

## OBSTETRIC NURSING.

— BY OBSTETRICA, M.R.B.N.A. —

## PART II.—INFANTILE.

## CHAPTER IV.—INFANTILE FEEDING.

(Continued from page 100.)

At their completion, this Course of Lectures will be published as one of the Series of "Nursing Record Text Books and Manuals."

AT first thought this might appear a wholly superfluous chapter, seeing that our baby, like the rest of the mammalian young, brings his food with him: hence our only care should be to *feed* and tend the *mother*. But, as a matter of practical fact, there is no part of Obstetric Nursing more beset with difficulties, for so varied and so trying are the conditions we have to meet that mere routine instruction is of scant avail, and we may almost say that none of the cases are ever *identical*. There is another consideration with respect to the subject we are about to discuss that I feel sure must enlist all our womanly sympathies for our little patient. No other mammal than he has his natural aliment taken away from him *at first*, for even poor little calves and lambs have the consolation of their mother's milk till they—meet their doom! But *we* are continually called upon to perform the unpleasing, and shall I add the *unnatural*, duty of *feeding* our baby with *one* hand and driving away his natural aliment with the other; and *this not* from necessity, but oftentimes from sheer maternal waywardness. And this is an age that *talks* hygiene and sanitation by the mile to *poor* mothers, and yet can coolly jeopardise the well-being of two lives to the exigencies of civilisation (?), and that at a most critical period of the maternal and infantile health. *Sanitas sanitorum omnia est vanitas!*

There are three methods of Infantile Feeding, and I propose to deal with each separately and comprehensively—viz. (1) Breast Feeding solely; (2) Hand Feeding solely; (3) Mixed Feeding, part breast, part hand.

We will begin with the first; and, before anything else, turn our thoughts for a few moments to that marvellous production of Nature, the milk of the mammalia, which, like and unlike, is formed for the sustentation of the young in all divisions of that portion of the animal kingdom, carnivora or herbivora; and, stranger still, to the denizens of the ocean and the numerous mammiferous amphibia. There is one fact arrests our atten-

tion here, that the *food* from which this aliment is formed is of the most varied and opposite kind—flesh, fish, herbage, or grain, and yet in Nature's cunning crucible they all yield the milk necessary for the newly-born mammal. First in pre-eminence amongst milk-yielding animals comes the bovine herbivora, and from that placid, kindly ruminant, the cow, we derive one of the most perfect alimentary substances known to man.

And how fares the human mammal in this mighty scheme? Is he forgotten? It would almost seem so; for of all young things he is the most feeble, the most helpless, the most miserable. No furry coat protects his tender skin, and at the first rude shock of a cold world he cries piteously; he has no power to seek his proper sustenance, and were he left as he lies he would perish with hunger and cold. What, then, is his stay? Maternal love. But even this fails him at the supreme moment of his existence, for his mother is as helpless as he. It is, then, in his Nurse's kindly heart and gentle hand he finds solace in his woes and comfort in his miseries. And thus it ever was. Woman's hand must minister to his first necessities, and at the "last scene of all that ends this strange eventful history," her's still. Should not, then, a Nurse be an honoured woman amongst men?

Human milk most resembles that of the herbivora, and medical writers affirm that the ass's is the nearest approach to it. *Complimentary* to our sex, is it not? But as facts are *stubborn* things, I presume that accounts for it. As Nurses, it is a matter of very little practical importance, for all we see of "asses's" (?) milk is brought to us by the *two-legged* variety of the species who want us to believe that the ingenious concoction he favours us with is *sans reproché*, which we are not *quite* asinine enough to admit, *malgre* that little infirmity for thorns and thistles with which we are credited.

But I must proceed with my subject, or Mr. Editor will be "cross" with me for wasting his space. You see the matter does *not* affect his *amour propre* as it does *ours*. You need not mention to him what I told you about the milk-man, or he might feel "puffed up" at his exemption from any asinine aspersions, and *possibly* rush into an editorial on the subject, and make it rather "thorny" for his contributor—put her into a "prickly" position, in fact.

We will begin, then, with breast-feeding, and take it from a typical point of view, as unless we have a certain standard to go by we cannot fully

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