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## Editorial.

### CLEAN MILK

In his "Lectures on Babies" at the Infants' Hospital, Vincent Square, S.W., Dr. Ralph Vincent, speaking on "Epidemic Diarrhoea," said, "as a mortal disease affecting babies, epidemic diarrhoea is the most serious of all." He said further: "It is a filth disease, arising from the consumption of filth, and the fact that very large numbers of babies are attacked is only to be explained by the fact that very large numbers of babies are consuming filth. *By filth I mean, for example, the ordinary milk supply of London.*"

Could there be a stronger argument for the passing of the Milk Bill recently introduced into the House of Commons by Mr. John Burns, President of the Local Government Board? None know better than nurses the importance of a pure milk supply. Both at the beginning and the end of life and during many illnesses it is the staple food of their patients, and on its purity often depend the issues of life and death. True it may be sterilised, but we are coming to learn that sterilised, and even pasteurised, milk are poor substitutes for clean milk. To quote Dr. Vincent once more, "once milk has been affected by the growth of pathogenic bacteria it is quite impossible that it can be of any good, and it must be a poison. Another important point is that sterilisation will do little good. The toxins present in the milk, as a result of bacterial development are there, whether you boil the milk or whether you do not, and all you do by sterilising it is to give the baby dead bacteria instead of living bacteria. In the circumstances it is better, if you are compelled to administer such milk to an infant, to boil it; but it is more useful to put it into the drain, for which receptacle alone is it suitable. We must

all realise that sterilisation, however carefully conducted, can never convert dirty milk into clean milk. The essential thing is really pure milk."

So all nurses must welcome the legislation proposed by the President of the Local Government Board, and hope that the "Milk Bill" will speedily become law. In connection with this legislation there are four points which chiefly need consideration: (1) The healthy condition of the dairy cattle. (2) The process of milking and storing of milk on the dairy farms. (3) The conditions under which the milk is handled and distributed by the middleman and retailers, and (4) The conditions under which milk is kept on the purchaser's premises before being consumed.

As the supervision of milch cows is vested in the Board of Agriculture, while the sale and control of milk are regulated by the Local Government Board, provision is made in the Milk Bill for the simultaneous issue by the Board of Agriculture of an Order dealing with the notification of tuberculosis in cattle. The process of milking and storing of milk is most important, for not only may contamination occur by the introduction of harmful material, but it must be remembered that nature intended milk to be transferred directly from the mother to her offspring, that the purest milk contains germs, and that the condition of a pure milk supply is the prevention of the development of bacteria in milk, after milking. This development takes place very quickly in milk at a normal temperature, and it is important that it should be reduced to a temperature of 40° Fahr., at which temperature bacteria do not multiply. The control of retailers is to be effected by the registration of dairies and dairymen by the local sanitary authorities, while the purchaser must be educated in the right methods of storage until it is consumed.

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