

CARE OF THE MOUTH IN EARLY LIFE.

By JOSEPH H. MARCUS, M.D., Atlantic City, N.J.

Before the eruption of the teeth the normal secretions of the mouth are quite sufficient in maintaining the proper cleanliness of the mouth. There really is no scientific indication for washing the mouth of the infant in conjunction with either artificial or breast feedings if the rubber nursing nipples and bottles are kept scrupulously clean for the artificially fed, and the breast nipples of the mother or the wet nurse be cleansed with a solution of boric acid before and after nursing. Thrush or stomatitis will thus be avoided. Under ordinary circumstances the attendant should not introduce her finger into the infant's mouth, either to cleanse it or otherwise. A vigorous protest should be made against the manner in which the nurse and others who come in contact with the infant put their fingers into its mouth. It would seem as though the infant's mouth were especially considered by those who ought to display more intelligence as something that should be felt.

A nurse should be instructed that she is never to kiss the infant on the mouth, or to allow anyone else to do so. Micro-organisms of disease can easily be transmitted in this manner, and cause a great deal of havoc that well could have been avoided. The fingers and hands of the infant should not be kissed, as they are more or less constantly going into its mouth. Bednar's Aphthæ and simple and gonorrhœal stomatitis have been introduced into the mouth of the baby by means of the nurse's fingers.

Epstein has conclusively demonstrated that washing the mouths of infants causes infectious ulcerations of the buccal mucous membrane, as well as the means by which extraneous infections, such as gonorrhœa and sprue, are engrafted on the mucous membrane. In the newborn, bacteria may gain access to the circulation through these ulcerations, and thus cause general sepsis.

After the teeth have erupted they may be kept clean by washing once daily, preferably in the morning, with cotton moistened with milk of magnesia, or with a solution of boric acid. The cotton is wrapped around a tooth-pick, and no force should be used in the cleansing process. Children should be taught to use the tooth brush at the earliest possible moment. Primary teeth should, by all means, receive the same attention as the permanent teeth.—From *American Journal of Nursing*.

NURSING ECHOES.

An opportunity for important and interesting work in the beautiful city of Montreal is offered by the Victorian Order of Nurses for Canada, who are anxious to obtain a District Superintendent for the Montreal Association of the Order. For the requirements we may refer our readers to our advertisement columns, from which it will be seen that a nurse of the highest standing, and of extensive experience is required. We learn from Mrs. Hannington, the Chief Superintendent of the Order, that the lady appointed will have a great opportunity for good work, and that she will need a knowledge of modern methods, as well as broad vision, to meet the problems with which she will be confronted.

Mrs. Reford, a member of the Board of Governors of the Victorian Order, is at present in Europe, and will later interview candidates.

The activities of the Victorian Order are: firstly, actual nursing, and instructions with a view to prevention; and secondly, the training of specialists in district and public health nursing. To a nurse of the right type the opportunity offers fine service in the great Dominion. The salary is good.

The Thirty-First Annual Report of the Committee of Management of the Nurses' Co-operation, 22, Langham Street, Portland Place, London, W., to the members, and nurses on the staff of the Co-operation, shows that there are now 385 nurses on the General Staff, and thirty-five Asylum Trained Nurses who take mental cases only, about 100 less than formerly.

The Committee wish to point out that although there is a considerable decrease in the amount of fees received in comparison with the three previous years, this is not so disturbing as may at first appear, and in a great measure is explained by the good health of the country and the altered circumstances of many who now find themselves unable to afford the expense of a private nurse.

The Report records the resignation by Miss Hoadley of the position of Lady Superintendent, and the election as her successor of Miss J. M. Jackson, O.B.E., R.R.C., "who brought with her the highest credentials, and special experience in the management of a Nursing Staff."

Probationer nurses at the Westminster Infirmary are to pay a penalty of £10 if they fail to stay at the institution for three years.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)