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POISONOUS MILK.

THE Health Department of Chicago is making some very unwelcome visits to various quarters in the great city; and for some time past the milk-sellers and cow-keepers have had a bad time. None to soon, however, if one-tenth of the allegations are true, and not soon enough, alas, to save the colossal sacrifice of infant life that has been laid on the sacred altar of profit in poison. In one place, seventy-five miserable cows were found penned tight together in a dirty unventilated shed, mostly fed on the distillery refuse, which, under the name of "slops," and in impudent defiance of the law, has hitherto formed the staple "food" of the "dairy-fed" Chicago cow. In another place, seventy cows were ranged close together in front of a feeding trough, without space enough to lie down. These poor animals were chiefly nourished on the refuse of a vinegar factory. In one shed, fifteen feet square, were ten cows in indescribable filth and an atmosphere too abominable for description. It is of small wonder that infant mortality is so high in Chicago. The amazing thing is that any one single baby, fed on such unhealthy milk, from such a contaminated source, ever lives to childhood. But why has not the H.D. found all this out sooner? One would have thought that next to drains and water supply the supply of milk comes ahead of everything else

in importance. How is it that with a strong law at their back, such as that which forbids the ownership of more than three cows by one dealer, the health authorities of Chicago have only just discovered how calmly the law is ignored? On this head the *Chicago Tribune* utters words of practical common sense:—"The infant mortality in this city is very large," it says. "How much of it is due to the poisonous germs swallowed in this alleged milk it is hard to determine; but it must play no small part in this colossal crime of infanticide. The Health Department must go for the milk-men. If it does not, the people must go for the Health Department. If it fails to do its duty, it is *particeps criminis* with the vendors of diseased and bogus milk. It is time to stop the sale of it, and protect the children." But are we at home as fully protected from contaminated or impoverished milk as we ought to be? Are the various dairies in London and elsewhere under that continuous and conscientious supervision and inspection necessitated by the vital issues depending on the milk trade? When one sees carts going about the streets bearing the legend—"Pure milk, 3d. a quart," a grave suspicion crosses the mind that the babies of the poor are being cheated out of their share of cream, and that the delicious cream in white and brown pots, so easy and pleasant to buy, is robbing Peter, whose future is injured by the fraud, to pay Paul, whose present cup of afternoon tea is cheered by the addition of a luxury. Of course, it must tell against the health and goodness of the milk, when the producers of it are kept penned up in ill-lighted places without exercise; and it is probable that far, far more than we think, disease is handed on to generation after generation through the unnaturally produced milk on which bottle-reared babies are fed. But however desirable it may be to make it illegal to keep cows without adequate land on which to feed them, and so depriving them of that life out-of-doors, without which they cannot be healthy, any such legislation is in the future, and what lies in the immediate present, is to keep a sharp look-out on the cheap milk that is hawked about, and to prevent the sale of so-called skim-milk by the ordinary milk purveyor to the general public. The writer of this article saw one of the former remove the card announcing "skim-milk at 3d. per quart," the other morning, and substitute another—"Fresh new milk." And there is little doubt that he charged his poor customers the full price for a very deteriorated article. "The price of liberty is eternal vigilance," might well be altered into "the price of health is eternal vigilance." But if the public made a little more fuss about poor or dirty milk, there would not be the fraud there is, carried on in spite of, and in full knowledge of, the law. "The cow with the iron tail" is good as a witty and pithy epitome of the origin of poor milk, but it is disastrous as a fact. But what an amount of educating is necessary before public conscience can be expected to be keen on the subject of pure milk, when, at a recent Agricultural Conference in Surrey, we have one of the "conferrers," a farmer, stating that he "did not think the milk of a cow suffering from pleuro-pneumonia was at all unwholesome!"

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