

The Midwife.

THE LEICESTER CORPORATION MILK DEPOT.

The old Roman town of Leicester is at the present day one of the three great metropolises of the English Midlands, and without doubt one of the most progressive centres in the United Kingdom. The Corporation is fully alive to the town's needs, and the provision of all classes of education, of ample open spaces, of street transit, of amusement, the disposal of refuse, the supply of lighting and of water, the public welfare of the citizens, all are alike excellently maintained. One of the most interesting and useful of the municipal institutions of the town is, without doubt, the Milk Depot.

Situated in Belgrave Gate, one of the poorest districts of Leicester, it is a bright, clean shop, painted in white and apple green. The window and walls are covered with photographs of babies fed on depot milk, with various "Don'ts," illustrated by sketches, such as:—

"Don't use a tube to baby's bottle."

"Don't stand the milk basin near the sink."

"Don't give the baby a taste of everything you have yourself."

"Don't bind baby up too tightly."

The Depot is under the management of the Health Committee of the Corporation, and is open daily from 9 to 6, on Thursdays 9 to 1. It is managed by a Nurse in Charge, who is an enthusiast on the work, and kindly gave me a great deal of information upon the working of the Depot and the system of treatment. Babies are taken as cases at any age from birth. When a mother brings her baby for the first time, the full particulars of the case are entered, under a reference number, in a kind of loose-leaf ledger, which thus forms a document of the most amazing human interest.

Some of the questions asked are as follows:

1. Name.
2. Address.
3. Age of baby.
4. Baby's present state of health.
5. Baby's previous state of health.
6. Whether under doctor.
7. Method of feeding.
8. Health of mother.
9. Is mother able to suckle.
10. Number of children in family.
11. Have any children died previously.
12. Occupation of mother.

In regard to Questions 4 and 5, any trouble, such as a rash, is duly noted, also the disposition of the baby. Although, as I shall explain, medical aid is given in necessary cases, the Depot always finds out whether the baby is already under a doctor, and which doctor, and mothers are always encouraged to continue any treatment that may have been started previous to the first visit to the Depot. It is important to note that no doctor's treatment is interfered with, and thus no friction arises. In regard to Question 9, mothers are always encouraged to suckle whenever possible. Question 12 is perhaps the most illuminating that is asked, and explains much. In one case, both husband and wife are employed as shoe hands; in another, the husband is dead and the wife stands in the market.

These questions having been answered, the baby is weighed, and the mother is supplied with dried milk, with full and clear directions as to its use. There are now three points to be considered.

1. PROPERTIES OF THE MILK.

This milk, which comes from Guildford, in Surrey, is specially selected cow's milk, from which the moisture has been evaporated. In the papers which are supplied to the mother it is stated that it is *not* a patent food, prepared from starch and sold under a fancy name in order to make a big profit, but is more digestible than fresh milk, many infants thriving on it who are unable to retain fresh milk. It is already sweetened, and requires no sugar to be added. It is supplied in three grades, as follows:—

Half cream for babies to eight weeks.

Three-quarters cream for babies from eight weeks to six months.

Full cream for babies over six months.

2. DIRECTIONS FOR USE.

The number of feeds, and at what hours, recommended by the Depot, are as follows:—

For babies up to three months, nine feeds per day (3, 7, 9, 11, 1, 3, 5, 7, 10).

For babies of three to five months, eight feeds per day (3, 7, 9, 11.30, 2, 4.30, 7, 10).

For babies of five to six months, seven feeds per day (5, 9, 11.30, 2, 4.30, 7, 10).

For babies of over six months, six feeds per day (5, 9, 12, 3, 6, 10).

In regard to the quantities of milk given, these vary very considerably in the different

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