

could not be attributed to hot weather, it was determined to keep one depôt open during the winter and spring, and at this one depôt there was an average weekly attendance of 35.

Dried milk was at first suggested as a cleanly substitute during the hot weather for the frequently contaminated cow's milk given to bottle-fed babies. The summer of 1907 was not sufficiently hot to test its efficacy in this respect, but as some babies actually contracted infective enteritis after the commencement of this feeding, it would seem probable that it does not completely fulfil in this respect the expectations that have been formed of it. (I shall refer to this point later.) On the other hand, where the infant is suffering from the more chronic forms of diarrhoea and vomiting due to the indigestibility of cow's milk, it has exceeded our expectations in the relief of the symptoms and subsequent increase of weight.

Unlike the majority of patent foods which often cure the digestive troubles and fatten the child, but produce later on pallor, lack of vigour, and all the troubles which are associated with the name of rickets, this milk appears to produce a concomitant improvement in weight, bodily vigour, and colour.

While admitting the great advantages of having easily digestible and nutritious food ready to our hand for use in case of digestive troubles, we must not forget that we have been able by means of the depôts and visiting to influence for the better the maternal methods of feeding, clothing, and general hygiene. Knitted woollen garments have been substituted for flannelette, clothing has been more evenly distributed over the body, and useful lessons have been given on treatment of the skin, care of napkins, the substitution of fresh air for foul, etc. It is distinctly noticeable that there was an improvement in the condition of the babies and a greater gain in weight during Whit week—a week which Sheffield people spend largely in the parks and other open air spaces.

The supply of dried milk has given the lady inspectors a more friendly status in certain homes where formerly they were treated with some suspicion, and where the mothers have been lazy or disinclined to follow out our instructions the threat of withholding the supply has often been efficacious. One marked example of this was that of the wife of a street hawker, whose infant for several weeks had remained stationary. After a severe reprimand the infant commenced to gain in weight, and went on regularly at the rate of 6 oz. weekly, the mother soon becoming quite keen and anxious about its progress.

The experiment will be watched with interest, for if babies are found to thrive on dried milk, when suitably diluted, a real difficulty will have been overcome for travellers who are accompanied by infants or young children, and have no means of obtaining milk in the districts through which they pass. It is unnecessary also to those acquainted with the difficulty of securing milk on board ship to demonstrate its convenience to travellers by sea.

## The Midwives' Act in Manchester.

It will be remembered that owing to strong opposition on the part of medical men the Notification of Births Act was not adopted in Manchester, but last December the Midwives' Supervising Committee introduced a system of voluntary notification of live births by midwives, which has met with a good response from the midwives. The returns are sent in weekly on stamped and sealed forms, and no fee is paid for the notification. The health visitors have instructions not to visit until the midwife has ceased attending. It is all very well, says a contemporary, to call this notification "voluntary," but one cannot help wondering what would be the position of a midwife who refused to carry out this additional task of notification. The duties imposed under the Midwives' Act itself are surely quite enough to make the position of a midwife far from enviable, and we cannot be surprised to read in the report that in some districts there is a shortage of midwives. The people in many instances prefer midwives who are easy-going as regards cleanliness and antiseptic precautions, and refuse to employ the more competent and highly trained women who insist on the provision of clean garments. In one case a patient refused to pay a midwife's fee because she had been told to be clean. It is evident that the people themselves need educating to enable them to appreciate the benefits of skilled attendants. Meantime, the better class of midwives are suffering, and we are told that it is probable that in the near future the problem of a supply of midwives will require consideration.

## The Care of Infants.

An attractively illustrated manual on the care and feeding of infants from birth to the age of two years has been brought out by Mellin's Food, Limited, Marlborough Works, S.E., price 2s. 6d. The readers are reminded in the preface that of children born alive less than three-fourths survive to the age of five years, and that the greater proportion of these early deaths may be traced to dysentery, convulsions, and wasting diseases. Further, that the frightful mortality among infants during the early years of life is undoubtedly either directly or indirectly due to errors in dietary and clothing; and the chief cause of this enormous waste of life, with all its attendant pain and suffering, is to be found in the ignorance of mothers.

For the rearing of healthy and vigorous infants the importance of the natural food provided for them is emphasised. If for any reason this is unobtainable, a substitute as nearly resembling human milk, both in its composition and properties, is of great importance. Fresh cows' milk is recommended as the best available basis for such a substitute for breast milk, modified to meet the requirements of the individual infant with Mellin's Food. The methods employed in this modification, together with much other useful matter, are detailed in the manual to which we have drawn attention.

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