

Notes on Practical Nursing

POINTS IN THE FEEDING AND NURSING OF CHILDREN.

Dr. Charles P. B. Chubbe, Hon. Surgeon to Prince Alfred Hospital Sydney, and the Sydney Hospital for Sick Children, in an interesting lecture on the Nursing of Sick Children, delivered before the Australasian Trained Nurses' Association, begins by saying that to speak on this subject to trained nurses may appear to many superfluous and unnecessary. He believes, however, and we are in cordial agreement with him, that though a nurse thoroughly trained in a hospital for adults, not containing a children's ward, will find no special difficulty in nursing children from six years old and upwards, yet she often finds herself completely at sea "without rudder or compass to guide her," when dealing with infants and children in the baby stage. Though very young children cannot speak they more often than not express themselves in no uncertain manner, but

unless the nurse has learnt to interpret signs that such children always make all this information is withheld from her, and it only by being constantly with children, and being watchful and observant, that this unwritten language can be learnt.

Dr. Chubbe gives the further advice that if you want to be successful in nursing sick children you should take every opportunity of carefully observing healthy ones. Watch them sleeping and waking, laughing and crying, at meals and at play; feel their pulse and notice their respirations.

We may also add learn to dress and undress a healthy baby, for there are very few nurses, even

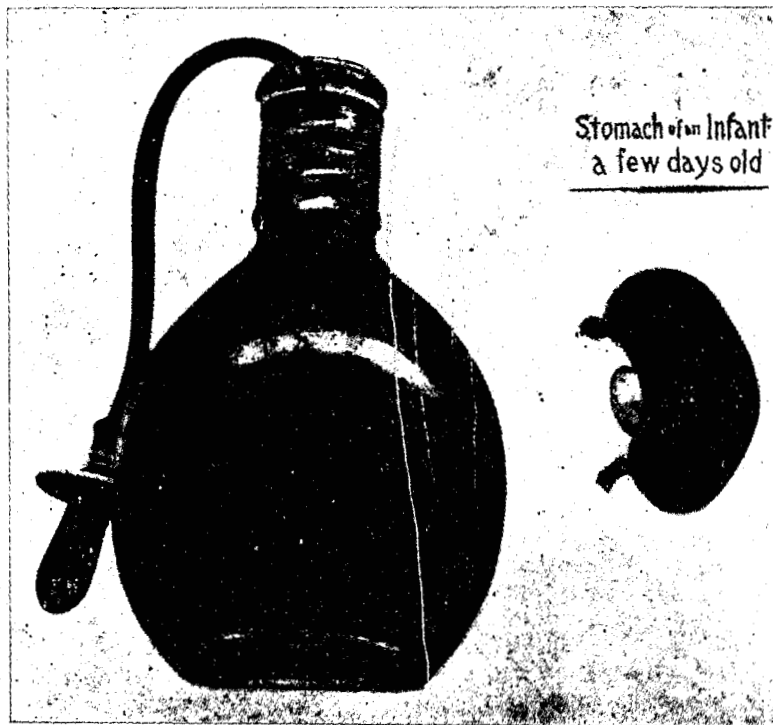
those who have had experience in children's wards, who know how to bathe and dress an infant, and if this is the case how can they possibly take proper care of a sick one?

Again, a point which it is important that nurses should realise is the capacity of an infant's stomach, otherwise they may err on the side of overfeeding, more especially as the bottles usually supplied for the use of hand-fed babies hold much more than they can possibly take. The following table of gastric capacities given by Dr. Chubbe is taken from Rotch's book. These capacities are taken from actual measurements.

SIZE OF AN INFANT'S STOMACH.

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|-------------------|----------------------|
| At birth | Five-sixths to 1 oz. |
| Four weeks old | 2½ ozs. |
| Eight weeks old | 3.2 ozs. |
| Twelve weeks old | 3.33 ozs. |
| Sixteen weeks old | 3.56 ozs. |
| Twenty weeks old | 3.6 ozs. |

A trained nurse, Dr. Chubbe says, ora half or even a quarter-trained nurse, is supposed to know all about the feeding of infants and infantile complaints. She is often appealed to by anxious mothers on various points. She is regarded as a sort of oracle, anything



RELATIVE SIZE OF FEEDING BOTTLE AND STOMACH.

she says must be true and correct because she is a trained nurse. Many people would far rather have a nurse's opinion on some detail in infant feeding than a doctor's, and I daresay some nurses are quite competent to give such advice. But people should remember that as "it is not the cowl that makes the monk," so it is not the uniform that makes the nurse. When any of you are asked to give an opinion on these matters, it is most important that you should know what you are talking about, and be careful what you say. You are appealed to as an expert, so your responsibility is great. A careless word from you may cost a child its life.

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