

5. During birth or closely preceding or following it derangements and injuries may occur which seriously handicap life's race from its very start.

It is impossible to deal with all these possibilities now, although when we come to consider certain defective infants it will be necessary to refer to some of them in greater detail.

One point, however, of great importance and no little interest must be referred to now.

#### THE INFLUENCE OF MATERNAL HEALTH AND NOURISHMENT ON THE UNBORN CHILD.

How does the health, the nourishment, and the general hygiene of the mother affect the infant during its ante-natal development? In attempting to answer this question we have to face wide divergence of opinion.

1. Some hold that Nature in her effort to maintain "a mean physical standard" for the race as a whole devotes her first and chief endeavour to secure the proper growth of the offspring. They hold that Nature is always working on the side of the child, and that the mother is but, as it were, of secondary importance, and may suffer loss and deprivation and even disease and some forms of serious disorder without markedly or permanently affecting the welfare of the child.

2. Others, however, argue for an almost totally opposite view. They hold that during intra-uterine life the developing infant has no existence apart from its mother, and that while everything that makes for the well-being of the mother is beneficial for the child, all influences lowering the vitality of the mother tend to lessen the vigour of the child, and mar its future prospects.

Certainly many observations and experiments may be brought forward in support of either contention.

3. It seems probable, however, that the truth lies somewhere between these extremes. We cannot altogether accept the blind optimism of the first school, but we must not be too much influenced by the pessimism of the second school.

I think we may admit the following:—

1. The offspring of many poor and neglected and underfed women at the period of birth appear well-developed and healthy.

Dr. George Newman's investigations in Finsbury are of considerable interest and value in regard to this point, and fully warrant him in concluding that upwards of 80 per cent. of all new born infants reach "to a mean physical standard in spite of ill-environment or the poverty of the mother's physique."

2. The size of the offspring, if would seem, if we are to be guided by the records of careful observations in the human, and many experiments on animals, may be detrimentally affected by restricting the diet of the mother.

I cannot stay to bring before you the enormous number of facts and theories, observations, and conjectures bearing on this important question, but without dogmatizing—and any such course would be altogether unjustifiable—I think we may arrive at this conclusion, at least as regards many cases:

A neglect to provide proper food and hygienic conditions for the mother tends to be detrimental to the developing child, during intra-uterine life, and particularly during the all-important neo-natal days.

It would seem, even when the infant is born apparently well-developed and healthy, that should the mother have suffered deprivations during her pregnancy the offspring runs a very serious risk of being deprived also of that surplus of vigour, that reserve of force, which should be the portion of every healthy infant and which enables it readily to become adapted and adjusted to its new world.

And more important still, the neglected and starved mother, even when she has succeeded in bringing forth a seemingly perfect babe, is commonly powerless to provide it with that nourishment which should be its birthright, and without which it has to run risks innumerable, and bear burdens which always bruise and often crush.

(To be concluded.)

### The Sleeping Sickness.

In view of the spread of sleeping sickness among men and animals in Equatorial Africa, the French Minister of the Colonies, as reported by the *Times*, has caused an important document, drawn up by Dr. A. Kermorgant, Inspector-General of the Colonial Sanitary Service, setting forth prophylactic measures to be employed for its prevention to be distributed in the form of brochures printed in French as well as in the different dialects spoken in the colonies.

The first symptoms of the disease are a fever on which quinine has no effect, a swelling of the glands of the neck and jaw, blotches on the skin, and severe pain following the slightest blow or even a pinching of the skin. The sleep from which the disease takes its name seldom occurs before the final stage of the malady, patients at first mostly suffering from sleeplessness.

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