

children are sent there. In some cases the nurse takes them when the mothers are not able to, or are unwilling to spare the time.

A lady doctor visits the creche once a week and several ladies from Raisina take an interest in it.

Lantern lectures are given from time to time to men and women in one of the large rooms; great interest is shewn in the slides. Some posters of the Lady Chelmsford League are hanging in the mother's room and these are explained to all and sundry as occasion offers.

The creche is a new institution but has great possibilities, and after a time it is almost certain that more babies will be brought than can be taken in. The present provision is for twenty.

The students of the Delhi Health School will have the privilege of working in the creche in turns for a fortnight at a time, and the experience will be very good for them.

Miss Jackson and Miss Abraham seem to be very happy in Cawnpore and the work there is progressing. Bathing has been commenced in the Infant Welfare Centre, and the mothers are being taught the value of cleanliness.

In India where religion plays such an active part, it is a pity that cleanliness does not go hand in hand with it; but alas! only too often they are far apart. It is the duty of every Health Visitor to try and bring them nearer together.

Yours sincerely,

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THE PSYCHOLOGY OF INFANTS.

From the "*Nursing Mirror*."

If the child was the discovery of the nineteenth century, the babe may well claim to be that of the twentieth, and there are even signs that the mother may be discovered before this general speeding-up decade is out.

Not that the baby theme is by any means exhausted. Much has been said about its bodily side, little about its spiritual side, and less about that vast borderland—soul, heart, mentality, psychology, spirit, individuality, subconscious self—call it one or all of these as you will; that mysterious rainbowland which divides, yet joins, pure matter to pure spirit.

If a question on this subject were put to the average prospective midwife at the oral examination, picture the distress and floundering of the unfortunate aspirant and the buzz of disapproval in the tea-room afterwards! And yet it is vital to any who would avoid psychological blundering.

Let us first take some instances of borderland activity in infants of six months; although, strange to say, the photographic response of the infant's borderland to that of the bystander is in inverse ratio to its age, so that a six-days' film will require a shorter exposure to photograph a wave of worry

than a six-months' one. This is because the six-months' borderland has made some advance in developing its self-determination, which offers some slight opposition to the passive reflection of another's mood.

To a certain hostel for rickety babes came the Starling, so nicknamed from his callow fledgling appearance, a bundle of skin, bone, and nerves. At first he was bathed by a nurse of rather dull mentality, but placid and tranquil, to whose services he raised no objection, and, in fact, soon showed signs of satisfaction in the ceremony. Then there came along an Irish girl of artistic temperament, anxious to do her duty, gentle and kindly, but with no idea that feelings of irritation and impatience when restrained from outward expression would be reflected by a babe. This, however, was the case, and the daily bath became one screaming protest. Whereupon the Placid One took back the Starling and all was well. When cause and effect were duly pointed out to the Celt, she resolved that the same disaster should not occur with the neurotic infant handed over to her in exchange, and all was well in this case too, although her new charge had a fine capacity for high screaming.

The normal, wholesome babe in the bosom of its family is no less responsive to psychological influence; but how often is this recognised in the training of the private nurse? A certain woman, wiser than her generation, always makes a point of dressing her infant charges rather more smartly than usual if they are cutting a tiresome tooth! One afternoon Diana, aged thirteen months, was arrayed in a startling pair of brand new scarlet shoes and crisply-clean Paris frock, which seemed out of keeping with a high temperature, swollen gum, and general look of plaintive distress. But the Wise Woman knew that just that measure of thought engaged by the shoes must be subtracted by Diana from the pestiferous double tooth, chiselling its way through the red-hot gum, which subtraction would result in a lessening of nerve irritation, and therefore of temperature.

In the case of infants a few days old, their perception and reflection of the bystander's mood, in so far as it is tranquil and placid, or irritable and worried, is amazing. Nor does this only apply to their mother's mood, which has, of course, a recognised effect on the milk. In a certain lying-in ward the two nurses in charge determined to subdue their natural temperament to the degree of supernatural placidity demanded by their infant tyrants. The results were most satisfactory, as witnessed by the matron, herself radiating forth serenity, who observed, "How quiet you are in this ward?" This appreciation was again a centre of soothing, causing nurses and mothers to preen their feathers and reflect a subtle sense of general well-being on the infant sub-consciousness. Contrariwise, one day an overwrought sister descended on the ward, reducing one of the nurses to tears of humiliated distress. Behold! immediate response from the babes, whose "muling and puking" announced the triumph of discord!

Moral.—Those who would assure for the babes under their charge the peaceful atmosphere of tranquillity must cultivate the saving grace themselves.