

WHEN SAVING FOOD WHY WASTE THE BABIES?



Reproduction of a poster issued by the Council of the National Baby Week, which was celebrated throughout Great Britain and Ireland from July 1st to 7th, its aim being to arouse the sense of responsibility in every citizen in order to secure to every child born in the United Kingdom a birthright of mental and bodily health.

At least thirty and at most forty per cent. of infant deaths can be scientifically prevented.

A Vital Phase of What Women are Doing By LOUISE MASON

S AID Mrs. Smith to Mrs. Jones: "Oh, I'm so sorry, I won't be able to go to your bridge this afternoon. Jimmie has come down with the whooping-cough. Such a nuisance when we are really just out of quarantine for measles; but I suppose children must have these things and the sooner it's over the better."

YET last year in the United States six out of every ten children, under two years of age, who contracted whooping-cough died of it. Ten thousand citizens needlessly lost to the State largely because that many mothers still cling to the fetish that the "incurring of children's diseases" is part and parcel of the normal child's life. So while the medical profession talks itself hoarse over the criminal laxness regarding infectious diseases, little Jimmie Smith goes gaily forth to whoop for the edification of the small Joneses and incidentally provides them with a whoop of their own.

It would be bad enough if the thousands of little graves—much more unnecessary than those larger ones in France and Flanders—were the only result of this gross negligence. But the cases of defective eye-sight following measles, and the number of children whose impaired hearing dates back to a bout of scarlet fever never appear in their country's vital statistics. Still they play a most important part when a world war makes the efficiency of our manhood a matter of national life or death.

Conscription may be the immediate answer to the demand for men enough to replace ten thousand casualties a month in the Canadian army, but conscription can

BECAUSE babies are being wasted wholesale in England there was a national baby week last month. In this connection Mary Scharlieb writes in *The Fortnightly* and says: Out of every thousand babies conceived, two hundred and fifty—that is, one-quarter—die before birth or during the first year of extra-uterine life.

In 1915, nine soldiers died every hour, but twelve babies died in the same space of time. Ten per cent. of all children entering the elementary schools are physically unfit; and Approximately one million men have been rejected by the army because they were physically unfit.

The subject has to be viewed from many different points—e.g., we ought to consider the present mortality of children before birth and during the first year of life; we ought to consider the excessive incidence and unduly high mortality of such diseases as measles, whooping-cough, and tuberculosis; we ought to take into account the fact that syphilis is responsible for a heavy percentage both of intra-uterine deaths and for deaths in early infancy. We must also acknowledge that, unless recognized and properly treated, syphilis causes the invaliding of many children, and that, together with gonorrhoea, it is responsible for more than 50 per cent. of all the blindness in the country, and as parents, philanthropists, and rate-payers we have to realize that the crippling, the blindness, and the deafness caused by these diseases inflict misery and inefficiency on the children.



Duchess of Marlborough, who worked hard to make a success of the National Baby Week Motherhood campaign.

never make good the young citizens lost annually in the Infants' Homes and institutions throughout the country where wrong methods produce a death rate of from 65 to 95 per cent. of the inmates. This high mortality obtains also in practically all hospitals where very young children are housed together, a fact which has led the medical profession to advocate the abandoning of an obsolete and dangerous method, for the cottage and foster homes systems.

Admitting that the child is father to the man—except in those cases where providence has slipped a cog and made the child a girl—there is no question of greater national importance at the present moment than the reduction of our infant mortality. How delicate is the problem may be gathered from the fact that a newborn child has fewer chances of living a week than a man of ninety, and of living a year than a man of eighty. Add to this the much better known fact that the largest families are usually to be found among the poorer classes and you have immediately given the new entries in the race of life additional handicaps in the form of poverty, dirt, and ignorance. This trinity is the chief factor in producing an abnormally high infant mortality.

Unfortunately, the spirit of the world towards its newcomers is similar to that of the paragraph in a recent number of "Punch," which read: "Triplets have been born in Manchester. The father is doing as well as can be expected." Perhaps he is, but that does not imply a great deal. It is only in the last forty years that the duty not only of the parent, but the state, to its future men and women has received serious consideration. And we haven't gone far yet. Not with the scientific fact staring us coldly in the face that from thirty to forty per cent. of our infant deaths are preventable.

In 1914 an investigation of the infant mortality in the following representative cities of the Dominion: Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Hamilton, London, Winnipeg and Edmonton showed a rate of deaths per thousand ranging from 144 in Toronto to 290 in Montreal. Of these cities the only ones making any effort toward the reduction of this mortality were Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Hamilton and Winnipeg. Quebec, which had been unable to supply any statistics on the subject, was contenting itself with the distribution of pamphlets that were doubtless never read by the people who really needed the

information; and Edmonton's sole effort was "a strict supervision over the general milk supply."

TO show the other side of the shield. In Hamilton, where they have a "Babies' Dispensary" at which milk is distributed and infant consultations held, the number of deaths from gastro-intestinal affections so popular with babies was reduced 52 per cent. in three years. Another interesting example of what can be accomplished by "applied science" is Fort William, whose medical officer, Dr. Wodehouse, with the assistance of one visiting nurse, cut the mortality among bottle-fed infants exactly in two, and reduced the number of deaths from gastro-intestinal diseases during the summer months from sixty-three in 1910 to six in 1912. While through its "Well Baby Clinics" and similar efforts, Toronto was able last year, for the first time in her history, to boast a lower infant mortality than New York where, despite many adverse conditions, science and philanthropy had secured a wonderful reduction through such agencies as the milk depots, lectures to mothers on the hygiene and feeding of their babies; and the League of Little Mothers which three years after its inception by Dr. Josephine Baker numbered twenty thousand members.

In these days of advanced science we may doubt the luck of a child born with a silver spoon in its mouth—unless the said spoon was properly sterilized. But no one who has visited an up-to-date maternity hospital can question the good fortune of the small visitor that makes his arrival there. A happy example of modern ideas in this regard, and one open to the poorest member of the community, is the department of the Toronto General Hospital known as the Burnside. It is, perhaps, of even greater interest because the methods used there were copied from the most advanced institution of the kind in America, and are in turn being reproduced in the Montreal Maternity Hospital.

Absolute cleanliness strikes the visitor as the key-note of the wards, where many a mother is receiving, perhaps unconsciously, her first lesson in the value of asepsis. She certainly would not call it that, but nevertheless the delightful immaculateness of her baby when it is brought every four hours for the necessary nourishment will probably bear fruit in better maternal attention when mother and child return to the often squalid environments of home. Nor could a royal princess fare better than

