

The Midwife.

CONFERENCE ON INFANTILE SUMMER DIARRHOEA.

A Conference has been convened by the authorities of the Queen's Hospital for Children, Hackney Road, E., to be held in the Board Room on Wednesday, the 11th inst., at 8.30 p.m., too late for us to report this week, to discuss the very important question of Infantile Summer Diarrhoea. The Earl of Shaftesbury, President of the Hospital, will be in the chair.

Mr. T. Glenton Kerr, the Secretary, writes :

As you are doubtless aware, every summer takes its toll of infant life through the dreaded group of disorders comprised in the terms "Summer Diarrhoea," or "Diarrhoea and Vomiting," the epidemic varying in intensity with the character of the weather, a hot dry summer bringing death to large numbers of otherwise healthy babies, and the cold wet summer showing a greatly decreased mortality in this respect.

Special efforts were made by this Hospital last year to combat the evil by distributing simply-worded instruction papers amongst the mothers, but it was felt that very little could be done without the co-operation of other charitable agencies and of the local Public Health Authorities.

This Conference has, therefore, been called by the Committee of the Hospital, and it is hoped that it may result in practical measures of a preventive character being introduced.

This Hospital, of course, receives patients from all parts, but the cases of summer diarrhoea that are brought here mostly come from the three boroughs of Bethnal Green, Shoreditch, and Hackney, which together have a population of close upon half-a-million, largely composed of the working classes, and we are therefore confining the conference to representatives of these three great districts.

INSTRUCTION PAPER ISSUED TO MOTHERS AT THE QUEEN'S HOSPITAL FOR CHILDREN, HACKNEY ROAD, E. SUMMER DIARRHOEA.

Prolonged hot weather will bring diarrhoea and vomiting.

The disease causes the death of hundreds of children in this district every summer.

Summer diarrhoea is largely due to giving milk and food which has been exposed to the air, dust and flies, or stored in a dirty vessel ; and to the use of "comforters."

It can, therefore, be prevented to a very large extent.

Summer diarrhoea seldom affects children who are fed *entirely* on the breast. Therefore no child should be weaned during July or August, except under Doctor's orders.

Comforters are deadly things, and must on no account be used.

Summer diarrhoea attacks delicate children especially.

Therefore, slight complaints must be taken seriously during the summer months. The mother should consult a doctor *directly* the child begins to suffer with vomiting or looseness of the bowels.

Rooms should be kept as cool and well-ventilated as possible.

FOR BOTTLE-FED BABIES.

The poison is carried generally by the milk. The poison is destroyed by boiling. The milk may become poisoned again, after it has been boiled, by exposure to dust and flies, or by storage in a dirty vessel. Keeping the milk cool prevents the poison from increasing.

Therefore :

1. Milk should be obtained from the milk-man, fresh, twice a day.
2. The milk should be fetched and kept in a jug recently washed out with boiling water, to which a little soda has been added.
3. The jug of milk should be covered with a double layer of new muslin to protect it from dust and flies, and stood in a basin of cold water in the coolest part of the house.
4. The measured feed should be boiled for two minutes before use, allowed to cool, and given immediately.

CARE OF THE BOTTLE AND TEAT.

The poison may develop in a dirty bottle.

Therefore :

The bottle and teat must be boiled twice a day in a saucepan kept specially for the purpose. The bottle must be washed out with water, to which a little soda has been added, immediately after each feed, and rinsed out under the tap with cold water before the new milk is put into it.

The jug in which the milk is kept must be washed out with boiling water, to which a little soda has been added, before the new milk is put into it.

The mother should on no account moisten the teat in her own mouth.

THE POISON MAY BE CARRIED ON THE HANDS.

Therefore :

The mother must wash her hands thoroughly before preparing the baby's feeds, and make all older children wash their hands before eating.

SIMPLE RULES FOR THE TREATMENT OF SUMMER DIARRHOEA.

As soon as summer diarrhoea threatens, all milk and solid food must be stopped absolutely, and the child taken to a doctor.

The child's napkin and linen must be changed directly it is soiled ; and placed in a pail of water

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