

difficulties which occur during the confinement are very distressing, especially when the family occupies only one, or at most two, rooms.

In such straits the father may go to sleep in a neighbour's tenement, while the children may be taken in by relatives or friends. Often the father may be found sleeping on the common stairs with his head between his hands.

Dr. Thomas urges that it would be a wise provision of the owners of large blocks of tenements if, in such buildings, they were to furnish and equip a special lying-in room for the use of their mothers—a room, cleanly kept and replete with modern conveniences for confinements, which poor mothers cannot afford.

HOME CIRCUMSTANCES.

We read that in squalid streets many of the tenements show evidence of poverty sometimes approaching to destitution. Arising out of this poverty is the practice of pawning, often through a professional pawner. As the needs become more urgent, the articles are said to be pawned in the following order—the wedding ring, clock, husband's best suit of clothes (10s.), husband's shirt (1s. 6d.), children's boots, baby's long clothes (2s.), sheets, pillowcases, aprons, petticoats and chemises all in one parcel (3s.), children's frocks or dresses, mother's frocks or dresses, and lastly the wall pictures.

WEIGHING CENTRES.

Much useful work is carried on through the municipal weighing centres of which there are three in the borough. Amongst other things the Public Health Department supplies the following details at cost price to mothers, free of cost to poor mothers: Tubeless sanitary feeding-bottles, special rubber teats, weighted cloth covers for milk jugs, cot covers, bristle brushes, drop tubes, woollen vests, pneumonia jackets and "Finsbury Cream." Disinfectant soap is given on request. The bristle brushes are for cleaning out milk bottles. The drop tubes are for the treatment of eye affections in babies. The "Finsbury Cream" is a special form of fat food for wasting and delicate children.

The list of the lectures and practical demonstrations given to mothers in connection with these centres shows that they cover a most comprehensive range of subjects in relation to both mother and child.

PURPERAL FEVER.

Concerning the eleven cases of this disease notified during 1914 in the Borough we read:—

The associated causes and conditions were said to be: prolonged labour (3), miscarriage or abortion (3), vaginal douche administered by an untrained nurse (2), unsatisfactory attention during child-birth by untrained nurses or neighbour nurses, 3 cases. In 4 out of 11 cases, the mothers were cared for during child-birth by slatternly neighbour nurses, dirty, untrained women who neither washed themselves properly nor the mothers, with nails long and dirt-stained; women who at one

and the same visit combined the operations of scrubbing the floor and giving vaginal douches to the mothers. None of them had nailbrushes, none washed the mothers' genitals before, during, or immediately after labour.

In two instances these neighbour nurses waited for an hour or more after the babies had been born before obtaining medical assistance. Meantime the children had not yet been separated from their mothers, who were passing motions into the bed fouling themselves and the infants. Nursing of this deplorable character by these wretched present-day representatives of Mother Gamp should almost be accounted for criminal negligence and treated as such in a Court of law.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The work done in connection with tuberculosis and other infectious diseases is described in detail. Concerning measles, which is not a notifiable disease we read:—

The universal medicine is saffron: "a pennyworth every day for three days and a drink now and then to bring the rash all out." In addition to the saffron, the mother may give the patient brandy, whisky, liquorice powder, cod liver oil, flowers of sulphur, cooling powders, syrup of buckthorn, lemon juice, lung syrup, and "cough mixture from a general shop." One mother gave her child the water some eels had been in when she bought them "to ease the chest and make the phlegm slippery." The cooked eels were given to another child to prevent him catching measles.

'WARE ICE CREAM.

In connection with a comprehensive report on the protection of the food supply Dr. Thomas states that: "The itinerant ice-cream vendors are probably the filthiest tradesmen in London. Their ice cream is, or may be, made in the gutter, and the stain of its place of origin adheres to it throughout its existence. The use of the small conical glasses which are mouthed and sucked by children is most undesirable. For cleaning, they are dipped into dirty water which contains the mouth secretions of previous buyers, swabbed with a small wet offensive duster and up-ended on a soiled barrow-top. One itinerant attempted to improve upon this method by immersing his right thumb into the same nauseous water and rubbing it vigorously on the inside of the glass: he used no duster. Another was giving the final polish to his glasses by rubbing them inside and outside with his handkerchief into which he blew his nose. Still another cleaned out the form in which he made ice-cream sandwiches by licking it with his tongue."

The whole report, from which we have quoted extensively, is of the highest importance and interest, and should be widely circulated, and studied by all interested in national health problems. It deals with these questions in a most illuminating way, and should help to raise the standard of national health by the effective way in which it draws attention to them.

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