

## The Midwife.

### THE CARE OF PREMATURE INFANTS.

#### I.

#### DRESSING THE INFANT.

Infinite care and patience are necessary for the successful rearing of small premature infants. The care must begin at birth and continue sometimes for a very long period.

As soon as the baby is born it should be kept warm until the cord is cut. A warm bath should be ready, and the baby put in for a few seconds. No unnecessary time should be spent in removing the vernix. If the child is well powdered the vernix will come off of itself. After the bathing, drying and powdering are completed, the child must be suitably dressed. The clothes provided will be too big (I am supposing the infant to weigh about 2 to 4 pounds), so it rests with the nurse to improvise clothing.

After the cord is dressed a binder is necessary. A strip can be torn off either from the binder provided or from a piece of new flannel, which is procurable in most houses. It is unwise and unnecessary to use pins. If the binder is put on lower than usual and, when in place, turned smoothly up at the lower edge, it will keep quite secure.

A very convenient little dress can be made out of about half a yard of gamgee tissue, as follows:—

Warm the piece of gamgee, cut a semicircle out for the neck at one of the selvages, cut two slits, one at each side, about two inches down, parallel with the edge in which the neck-hole is cut; the pieces above the slits make the sleeves. Then slip the hand in at the cut edge and divide the thickness of the wool equally (the warming makes it divide easily). The baby can then be put in, its head going through the neck-hole. A few stitches at the shoulders and down the sleeves will secure and fit the top of the dress. Then the front corners below the sleeve slits should be tucked round the child towards the back, under the arms, and the back corners brought together in front and stitched. An extra piece of gamgee or wool can be used as a napkin, and this can be changed when necessary from the side of the dress without much disturbance.

The dress being complete, the baby should be loosely wrapped in a warm blanket.

The great thing is to keep the child in a warm, even temperature, and a very good plan is to put a pillow-case on a pillow, lay the baby on the pillow inside the case, putting a woollen wrap round its head, which is the only part visible. Later, when the nurse has more time, a flannel pillow-case could be made to open at the side for extra warmth and convenience, also a batiste covering for the pillow.

By this method the baby can be taken up from its cradle on the pillow without disturbing or chilling it.

R. M. B.

### THE LEEDS MATERNITY HOSPITAL.

At the Annual Meeting of the Leeds Maternity Hospital, held last week in the Lord Mayor's apartments at the Town Hall, the Lord Mayor (Mr. William Nicholson) presided. The report, presented by Mrs. Robert Hudson, stated that two new branches had been opened, mainly owing to the generosity of the Misses March. With respect to the educational side of the work it was stated that thirteen midwives had been trained during the last six months, and twelve had obtained the Central Midwives Board certificate. Two maternity nurses had also received training. At present there were ten midwifery pupils and two maternity nurses in training. During the half-year the Investigation Committee had dealt with 358 cases. If the hospital was to be maintained in the same degree of efficiency as hitherto, the income must be increased considerably, and more ladies must come forward to assist in official capacities.

The Lord Mayor, who moved the adoption of the report, said that the poorer classes were constantly employed in earning their own living, and many of them had neither the time nor the knowledge to get the best out of life. It should be the duty of those in better circumstances to teach them how to live. Voluntary workers should remember that they had to deal with the greater part of the population, and that however wealthy they might be, even if they gave the whole of their wealth away tomorrow, they would do very little good. The only chance for this country, that he could see, was to educate the people themselves, in order that they might help themselves.

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