, and no child to whom it is habitually administered will ever attain to thoroughly robust adult life, even if its days are not prematurely cut short.

Patent medicines should be rigorously tabooed. Risky in all cases, they are especially so where children are concerned. Apart from the possibility of deleterious ingredients, few people know the effect of cumulative doses. Even the most harmless substances may become positively dangerous by too persistent use. Even such a simple substance as camphor has been known to produce convulsions. Yet many a mother, who would rather die than injure her child, falls into the error of

imagining that a remedy is void of harm because she is familiar with it, and therefore safe for the baby.

There are numbers of harmful practices in common use, all of which are inimical to the welfare of the baby. One of them is, putting the child to the breast immediately, or soon after it has vomited. Under such conditions, many mothers will commence to trot the baby up and down, than which nothing could be more harmful. The stomach needs rest, and nothing should be administered but a little warm water, in a teaspoon, until the condition passes. It is an unwise practice to keep the baby's milk warm for any length of time. Milk for the baby should always be kept cool, and warmed only when wanted. Warmth favors the development of bacteria, and milk is an admirable culture medium. It is a reprehensible practice to dilute the baby's milk too much, as it thereby loses its anti-scorbutic quality. It is positively dangerous to feed a baby altogether on either sterilized or condensed milk, as it is exceedingly likely to induce scurvy.

The quotation at the commencement of this article does not seem to be extreme when we consider the countless dangers that beset the infant, especially during its first few months of life, and, not from sources hostile to it, but

we have direct and full control, is mastication. Thorough chewing of the food and its consequent incorporation with the salivary juice lightens the burden of gastric digestion enormously, and is a long step toward perfect assimilation.

The exposed part of a healthy tooth is covered with enamel, the hardest structure in the body. Ninety-six per cent or more of the enamel is composed of mineral matter, which accounts for its compactness.

Externally, the enamel covers the dentine or ivory, which makes up the great bulk of the tooth and surrounds the inner, narrow cavity of the root which is composed of nerves, blood-vessels, and a delicate network of fibrous tissue. This is the pulp of the tooth, but it is more commonly known among the laity as the nerve because of its great sensitiveness.

Each tooth is set in a bony pocket or cavity of the jaw, and is fixed in place by a dense fibrous membrane. The gums, a continuation of the mucous membrane of the mouth, surround and protect the teeth as they emerge from their bony sockets.

A Foul Mouth

Most people are very particular, and rightly so, about having their food and drink clean and free from filth, but unfortunately, a large number seem to be very careless when it comes to cleanliness of the mouth. Indeed, a foul mouth reeking with the vile odors of germs, decaying teeth, putrefying food,

kinds. The plain precipitated dry chalk may also be used in cleansing the teeth. It matters little what the dentifrice is, provided it is free from injurious ingredients and is used faithfully at least once each day.

Bear in mind that the milk teeth of a child require more care and attention than those of an adult, for they are less dense in structure and hence more subject to decay.

The teeth are given us for service as well as ornamentation. They are formed of the hardest tissue found in the body, and nature intended them to be used for chewing and grinding the food. It is a law of physiology that if an organ is neglected and disused, it promptly weakens, atrophies and becomes more or less useless. Put your arm in a sling for a few months, and it soon becomes feeble and powerless. The same law also applies to the teeth. Consequently, it is a great mistake to feed solely upon slops and soft, mushy food. Reasonably hard foods are required in order to keep the teeth in a healthy fit state. If they are not properly utilized in the process of mastication, there is not only great danger of their softening and becoming decayed but they are also liable to get loose in their sockets and become more or less useless. The very act of chewing strengthens the jaw and, in the case of children, enlarges it for the permanent teeth. Give the teeth, as well as the muscles, daily exercise if you would maintain them in a healthy and efficient state.

Influence of Diet on the Teeth

Another important consideration about the diet is the water and quantity of salts it contains. For the proper development of hard teeth, a sufficient quantity of lime and other earthy salts are essential. Wholemeal bread and graham bread is far superior to white bread in this respect, and either may truly be regarded as the staff of life. Oatmeal and barley porridge are also valuable in this respect.

We believe it would be wise for everyone to call upon the dentist at least once a year for the purpose of having the teeth inspected and starting decay attended to. The dentist will be able to remove tartar or other deposits on the teeth, and will detect the first beginnings of decay. Further decay is easily remedied by a small stopping, and the life and usefulness of the tooth are thus preserved.

A Few Hints

Avoid extremes of both heat and cold in food and drinks.

Avoid vinegar and similar acids. This precaution does not apply to the mild acids found in the ordinary fruits.

Avoid medicines, and particularly iron tonics and hydrochloric or other acid draughts.

Avoid cracking nuts. The teeth were not intended for this purpose, and there is danger of chipping off the enamel, thus leading to early decay.

Be strict about keeping the mouth clean by rinsing and gargling it frequently, and also by brushing all food particles that gather about and cling to the teeth.

Avoid slops and fluid foods as far as possible. Take zwieback or hard biscuits with your soup and other soft foods, and endeavor to give the teeth a reasonable amount of exercise daily.

The Key to the Graveyard

There is said to be an old church near Berlin, Germany, which is very attractive to tourists. The graveyard back of the church is kept locked, but on a gate is the following notice: "The key to the graveyard is to be found in the tavern." This is an undesigned statement of a great truth. A great army of men annually find the key that opens the way for them into the graveyard by going into the tavern. They not only unlock the graveyard to themselves, but oftentimes to innocent children and helpless women who are dependent upon them.—"American Issue."

THE BLUE BONNET

By Ada Stewart Sheldon

My true love wears a bonnet
To frame her winsome face,
No lace or ribbons on it,
Yet 'tis a thing of grace;
And when that fetching bonnet
She ties beneath her chin,
I give my word upon it
She ties one's heart within.

The color of that bonnet
Is like to heaven's blue,
Fit for a poet's sonnet,
For dreams the long night through.
It knows no freak of fashion,
It shields from sun and heat,
Who would not have a passion
For anything so sweet?

Oh, dear me! and oh, dear me!
That bonnet made of blue
Has cast a spell, I fear me,
I never can break through.
And when I see her don it
With such a witching air,
That darning blue sun-bonnet
I'd follow anywhere!

chiefly from those who have its interests most at heart, but who, from lack of knowledge, subject it to a multitude of dangers.

What is the remedy? It lies in a campaign of education among the present and future mothers of the land. Considering the magnitude of the interest at stake, it should be made a national issue. Money should be appropriated to establish training schools for mothers, and to furnish a corps of instructors to visit the homes, especially in the poorer localities, to teach mothers, at least, the rudimentary principles of conserving infant life. Considerable work is being done in this direction, especially in New York, but not of any comprehensive manner. It is a matter fraught with the greatest interest to the world at large.

How to Preserve the Teeth

By Alfred B. Olsen, M. D.

It is a real distinction nowadays and a badge of health aristocracy for an adult to possess thirty-two natural teeth, even though some of them contain stoppings or have been provided with crowns.

Nevertheless, there are few people who do not appreciate the great value of sound teeth. A good set of teeth is necessary, not only to give character to the mouth itself, but also for the purpose of clear, distinct speech, and, most important of all, for the proper mastication of the food. The first step of digestion, and the only one over which

and often tobacco is, unfortunately, not nearly as uncommon as it ought to be. Such a condition of the mouth is positively a menace to good health, and is frequently a direct cause, not only of an offensive breath, which makes such a person's company anything but pleasant; but also of various disturbances of digestion, bringing in their train much physical discomfort, as well as bodily weakness and anemia.

There is no excuse for a dirty mouth. It simply means gross carelessness on the part of the owner. If the neglect has been of long duration, it is usually necessary to have the worst of the teeth drawn and others properly stopped, in order to insure a clean mouth.

The mouth should be washed each morning on rising, and also after each meal. A pinch of salt in a glass of water makes a simple and efficient mouth wash.

If decay and putrefaction have been going on in the mouth, it will be necessary to use some mild antiseptic such as peroxid of hydrogen, or some similar preparation properly diluted with water as a wash.

Cleansing Agents

Mere rinsing is not sufficient to keep the teeth clean, and a medium soft brush will be required. It is poor economy to buy a cheap brush, for the bristles soon come out and become a great nuisance when brushing the teeth.

As a dentifrice, any of the above antiseptics might be utilized to advantage. Some prefer a cream paste which contains a precipitated chalk, as well as mild antiseptics of various