

The Midwife.

How Certified Milk Lessens Infant Mortality.

Miss E. Ida McCune, Visiting Nurse for the Boarded-out Babies of the Associated Charities of San Francisco, writes in the *Nurses' Journal of the Pacific Coast* :—

The science of to-day calls not so much for the cure of disease as for its cause and prevention. The causes of infant disease and mortality are due mostly to improper feeding.

The Children's Agency of the Associated Charities, from a humane standpoint, as well as an economic one, believes in saving the babies, so our study has been mostly how to keep the baby well. From observations made from the study of one hundred and sixty-four babies during the last year, we have found that the proper use of certified milk will do wonders in accomplishing this.

We all know that in most cases the condition of the stomach forms an important part in the treatment of any disease, just as it forms an important part in prevention. No organ of the body is so ill treated, and this is especially true in the feeding of the helpless infant.

Have you ever thought how, when and where the majority of babies are fed? Yet the mortality of the baby is controlled largely by those who feed it. The baby has to take what is given it, and if it cries, the cry is generally mistaken as a call for more food.

Most mothers feed on the old adage, "If a little is good, more is better." Sometimes the food is mixed one way and again in another. Often it is heated until it will blister the baby's mouth and sometimes it is as cold as the proverbial charity. Knowing this, are you surprised at the alarming infant mortality? The wonder is that it is not greater.

From the hour of birth, the baby is accused of looking like almost every member of the family. It is wakened that the visitor may see the colour of its eyes; it is shaken, bounced, turned over, patted, whistled at, chuckled under the chin, tickled in the ribs, and kissed on the mouth and the soles of its feet. But no matter how we of the profession may frown upon this treatment, the majority of us have lived through it.

The value of the education of the masses in regard to the importance of the right infant-feeding cannot be over estimated. It is not the ignorant and poor alone who need teaching,

but often those who are well able to afford a physician. This teaching can best be done at our clinics and by the visiting nurse.

Strange as it may seem, many prefer the well advertised patent foods to pure cow's milk and a doctor's advice, and it is only after the baby is made sick by the wrong food that the physician is consulted.

We have all heard much about the "mother instinct" and mother love. Poets have written of them and painters have tried to depict them, but when it comes to bottle-fed babies, the mother instinct may often be at fault.

In studying how Holt, Rotch, Chapin, and Fisher feed babies, we find that they all seem to have fed differently, since they all had different babies. But I believe that most babies not directly under a doctor's care are fed indifferently.

To be properly fed, a baby should be seen and carefully studied. What physician of any repute would think of writing a prescription for a patient whom he had never seen?

One woman who had charge of a poor miserable baby was asked what the baby was being fed, and said, "Why, according to the box, and a teaspoonful of castor oil every day." Too many babies are fed according to the directions on some patent food box instead of their individual needs. What is the result? An alarming death-rate of babies every year.

Since we are dealing with the bottle-fed baby, the first thing to consider is the kind of milk to use and how to modify it. Most patent baby-foods should, I think, be classed with most cure-all patent medicines. Few of us would be so unwise as to use for food a canned meat or vegetable when we could get the fresh article. So we should endeavour to use only the best fresh cow's milk, and this we know to be the certified. Many people who still believe in the good old patent foods and condensed milk will tell you that it does not agree with the babies. It is true it may not make the baby so fat, neither does it make it so flabby, but when the certified milk disagrees there is in most cases something wrong with the technique; the milk has not been mixed properly, or the hands that prepared it, or the feeding utensils used, were unclean.

The great tendency is to overfeed the baby and to keep it too warm. There is always great excitement over the starving baby that may be found in the tenement, but for every baby that is starved, there are a hundred that suffer from

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