

should be met by instructing and safeguarding the mothers.

MANIFESTATIONS OF IMMATUREITY.

As I have already explained, many of the characteristics present in the premature infant, and which I described to you last week, are manifest in the immature child. I do not propose to detail these again to you. There are however certain signs and symptoms and evidences of morbidity which are often met with in immature infants, to which I wish very briefly to draw your attention.

UNSTABLE DIGESTIVE POWERS.

A very large number of cases are brought to us with a history that they were born, big, heavy, and healthy-looking, but that even when nursed by their mothers they quickly flagged and faded. Now many of these failed on account of mismanagement, but a certain number it would seem were congenitally deficient in digestive powers. At least as regards their alimentary tract they were immature.

Some of the signs and symptoms of digestive deficiency on the part of the child are—crying, flatulence, regurgitation of milk, distension of the abdomen, and alteration in the character of the motions. Indigestion is dependent on lack in the powers of digestion.

ATTACKS OF CYANOSIS.

The late Professor Budin used to lay great stress on the occurrence of attacks of cyanosis in weaklings. He believed that this condition was often dependent on underfeeding.

An immature child may not be able to digest sufficient food to last it for the ordinary period of feeding at intervals of two hours. As the fashionable dyspeptic needs a flip so these immature babies may require feeding more frequently than the ordinary healthy infant.

LIABILITY TO INFECTION.

Puny, non-resisting, immature weaklings are particularly liable to infective processes. I need only remind you of the terrible course of so-called "acute infectious diarrhoea" among the immature inmates of foundling hospitals and similar institutional homes for infants. Septic conditions of the throat when introduced among such cases are liable to spread rapidly and produce much disaster. Infectious catarrhal states sometimes travel through a ward, containing these feeble little ones, doing much havoc. Ophthalmia, when occurring in these cases, is often very stubborn. Other infectious diseases, such as chicken-pox, sometimes occasion much damage to these immature infants.

SUDDEN DEATH.

I want to warn you that not infrequently these immature infants die unexpectedly.

Even when there appears to be no cause for alarm, in the course of a few moments they may suddenly collapse and die.

THE MANAGEMENT OF IMMATURE INFANTS.

In caring for the full-time delicate infants, much that we have already learnt in regard to the protection and preservation of the premature baby will help us.

I cannot be too insistent on the importance of systematic weighing of these immature cases. The regular use of a weight chart, such as we employ in this hospital, is of the greatest possible assistance.

In providing for the nutrition of the immature infant, great difficulties will almost certainly be experienced in regard to its proper feeding. This is often the key to the whole point. As I have already explained, in a large number of cases, the mother is quite unable to nourish her child. Some form of substitute feeding has almost always to be adopted. The most satisfactory method we believe is that of percentage feeding, such as we employ in this hospital, and which has already been fully explained to you.

THE EXAMINATION OF THE MOTHER.

Although we have been considering only the infant, it is important that the mother should be medically examined, and, where necessary, as is often the case, adequately treated. Her diet and general hygienic condition must be a matter of careful supervision, as any deviation from the normal standard on her part is sure to influence her ability to feed her infant properly.

The Management of Babies.

Dr. Ralph Vincent, on Tuesday last, gave an interesting lecture at the Infants Hospital, Vincent Square, S.W., on "How to Advise Mothers of the Poorer Classes in the Management of their Babies." He urged his audience to abandon the idea that mothers of the working classes were ignorant. He had found them remarkably intelligent, and in regard to errors in feeding he defied those present to find any mother feeding her baby on materials which had not at some time been recommended by some of the highest authorities in the medical profession. In regard to the care of the nursing mother, milk in small amounts was not a bad food for her, but neither was it a good one. She needed beef-steak, with fat, and fish, and eggs. Usually she did not get enough meat.

Dr. Vincent gave a demonstration of the preparation of whey with the means available in a cottage home.

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