

Meanwhile, since an analogy has been drawn between their work and that of their civilian brothers in the fighting line, we may remark that these brothers do not complain of the ungenerous and discourteous treatment of their superior officers as a blot on a noble profession which should be removed. They realize that the treatment they receive is possibly for their good, that in any case it must be endured, and gradually they find that it has shaped them into the smart, capable, gallant soldiers whose discipline and efficiency are the admiration of the world.

The ranks of the Voluntary Aid Detachments contain much promising material for the fashioning of nurses, provided that the members are content to begin at the beginning and to learn their work thoroughly.

The real cause of offence against the work of these Detachments for the sick and wounded in the past, is that so much of it has been shoddy, ignorant, and emotional. The first essential for its improvement is that it should be organized by a professional committee under the direct control of the War Office, and there is no reason why, in its degree, it should not be as efficient as that of the Regular Military Nursing Services.

### INSECT-BORNE DISEASES.

Dr. Louis Sambon, addressing an interested audience at the Passmore Edwards Settlement at the Mothercraft Exhibition on Wednesday, July 6th, on "The Protection of Children against Insect-borne Diseases," referred to the wonderful knowledge of the ancients of diseases and their control, and to an ancient Roman feeding-bottle (on view in the room) which he had discovered, fashioned so that no flies could get at the milk.

Referring to the Infant Mortality in this country, he said that some of it was due to the fact that the mothers could not take care of themselves, sometimes the deaths were due to their faults, sometimes to social conditions, but often to neglect. Thus the mortality amongst illegitimate children was double that of the legitimate. The babies, said Dr. Sambon, "come down like snowflakes in a storm, and melt away just as easily." Some came into the world unfit to live, but many died of disease in the first year of life.

### SUMMER DIARRHOEA.

One of the most important of infantile diseases was, said the lecturer, summer diarrhoea. It existed in times gone by, and it killed then as now, but some wonderful progress in our knowledge has been made of recent years, and the all-important discovery had been made that the chief means of spreading it was the house-fly, which was one of the principal causes of disease.

The fly spread infection by contaminating food and milk, to which it came from the latrine, the spittoon, from the excretions of the human body—of the bowels, the urine, the sweat, and the mucus from the lungs.

Take enteric fever. The germs were thrown out with all the discharges, and especially with the urine, even after convalescence.

Discharges should be emptied away at once, and never kept in places where flies had access to them. Discharges from the bowels of the fly, containing these germs, deposited on food and in milk were most dangerous.

Drinking water should be boiled. The ancients thousands of years ago boiled their water because it contained the germs of dysentery and typhoid. It was the simplest thing: bringing the water to the boil was sufficient. The great Persian King, Cyrus, when he went to war, took with him cattle, and provisions "well prepared," and boiled water from the river was carried after the army in silver vessels.

The Chinese always boiled their water, and that was the origin of the delicious beverage known as tea, as this was infused in the water to make it palatable. But, if sugar and milk contaminated by flies were added, then the tea might not be a safe drink. The speaker insisted on the importance of using only milk uncontaminated by flies.

### MALARIA.

Other diseases, he said, were also insect borne, a notable example being malaria, conveyed by mosquitoes. Dr. Sambon told the now well-known story, which nevertheless is always fresh, of the proof that the mosquito was responsible for malaria. It had been suspected for a long time, and Sir Ronald Ross had studied the cycle in connection with birds, but there was no proof in regard to human beings.

Medical men interested in the question asked the Government to take steps to destroy mosquitoes, and were laughed at. Then they asked, "Will you allow our mosquitoes to bite you?" They also volunteered to live in a swamp on a malarious island at the mouth of

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)