

A more unnecessary, criminal waste of mother-force and mother-love cannot be chronicled. Here was a young woman, who had never been taught to value and conserve the highest powers she possessed, the gift which was of most vital importance to herself, her husband and society.

This is no idle tale of imagination, but the life history of a woman who has been saved from bitterness only by the exquisite sympathy of an understanding husband. Thousands of women like her, of average intelligence and education and in comfortable circumstances, are scattered over the country—only they are less fortunate, for she at least has good health.

THE EMPTIED CRADLE.

A correspondent, writing to the *Scotsman* under the heading of the "Emptied Cradle," points out that it is not the empty cradle with which he is concerned, but with the cradle that might be kept full under more favourable conditions. He says:

"We hear a good deal of the evil of the impure milk supply, but I do not think that is the cause of the majority of the young infants' deaths, as a large percentage—I believe it is said 80 per cent.—of mothers of the working classes in Scotland feed their infants from the breast. If a great many people who are interested in this subject could see the homes the babies are born in, they would be inclined to marvel that so many survive such adverse conditions. Gross overcrowding is almost universal. Large as the wages are, and even in pre-war time much money came into the house, the Scottish working man will not spend what English people would consider a fair percentage of his income in providing good accommodation. In homes where from £3 15s. comes in regularly, the family are content to live in a two-roomed house, and often a kitchen house only, which means a single room and scullery. A two-roomed apartment usually comprises a fair-sized living-room, with two beds let into the wall, and a back room, a dingy apartment giving on a yard or close, where no sun can ever enter, and which is frequently let to one or two lodgers. In the living-room (a kitchen), all the family live, sleep, eat, wash, dress. Seven or eight persons to these two apartments is quite a moderate estimate. The windows are rarely opened, and in this vitiated atmosphere the mother brings the baby into the world, and there it passes its first months of existence. The mother in her convalescence has to contend with all the racket of the family life, and no chance of breathing fresh air and having the quiet so necessary to her recovery and the first days of the coming and settling of the milk on which the baby's health so entirely depends. She is lucky if she receives more skilled attendance than that of the 'guid body' who lives in the close near by, or the willing and friendly neighbour 'who has had ten of her own and buried eight,' though, fortunately, by the passing of the Scottish Midwives Act this additional handicap to the baby's chance of life will be removed."

In Scotland the infant welfare scheme has, we read, not so far made much progress, and it is to be hoped that the steps suggested in this direction will make speedy way. The education of mothers of the poorer class is the only hope of salvation for the infant.

THE MISERABLE REMUNERATION OF MIDWIVES.

The incident below, in connection with one of the recent air raids, savours so strongly of the Sairey Gamp era that it is difficult to credit that it belongs to the present day.

A midwife, about seventy years of age, and a woman and newly-born baby were sleeping in the same bed at the time of the raid. The mother and child were unhurt, but the old lady was very badly injured by a piece of shell.

Our sympathies, of course, go out to the poor old lady, who is another victim of these senseless and wicked outrages; but surely it is time that such a state of affairs as that revealed by this account was rendered impossible, and we trust that the Central Midwives Board will use the weight of its influence to discourage so reprehensible a practice.

A recent correspondence in the *Times*, on the "Economy in Infant Life," brings out the real reason of the employment of these aged and ignorant women.

Miss Louisa Rogers, an Inspector of Midwives, asserts that it is the treatment accorded to the certified midwife. There are, she points out, hundreds who have passed the examination of the C.M.B. who are ready and willing to practise to-day, but the miserable remuneration and strenuous opposition accorded to them preclude any possibility of their doing so.

THE VESTIAIRE MARIE-JOSÉ.

A committee has been formed under the hon. presidency of the Duchess of Norfolk to assist the Belgian Society called the Vestiaire Marie-José. This society supplies milk, food and clothes to the babies of the villages in Flanders behind the firing line. Gifts of infants' and children's clothes, materials and wool should be sent to the depot at 1, Elm Park Gardens, Fulham Road, S.W. The garments are distributed at the Infant Consultations by Mrs. Haden Guest, who is attached to the Belgian Health Service. It may be added that the work is officially recognised by the Local Government Board, Whitehall.

THUMB SUCKING.

Dr. L. Duncan Bulkley, of New York, suggests that a cardboard cuff around the upper arm would prevent a child from sucking the thumb. This habit is a cause of deformity, bringing about malocclusion of the teeth, a narrowing of the palatal arch and nasal obstruction.

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