

fected, and to see that they were afterwards kept clean and flushed : it is at least a coincidence that after this was done no more school children were attacked. With regard to the use of trough closets, I would remark, in passing, that they are excellent arrangements for use where large numbers of people have to be provided for, as in factories and schools, *if* kept thoroughly clean and flushed. When, on the other hand, they are not properly attended to they are little better than an open privy seat over a cesspool. They present a large surface for the retention of filth, which will, at the best, decompose and become offensive, if not dangerous, and which, if partly composed of infected matter, will most probably cause disease in persons using them. Should a trough become infected, matters are infinitely worse than they would be should one of a row of separate closets receive infected sewage, for in the case of the trough the whole row of six or more seats would possibly cause disease, in the row of closets only one ; hence the chance of infection would be six-fold in the trough case. The closets, too, would be probably flushed after each use, and the matters carried at once into the sewers, whereas they would be stored for six, twelve, twenty-four, or more hours in the trough. The storing of sewage matter in such a receptacle as the trough for indefinite periods is contrary to the principles of sanitation, and, unless great care is taken to prevent fouling and storage, I regard these arrangements as dangerous. I am not aware that any outbreak of disease has been attributed to them previously, but I also am not aware that they have been specially thought of as possible causes.

THE PREVENTION OF INFANTILE MORTALITY.

By ALFRED SWANN, M.D., M.O.H. of Batley.

IN 1894 there were in Batley 134 deaths under one year of age, whilst in 1893 there were 216 deaths. I particularly alluded to the large infantile mortality in my 1893 Report, and pointed out that the diarrhoea epidemic was largely responsible for this. During the year 1894 the death-rate amongst children under one year of age was 157 per thousand born. This is, I believe, considerably below the average for manufacturing districts. Even this figure is, of course, very much higher than it ought to be. . . . Under one month of age there were 43 deaths, from one month to three months there were 29 deaths, from three to six months 21 deaths, and from six to twelve months 41 deaths.

In looking at the causes of death, one is painfully struck by the fact that convulsions caused 48 deaths, and bronchitis and convulsions, debility and convulsions 45 deaths. Thus 93 deaths are associated with convulsions. Five deaths are due to diarrhoea, and five to wasting and weakness.

Thus one may say that, out of 134 deaths under one year of age, 103 were due to bronchitis, convulsions, diarrhoea, and debility.

What are the causes which produce this crop of fatalities ?

1.—On the face of it, and considering the diseases which have caused them, one is irresistibly led to the conclusion that in all manufacturing districts alike the nursing of young children is not properly understood or carried out, and that young children are not properly protected, hence, colds and bronchitis.

2.—That the proper feeding of infants is also equally misunderstood or disregarded, and, as a result, large numbers die of convulsions, diarrhoea, and debility.

What are the causes of the foregoing evidences of inability on the part of certain urban populations to successfully rear children ?

This is a question which I am unable definitely to answer, but sooner or later it will need solution. The first point, however, that strikes an unbiassed observer is that there is a reckless production of children without any prospect on the part of the parents of being able to properly support them.

The second point is that when produced, the resources of the parents are not large enough to enable them to do their duty to those depending upon them, as very often the united efforts of both father and mother are required to provide for the family, and necessitate the absence of the mother from her child at the very time when it most requires maternal attention and support.

On again looking facts straight in the face, what is it that strikes one ?

That it would be for the public weal if fewer children were produced, and if that few were strong and healthy, and lived to become sound men and women.

How is this desirable end to be brought about ? Time alone can solve this problem, by the development of self-restraint, by the cessation of marriages amongst the too young and immature, and by the growth of a feeling of the awful responsibility which devolves upon those who are the cause of children being born into the world. By education and a knowledge of, and respect for, the laws of Nature and Health.

Under existing circumstances, and seeing that children are brought into the world under conditions not favourable to their prolonged existence, I think the valuable suggestion made by the editor of the *Batley News* well worthy of consideration, viz., that the Registrar of Births and Deaths should be furnished with leaflets of instructions and suggestions as to the care, feeding, and rearing of children, and that each person who registers the birth of a child should be furnished with one of these bills of instructions. In that case, at all events, parents could not plead ignorance of how

to bring up infants, and something might be done to prevent the wholesale destruction of the infants which now exists.

THE RELATIVE MERITS OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SLAUGHTER-HOUSES.*

By JNO. F. J. SYKES, D.Sc., M.D., M.O.H. for St. Pancras.

TOWARDS the end of November, 1894, a deputation from the Church of England Society for the Promotion of Kindness to Animals presented a petition for the erection of public abattoirs, signed by a large number of bishops, noblemen, and leading persons, to the Health Committee of the London County Council. The petition was read by the honorary secretary, the Rev. F. Lawrence, supported by the secretary to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Sir Benjamin Richardson, President of the Model Abattoir Association, acted as spokesman of the deputation, and, as reported in the *Lancet* of December 8th, 1894, urged that public abattoirs in place of private slaughter-houses presented the following advantages:—

1. They brought the method of slaughtering and dressing animals for food at all times under the public eye.
2. They led to careful inspection of animals as to their state of health before slaughtering.
3. To the introduction of the most painless and most rapid modes of slaughter.
4. To the most perfect cleanliness and dressing of animal food and treatment of the offal.
5. To the health and cleanliness of the men occupied in the work.
6. To the immediate and complete inspection of the carcasses after death, on the Jewish system, or an improvement of that system, in which skilled veterinary surgeons would be inspectors.
7. To the better lairage of animals brought from the market to the abattoir.

Sir Benjamin Richardson added that the members of the society did not wish to press for the establishment of large numbers of abattoirs in London. They were more inclined to the idea that the abattoir system, with preserving chambers, should be carried out near the great lines of railways all over the kingdom, so that the animals, without being driven great distances, to the most serious failure of economy, could be slaughtered, dressed, preserved, and sent by railway to London ready for the market. At the same time it was felt that a certain limited number of abattoirs should be erected by the County Council in London, not only for the convenience of a necessary amount of slaughter there, but as model institutions, from

which similar institutions in the country could be imitated. He believed that when the system was understood it would be to the commercial interest of those who were engaged in trade, and that all the representatives of the meat trade would be both inconvenienced and benefited. He suggested that the members of the society of which he was president were inclined to think that permission might fairly be given for a time to the possessors of first-class slaughter-houses for their buildings to remain, on the conditions that they were not by their position injurious to health, and that they included all the advantages of the public abattoirs, so that everywhere alike the process of preparing animal food for the market should be effectively carried out with a perfect system of inspection at every centre by veterinary inspectors.

Subsequently a letter, dated 18th December, 1894, was received by your Vestry from the secretary of the London Chamber of Commerce, stating that the Meat and Cattle Trade Section of the Chamber had had under consideration the question of the proposed abolition of private slaughter-houses, and the establishment in their stead of public abattoirs, requesting that no decision should be come to without the fullest information and enquiry, offering to afford any further particulars desired, and drawing special attention to the following facts:—

1. That the private slaughter houses now in existence have, at considerable expense to the owners, been erected or adapted to plans approved by the London County Council and the District Boards of Works, and are subject to a dual supervision by the inspectors and doctors appointed by both of these authorities.

2. That they are a great boon to all the poor residing in their neighbourhood, as the internal parts of the animals provide a cheap and nourishing article of food, which is only good and edible when freshly slaughtered.

3. That the abolition of private slaughter-houses would result in the whole live cattle trade of London passing into the hands of a few wholesale firms, who would be able to control prices to the detriment alike of the producer and consumer. This unsatisfactory state of affairs at present exists in Paris, where, in consequence, meat is very much dearer than in London.

4. That there is more humanity and consideration for the animals displayed in private slaughter-houses than in public abattoirs, the slaughtering in the former invariably taking place under the immediate supervision of the owner, and it being to his interest to see that his property is in no way injured or deteriorated in value.

5. That meat slaughtered in small quantities in private slaughter-houses keeps better, looks better, and is less handled than that slaughtered in public abattoirs; that it is by far the most economical method of dealing with meat, and consequently

* From a report by Dr. Sykes to the St. Pancras Vestry.