

## NOURISHMENT IN RELATION TO THE "PERIODS" IN WOMEN

BY A. E. CHAPPELL, L.O.S., C.M.B.,

*A Pioneer Plunket Nurse of N. Z.*

A doctor—a fasting specialist of many years' experience and astonishing success in curing so called incurable cases gave me some useful knowledge. One of the facts was as follows: When a woman is put on a complete fast her periods cease but return when she has taken sufficient nourishment above her personal individual needs.

Later a mother consulted me about her young daughter whose periods had not commenced fearing there was something seriously wrong to delay their appearance. She proposed taking her to a doctor and asking him to give her something to bring them "on." I knew the girl was very much undersized and that she was working very hard both early and late on their fruit farm, for it was the fruit season in Tasmania. With the memory of the statement made to me *re.* nourishment and periods I wondered if the girl was using up all the nourishment she was obtaining in the energy expended in work. I therefore proposed to the mother that she tried the following before taking her daughter to the doctor. That she should keep her daughter in bed all the time possible and give her all the extra nourishment she could digest. The mother put my suggestion into practice and in a month the periods had made their appearance and were established as the mother protected her from overwork and saw she was well nourished. In addition the girl began to grow again and lost her stunted appearance. With these facts before us it makes us wonder what serious injury would have resulted had she been given something to start them under those conditions. It is evident the body would have been depleted of necessary nourishment.

Another interesting point regarding nourishment and periods is the fact that nature has provided that women unconsciously from adolescence eat for the possible two of the future but when there is only one to be nourished the surplus is automatically wasted. When the second life commences automatically the second portion is conserved to nourish it.

This fact shows the mistake so many of us may have made when we have urged the expectant mother to eat for two when she has been doing this from her girlhood days unconsciously. It is quite possible that much of their sickness and general stomach upset has been caused in this way. Besides adding to their burdens at this time in discomfort and pain, indigestion will make it less possible to make good milk and nourish their own babies which is more and more necessary to safeguard the infant's life and health.

Another disadvantage in mothers being urged to eat more than they desire is the fact that the baby may be much fatter than is at all necessary, thus increasing difficulties at the time of delivery. *The thing we should urge is that the diet should be such as to contain the elements needed to build the young life*

strong in every part. The denatured foods many European people eat are most injurious to both mother and child. How many mothers complain that with each child they lose a tooth or suffer with their teeth in some way. The fact is the new life must have the elements for building teeth and bones and when there is not enough the mother suffers as well as the child. Of course it is more serious to the child because its teeth and bones are in the making and no future care can rebuild these defective structures. The diet Sir Fredrick-Truby-King recommends for expectant mothers and which contains the right elements for keeping the mother in health and containing the substances baby needs to make a sound body is as follows: Whole wheat meal bread preferably well toasted or dried in the oven (with door ajar). Fresh vegetables especially "green food" such as lettuce, mustard and cress, spinach, silver beet, French or runner beans, green peas, etc., and raw ripe fruit should form a large part of the daily diet, because these food stuffs are rich in the "fresh elements" or vitamins, which are needed for ensuring the proper building of the child especially good sound teeth. Milk, eggs and butter may be taken as usual and meat in strict moderation. The tendency is to take too much sugar and jam. An extra pint or two of water should be drunk (between meals) especially as pregnancy advances."

One knows it is not possible to get some of these things in some parts of India, but I do think with a little trouble mustard and cress and lettuce can be grown in boxes indoors and with grated raw carrot and grated raw beet very good salads can be made and lemon juice or lime juice be used instead of vinegar for the dressing. Of course we all know that anything to be eaten uncooked must be washed in a pink solution of permanganate of potash and allowed to stay in the water a few minutes, then the permanganate should be washed off with cold boiled water. It is no use taking the trouble to safeguard these foods with permanganate and then wash it off with water which may contain germs.

Efforts should be made to have no soda used to cook with vegetables, as it destroys vitamins. Or better still if the vegetables were cooked without water but in their own moisture so conserving their elements. There is a Boilerette made by Welbanks Duplex Works, Banbury, England, which makes this possible. The price is about £1, perhaps more, larger sizes. In fact a whole dinner can be cooked in one of these with a small flame and left for hours without burning. Sir Fredrick Truby-King says further: "The most sensitive and delicate parts of the unborn child are its rapidly growing brain and nervous system, naturally these suffer most if the mother's blood is impure though no part of the young organism is undamaged.

A baby fed for the first nine months of its life on impure blood, whether the impurity is due to the mother suffering from indigestion and constipation, or to her taking alcohol, comes into the world handicapped." No woman with the true mother nature would wish to handicap her own offspring no matter how much she had to sacrifice to avoid it.