

cottage, and nursed them back to health. In 1907 the Plunket Society was founded and a house was given to serve as a hospital and training centre—the first of the six baby hospitals and mothercraft homes now controlled by the Plunket Society.

In addition, the Society now has 68 branches and about 500 sub-stations in New Zealand. One hundred and twenty-six district Plunket Nurses are employed, one nurse to about every 200 babies born annually in New Zealand. The infant death-rate in New Zealand in 1936 was 30.96 per 1,000, as against 80 per 1,000 before the work started. The total cost of conducting the work of the Plunket Society is now about £60,000 per annum. It is assisted by a grant from the New Zealand government amounting to £22,760 during the year 1936–1937.

In 1918 Dr. King was invited by an English Committee to found a training centre in London under the name of the 'Babies of the Empire Society', linking up with his work overseas. He and a matron from New Zealand, the late Miss Patrick, in two short years laid the foundation of what is now known as the Mothercraft Training Society. This latter name was thought to describe the work better than the former one, which was retained in brackets under the new title. Those of us who were privileged to train under those two pioneers were enthused and inspired in a wonderful way. They were true humanitarians and vocational workers.

The Mothercraft Training Society now has 780 certificate holders. Many of these trainees have come from Europe and overseas. They are working in all parts of the world. The training centre and headquarters is at Cromwell House, Highgate, London, N 6. There are branch clinics in Brighton, Cardiff, Cambridge, Earl's Court, Kingston-on-Thames and Newport. The total attendances recorded for the year 1936–1937 were over 41,000.

The work started so simply by Dr. and Mrs. King in 1904 has now become world-wide. There are training centres on similar lines in Australia, South Africa, Canada, Palestine and Tasmania. The teaching which is given is 'mothercraft' in its widest sense, following natural laws. The whole method has been described by its founder as 'Common sense scientifically applied.'

Sir Truby was a genius, misunderstood by some but loved by those who knew him best. Like all pioneers in the field of scientific application, his views were often the subject of controversy—that controversy which is always the penalty of pioneering, but which is the surest symptom of the health and vitality of any new movement. His books—*Feeding and care of Baby*, *The expectant mother and baby's first month*, *Natural feeding of infants*, and *The story of the teeth*—are among the classics of the maternity and child welfare movement.

Sir Truby had a great sense of humour, a versatile mind and brilliant conversational powers. He will long be remembered as one of the great pioneers in mothercraft work.

—From *Mother and Child*.

THE CLOTHING OF INFANTS

By S. CHINNAYYA, *Health Visitor, Raichur*

The health, comfort and the preservation of children's lives may largely depend upon the clothing we select.

The principal use of clothing is to assist in the maintenance of heat by affording protection against the changes of the weather, and generally by adding to bodily comfort. The warmth of the body is of course derived from

food, but clothing prevents the rapid escape of heat. Infants are far more susceptible to changes of temperature than adults, and they lose heat more quickly by evaporation.

The three points to be considered in selecting the materials for a baby's clothing are :—(a) Softness, (b) lightness, (c) protection.

A baby's skin is very soft and tender and readily chafed, which makes it necessary to choose those materials for its clothes which will not cause irritation. The clothing should be light in weight, and should be evenly distributed over the child's body. The clothing should be loose, so that the child can get free movement in all parts of the body, and so arranged that it can be easily taken off.

Winter clothing. In winter, the warmer the child is clad the less fuel will be required. The tendency of young mothers is to load the chest of the baby with too great an amount of clothing, frequently neglecting the necessary protection of other parts. Deprivation of clothing has an injurious effect upon children who require a large amount of heat to enable them to carry on the process of growth and development. Every garment should be made to fasten with tapes or buttons, and should never be fastened with a safety pin.

Wool is the best material, and knitted garments are light and warm and permit freedom of movement. The infant should have a vest of knitted wool or flannel, and another kurta with sleeves. A napkin is always necessary, knitted socks or booties should be provided. When the child is taken out of bed, a small blanket or shawl is required. When the child begins to crawl, it is good to have a romper suit as these garments avoid undue pressure round the waist.

With regard to head covering, babies should not have their heads wrapped up except in the most severe weather. 'Keep the head cool' applies even to infants. Sunshine and fresh air are essential to a vigorous growth of hair.

Summer clothing. In Summer infants suffer very much from excessive heat. Very little clothing is required. A muslin or thin cotton garment and a napkin or knickers are sufficient. The minimum of clothing helps to prevent prickly heat in children.

The value of clothes from the standpoint of health may be summed up in one word—protection. They protect the infants from (a) extremes of temperature (b) wet (c) injury (d) disease germs.

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