

the womb, faces life in a resentful mood, always cold, always sleepy, reluctant to get up and anxious to return to bed, always rather dissatisfied; while the disposition of the child who, for some reason, was somewhat behind time in entering this world, may often be found impatient and restless, beset by a feeling that everyone is conspiring to hold it back and put obstacles in its way. These early determinants of character are reinforced by the important functions of suckling and defæcation, also, especially in the case of boy babies, of urination. We know, those of us who have watched the dawn of character in these tiny scraps of humanity, that no two are alike, not even children of the same parents, brought up apparently in exactly the same way. Some factor, at present a secret, or only dimly guessed by those whose business it is to try to solve these riddles, constitutes the difference between this child and that.

One finds many differences between breast- and bottle-fed babies, yet the circumstances attending the weaning makes almost more difference, if this were possible. One notices a variety of reaction on the part of the infant towards any change in its diet. Here we must also take into consideration the attitude of the mother (this applies especially to the one who feeds her baby naturally), whether she herself derives much pleasure from suckling the infant; if so, she may put off the weaning past the usual period; or, on the other hand, should it be irksome, or prevent her doing something she particularly wishes to do, it may be hastened. Baby, however, thoroughly resents it, and is influenced by it for good or ill. It is more than a popular superstition that the milk of a nursing mother is influenced by her mental condition—her happiness or the reverse. The taste of an infant is very acute, as one may readily test by changing the mixture of a bottle even by a trifle. Some babies fight desperately against their weaning, and may be brought almost to death's door by their persistence before consenting to adopt a new food. These grow up with the same attitude towards other changes, and will resolutely refuse later on to be what they call "put off with substitutes."

One has only to watch the child during the evacuation of its bowels or bladder to recognise that these functions cause genuine pleasure, and that somewhat later a great deal of interest and pride as well as disappointment is experienced by children that these feelings are not shared by others. The bodily functions undoubtedly occupy a great deal of the infant

mind, and are the source of much curiosity. The first year lays the foundation, or should do so, of good habits, and one is beginning to realise that an infant cannot be started too early in paths of rectitude as regards cleanliness and regularity. But here may I utter a word of warning, culled from many years of experience in dealing with children, both healthy and nervous. The training for cleanliness, next after weaning and birth, is the most important experience in consideration of the character that is being formed, and sets an example that the child will follow until his life's end, unless something remarkable change his attitude, which is not very likely.

Kindness, patience, and gentleness should never fail on the part of the trainer; the child on his part often regards these bodily products as treasures from which he is loath to part; they will be surrendered in return for love, praise, and good will, but not because, unless he do so, someone will punish or threaten, smack or scold; such methods are used sometimes, and they have disastrous consequences. Obstinacy, fear, rebellion, and a spiteful determination to treat others as he is treated himself result, and are only altered with the greatest difficulty, if at all. Hasty, impatient persons cannot train children, for they have never learnt the lesson of self-control themselves. We require endless patience to deal with children, who learn so much through imitation, and grow up in so many ways such faithful little copies of those whom they have loved in their early days.

MARY CHADWICK.

#### NURSES' MISSIONARY LEAGUE.

A Quiet Day for Prayer and Meditation will be held on St. Andrew's Day, Friday, November 30th, 1923 (by kind permission of Prebendary Thickenesse), at the Chapel of the Ascension, Hyde Park Place, Bayswater Road, conducted by the Rev. D. H. D. Wilkinson, M.A.

*Morning.*—10.30—12.30 :—10.30. First Address: "Profession or Vocation"? 11.30. Second Address: "The Response to Vocation, in regard to ourselves."

*Afternoon.*—3.15—4.30 :—Special Intercessions. 3.30. Third Address: "The Response to Vocation in regard to our immediate environment."

*Evening.*—6—7 p.m. :—Short Service and Fourth Address: "The Response to Vocation in regard to the world at large."

Miss H. Y. Richardson is greatly pleased with the result of the recent Sale of Work for the N.M.L. There are still some articles left which she will be glad to dispose of.

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