

the nature of the disease, it is necessary for me to deal with the very important question of its terminology.

WRONG NOMENCLATURE.

I have taken as the title of my lecture the only authorised term at present, because it is the only official term—the term *Epidemic Diarrhœa*. The adoption of this name for the disease is much to be regretted. In the first place it is wrong, because on all sound principles of the nomenclature of diseases we should always avoid labelling a disease by its symptoms.

You may be suffering from toothache—that is not a disease, it is only the means of drawing your painful attention to the fact that you are suffering from dental caries, and the disease is not the toothache, but the dental caries which gives rise to it. Therefore, the terminology of this disease is wrong, because the diarrhœa is not the disease at all—it is one of the symptoms of the disease, and, what is more, it is a symptom which represents an attempt of nature to cure. It is nature's attempt to void the poisons, and although the diarrhœa may be so exhausting as to kill the patient, nevertheless this does not interfere with the fact that the diarrhœa is an essential part of the process of removing the poisons from the infant attacked by the disease, so that the *motif* of the diarrhœa is essentially beneficent.

If the terminology in this respect is unsatisfactory, it is altogether misleading in another respect, because the disease is *never* epidemic. This is so important that I must explain to you certain facts in regard to infants which are very inadequately appreciated at the present time. Babies are remarkably immune from all epidemic disease. Scarlet fever and measles are well-known typical epidemic diseases. They attack large numbers of the community, particularly children, but they very seldom attack babies. Chicken pox is almost the only form of epidemic disease that at all commonly attacks babies, and, as you know, it is one of the trivial forms. Not long ago we had an infant approaching the age of childhood in the hospital; it was attacked with measles, and we learned, when we questioned the mother, that her other child had been removed to a fever hospital suffering from the same disease. We remonstrated with her for bringing her child to the hospital without mentioning the fact. The baby was removed from the hospital, but not a single infant in the hospital contracted measles. I draw your attention to the facts in regard to this Infants' Hospital—the only one of its

kind—because of the remarkable illustration it gives us of the conditions as they affect babies. Let me ask your special attention to the conditions of the old hospital in Hampstead, because the fact that that was by no means a perfectly equipped institution has a very interesting relation to the facts. It is an important point in the work of this hospital that we intentionally started with comparatively inadequate accommodation, because we were very anxious to put the views which we entertained to a very stringent test.

The old hospital was nothing more than a house in Hampstead, quite an ordinary dwelling-house, and the arrangements were as follows. An ordinary front parlour, an intermediate room of small size, and a larger room behind—these rooms all communicating constituted the ward. The sanitary accommodation was such as you usually find in a house of that size and character. In that ward we had twenty babies under treatment, and in the year 1904 we had six babies in the hospital who had been admitted suffering from the disease known as epidemic diarrhœa. No infant in the hospital ever contracted the disease, although we had six of them suffering from the disease when they were admitted. I think that should satisfy you that the disease is not of the nature of an epidemic, for there could be nothing more likely to spread an epidemic than bringing these cases among infants susceptible to it. But there was no epidemic of zymotic enteritis—not a single baby contracted the disease, and, from the time the hospital was established to the present time, there has never been an infant who has contracted the disease in the hospital.

The fact that in the hot weather the disease suddenly arises, kills a large number of infants in a limited area, and then suddenly disappears—there is a great deal in that superficially pointing to its being an epidemic. But there is one cardinal fact which stands out with regard to this epidemic, as it is called, and that is the infants who are not attacked by it. The cardinal fact is that the breast-fed babies escape; they are practically immune, and, if they are attacked, the attacks are much slighter, and they generally recover. Moreover, you will generally find that these breast-fed babies who are attacked have been given other food in addition.

When you find such an extraordinary feature in a disease as that, you are at once compelled to conclude that the epidemic theory falls very short of being the true explanation, because, of course,

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