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About the Baby

By KATHLEEN E. STEACY

That Everlasting White!

WHITE has always been the baby's colour, but the wisdom of this is being questioned, and we are proving it wrong.

A new baby's eyes are not strong and are not accustomed to the light. A bright or strong light will make him wriggle uncomfortably, screw up his little face and make wrinkles across his little nose. Then we move him or the light, and think we have done our duty.

But have we? Listen to this baby's wail:

"White! Ugh! It hurts my eyes and my head and my face. All my clothes are white—some of 'em stiff, when company's coming. My bed is white—it's soft, of course, but it's *all* white. How I hate it! They say white is the baby's colour, but they're wrong—these so-very-stupid-grown-ups! White isn't a colour at all. It's only the lack of colour, and what do you call *that*? Nice state of affairs, isn't it, to be clothed in a *lack* of something!"

"When my nurse takes me up, it is only to hold me in stiff, shiny arms, and she lays my little soft head—I haven't any hair, you know—against a stiff, hard, shiny breast! When my little Mumsie comes in to see me, I gasp for joy, because she wears soft, fluffy things in dear, soft, baby colours; but the hard, shiny nurse ties her into a stiff, shiny apron that comes up all over her—afraid of 'germs' she says; what are 'germs' and where did I get 'em? — and Mumsie takes me on that hard, shiny apron, and oh, dear me, I cry! And when they put me back into that white bed, I dream of a nice, motherly bosom where I can cuddle my head! Could you do that—against starch?"

"They say my room is sanitary; I don't know what *that* means, unless it is that it's afraid of 'germs'—the 'germs' I have, you know. And so to protect itself, my room, and everything in it, is hard and white and shiny—how that everlasting *shine* hurts my eyes! The woodwork is white and the walls are white; the curtains are white and the ceiling is white; my cot is white and the table is white; the chairs are white and the rug on the floor.

"I've no place to look and nothing to look at! I can't keep my eyes closed *all* the time—I wish I could!"

"One day, one beautiful day, Mumsie took me to visit another baby, and I never had such a perfectly lovely time in all my life! We played in a perfectly heavenly nursery! The rug was a soft green and the ceiling a delicate tan. The walls were soft green, too, with the most enchanting frieze of Mother Goose pictures, in greens and yellows and browns, all round. The woodwork was a tan, and there were a few fascinating pictures on the walls. The curtains were tan something-or-other and had the cutest little vine-things running up and down the edges. Some of the chairs were green twiggy-stuff and some were brown.

"I had on my stiff, white, company clothes; I looked a fright and I felt a scream! The other baby had the dearest little frock of soft green and a string of gold beads. I wanted all that room and everything in it, but I wanted those beads most of all!"

"I cried when they took me away, and I wanted to die—I was ill—when they put me back into my stiff, hard, shiny room. Oh dear! (That's the only swear word I know.)"

The Baby and His Dinner

IF we could go further and fathom baby's opinion on the myriad phases of its existence, on the little items imposed by

devoted parents out of the depths of their love, apparently for baby's good, what would be the diminutive decision? Consider for instance, his dinner.

Have you ever noticed a baby refuse, positively push aside, with tiny protesting hands, a bottle of what elders would consider enticing liquid food?

And what, the comment? "Poor little fellow, he's tired!" "He's sleepy", or—"He can't be hungry, he had a bottle only an hour ago."

Did it ever occur to you mothers that the child may not like it? That he may have, yet in the embryo, power of discrimination where taste is concerned?

On the other hand, a baby has seldom, or mayhap, never been known to refuse mother's milk. It would not be natural.

The mother who nurses her baby gives him a hold on life that the bottle baby cannot have. Vastly more bottle babies die during the first year of their lives than those fed on mother's milk. The latter are far less liable to infectious diseases. Mother's milk is especially designed for, and accurately suited to the needs of the child. It becomes the nucleus of his brain and brawn, it is an integral part of his nervous system.

From it emanates the stamina to withstand illness and the elasticity to recover.

The mother who does not nurse her baby invites and misuses much; she invites endless trouble and experiments with milk and foods, countless hours spent in sterilizing bottles and nipples, and everlasting anxiety lest the milk should be or should become contaminated. She misses—well, if your little girl had to give up her rag baby every two or three hours to the care of a glass bottle—yes?

The Mother's Health

THE mother who wishes her baby to be strong and healthy, must look after her own health. This depends as much on her mental condition as on her physical. She must avoid worry, excitement, fatigue, over exertion and anger. The nursing mother cannot afford to give way to fits of bad temper—not if she values her baby's nerves and digestion. She should, so far as possible live a quiet, serene life, and cultivate a cheery disposition.

She must give attention also to her diet. This should be plain, but nourishing. She must avoid highly seasoned foods, acids of all kinds, unripe fruits and vegetables, and sudden changes of diet; eat meat in moderation—once a day is sufficient; use bran in bread and biscuits, or with oatmeal for porridge; use cornmeal in bread or porridge; milk if it does not induce biliousness or constipation. These two disorders—especially constipation—must be avoided if mother and baby are to be healthy, strong and happy.

The value of an abundance of fresh air for both mother and baby cannot be overestimated. Keep the baby outside, in a cool spot in summer, and out of drafts in the winter, when sleeping as well as when awake, and do not overlook giving the little one a drink of water occasionally.

Though every mother's attention should be primarily to the baby, especially during the first year of his life, scientific consideration of her own physical fitness is essential. It is vital. It is one of the chief arguments for "better babies."

Menus for the Nursing Mother

Any recipe will be sent for a three-cent stamp.

MONDAY

Breakfast.—Farina with Dates and Cream. Poached Eggs on Toast. Milk.