

OBSTETRIC NURSING.

— BY OBSTETRICA, M.R.B.N.A. —

PART II.—INFANTILE.

CHAPTER V.—HAND FEEDING.

(Continued from page 289.)

At their completion, this Course of Lectures will be published as one of the Series of "Nursing Record Text Books and Manuals."

WE will begin with the *milk*. In country houses it could be obtained fresh and pure, and so far the advantage was immense, and we may dismiss any suspicion of impurity (except, perhaps, *organic*) from our minds; but as the larger part of our little patients are born in cities and towns, we will confine our remarks, for the present, to the difficulties that used to beset us in former days, and, to a large extent, do still in—the urban milk supply; and if I appear to dwell upon the matter somewhat tediously, I must ask the kind forbearance of my readers, in consideration of the immeasurable importance of *pure milk* for the food of our infants, and by pointing out to my young Nursing readers some of the obstacles that stood in our path in former days. They can then the better judge for themselves to what a beneficent extent modern enterprise and advanced sanitary knowledge have helped us in this difficult matter of infantile nutrition, which I have ever regarded as one of the most practical and interesting portions of Obstetric Nursing. We will confine ourselves for the present to *urban* milk supply, and traverse a period of about twenty years, when our modern feeding-bottle was in almost universal use. There were two sources of supply in London and other great cities. Town cows kept by town milkmen, and housed for nearly all the year round in town cow-sheds, for we know, for instance, that the heart of London is a long way from the fields, and the dairy(?)man retailed the milk to his own private customers; he never dreamed of *buying* from the country, and if supplies fell short, the town water made good the deficiency, the cream(?) being conspicuous by its absence *in* the milk, while its presence(?) (on order) in a curious *conglomeration* contained in *very* small cans adorned the outer margin of Mr. Chalk's large cans. When a town baby made his appearance in the household, Mr. C. became an important personage, and entered into a sort of unwritten covenant to supply the new-comer with milk from *one cow* only, such being the medical

direction. This milk was brought in a separate can, and we had to take it, like our fellow creatures, as we found it. Nurse had the charge of and kept it for baby's food, and in those days it was considered that in this *keeping apart* of the milk for a special purpose, *all* was done that could be done—save its further dilution with water! Miles upon miles of London streets were supplied with milk upon the lines I have just pointed out.

The next advance in urban supplies, and a very great advance, was the establishment of the Metropolitan dairy companies, the most of whom had suburban *farms*, and one of them I know was (I daresay it is a railway junction now) simply perfect in all its arrangements. Like the dairyman, the dairy companies retailed the milk to their own customers, and sent it out from the farm by their own men, and it was the produce of their own cows; it was *not* bought up first and sold afterwards. For the most part suburban residents got the benefit of these admirable innovations, although many town families were supplied as well, and in that case our baby's milk was sent and sealed in a separate can, and guaranteed to be always from the same cow—according to routine. I am not prepared to say it was immaculate, but it was immeasurably better than Mr. Chalk's, and, as a consequence, less deteriorated by the *water* Nurse had to put to it. And thus far we can see the milk purveyors both worked on similar lines—they dealt in the produce of *their* own cows. The next move was the appearance in London and large provincial cities of *milk buyers*, as well as sellers—factors (dare I say manufacturers?)—who bought milk from farmers all over the country and had the supplies sent to them daily. Unlike the Dairy Company, these middlemen did not *distribute* the milk; they sold it retail in their shops, and wholesale to smaller dealers. There was no particular pains taken to secure *quality* or purity, so long as the milk was *saleable*—that seemed to satisfy all requirements. One result of these arrangements was to "muddle up the milks," not only of different farms, but different cows, and our instructions to give baby the milk from *one cow* was impossible of attainment. If these commercial undertakings concerned cabbages, instead of one of the most sensitive, perishable and important articles of food, there would be nothing to say about them, but until the Adulteration Act came into force the public had no protection at all from unfair trade practices. But now milk sellers must take

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