

The Midwife.

DIET POINTS FOR MIDWIVES.

Speaking to a friend recently on the superiority of wheatmeal over white flour, she replied: "I don't like it. If I have half a wheatmeal scone in a tea shop I can't eat anything else for hours afterwards. It is too satisfying for me."

Therein lies the chief importance of wheatmeal. It does provide the nourishment that starved bodies demand, and white flour does not. In years of daily experience amongst underfed women and children, the most tragic feature to me is that they wilfully reject the natural and available building material for their bodies which whole wheat supplies, and insist on having the white loaf of dangerously bleached flour, which consists chiefly of starch and water. The bedrock of the fallacy appears to be a colour prejudice. One cannot eradicate the idea that brown bread must necessarily be inferior to white.

Perhaps no one has such opportunity for teaching on this point as the midwife. She can advise the expectant mother that she cannot create strong, healthy babies without the nourishment that whole wheat contains. There can be no objection on the score of cost, as it is sold at the same price as a good quality of white flour. Many bakers, however, prefer to sell the white loaf, as owing to white flour taking up more water than wholemeal does, a sack of white flour will produce considerably more quartern loaves than the same weight of wholemeal.

For some years I have exhaustively tested wheatmeal as a diet. I practically live on it, and keep an enviable degree of health and energy. My personal experience is that one slice of wheatmeal bread is more satisfying than four corresponding slices of white bread. Think of the saving effected here in a cottage household! The objection of some to a very coarse wholemeal bread is reasonable. But there is no need to use that kind. There are many varieties, all of which I have tried, and have found the greatest satisfaction in the pure superfine wheatmeal ground by millstone process by Messrs. J. Reynolds & Co., of the Albert Flour Mills, Gloucester. This flour has been awarded 115 gold medals. If demanded, it could be purchased in every village.

In this time of war and rising prices it is an

urgent necessity that there should be no waste, least of all in cottage homes, and the use of white flour is a terrible waste. Cakes, scones, teacakes, pastry, dumplings, and puddings may all be perfectly made with fine wheatmeal, which contains the whole of the wheat berry finely ground. As the result of personal experiment in this direction I never use any white flour. In the interests of the unborn half of the population midwives and maternity nurses should for themselves test this food question, so as to be able to pass on their knowledge to those who at present go through life enfeebled and suffering through easily avoidable starvation.

Some years ago in New York the superiority of wheatmeal over white flour was conclusively proved by experiment on dogs. Six dogs were for two months fed on white flour, and six on wholemeal, under identical conditions. At the end of that period the dogs fed on wholemeal were in perfect condition, while those fed on white flour exhibited all the symptoms of starvation. Hence the daily pitiful spectacle in our midst of emaciated, rickety, white-faced little ones, whose teeth become carious before they reach the age of six.

There is a movement afoot for imposing by Government a standard flour which contains 80 per cent. of the wheat berry. Some say that wholemeal is too heavy for the English taste. This may be so for those who can afford to eat meat, fish, eggs, bacon, and unlimited butter. But while we are getting rid of the wasteful white loaf in cottage homes, do let us offer the very best—that is, the most nourishing and appetising substitute for it. This can be found only in a finely ground wheatmeal.

HEALTH MISSIONER.

MIDWIVES IN THE COUNTY OF LONDON.

The Midwives Act Committee of the London County Council report that during the year 1914 556 certified midwives gave notice of their intention to practise within the County (an increase of twenty over the previous year). In addition, six notices were received during the year from persons who acted as midwives on specific occasions, and eighteen notices from certified midwives who intended to practise in the County during periods of less than one year.

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