

## BOILED MILK AND THE MEANS BY WHICH ITS FATAL EFFECTS ON INFANTS ARE PRODUCED.

Dr. Ralph Vincent delivered his third lecture of the present course on Tuesday, October 31st, at the Infants' Hospital, Vincent Square, on "Boiled Milk, and the means by which its fatal effects on infants are produced."

He said he would point out some important features of the mysterious disease Epidemic Diarrhoea (so-called) before discussing its causation. This country, par excellence, was the country of sanitation and, in the last few years, the progress in that direction had rendered it famous. As a result it was well known that the death-rate in the last hundred years had enormously decreased. But one striking fact stood out, that infant mortality had actually *increased*. This was due to the introduction of a disease not known in the years when sanitation was not so good. This increase then was due to a factor entering into children's life that did not formerly exist, a factor so adverse as to entirely neutralise the improvement in sanitation; it was due to a rush of patent foods, condensed milk and artificial preparations that involved the cooking of food. It was a misapprehension to mix up antiseptic surgery with sterilizing milk.

It was one thing to prevent the access of germs to a sterile cavity, and a very different one to alter the character of milk by boiling it. Some years ago a new disease began to be reported, not described in any text book: the symptoms were hemorrhage into the gums, long bones, muscles and bladder. It was described by some surgeons as sarcoma. Then came the precise pathology lately described by Cheadle. It was scurvy—hitherto unknown in infants, and arising from the introduction of boiled foods.

The abolition of this disease, by means of the use of raw foods and orange juice, was one of the striking things of the last century.

Scurbutus, not the only disease that came with boiled milk, could never occur in children fed on raw food.

When the Infants' Hospital was first opened, he, Dr. Vincent, received letters from all quarters, from doctors engaged in the study of young infants, warning him that it was quite impossible to keep infants together, as epidemic diarrhoea would certainly attack them. In one institution in St. Pancras 96 out of every 100 infants had died of this disease, while at the present time, at the Foundling Hospital, all babies under twelve months are boarded out.

In giving the children at the Infants' Hospital raw milk he was supposed to be giving them a most dangerous food, but in support of it, he said that when, outside the Hospital, infants were dying by hundreds, there they had the sufferers from the disease lying side by side with the healthy, and no infant had ever contracted it within the walls of the institution. It was quite impossible to give the disease to an infant fed on raw milk.

Dr. Vincent explained this by pointing out that pure milk undergoes a decomposition, not putrefactive, peculiar to itself, a characteristic feature of which is that it is always acid, which prevents putrefaction. It is fatuous to suppose that milk can really be sterilized without reducing it to a condition one would not look at. It is raised to a temperature of 212 deg. Fahr. for one hour, kept for twelve hours, and on two successive days has to go through the same process. Heating milk in the ordinary way means only the discriminating of the number of organisms.

Raise the temperature of the milk to 180 deg. Fahr. for a few minutes and all the acid producing organisms are killed with one exception. Thus are destroyed the natural guardians of the child.

## AN INTRODUCTION TO A CONSIDERATION OF THE INSURANCE BILL.\*

BY MISS M. MOLLETT.

I make no apology for speaking on the Insurance Bill, though others might well have done so with a more intimate knowledge of that intricate measure, which vitally affects every class and profession in so many various stations of life and whose results will, I firmly believe, be more far-reaching than its most convinced supporters anticipate, because nurses have a really greater stake in the Bill than any other calling.

For, as professional women, they are keenly interested in the effect the Act will have on the whole question of the national treatment of health and disease, and as wage earners they come under the monetary clauses and will be bound by law to insure in such a manner as to satisfy the law.

But first I should like to say a few words about the tendencies, the historical past of which that Act is more or less a logical outcome.

\* Founded on the notes of an address delivered to the Heden Branch of the Central London Sick Asylum Nurses' League.

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