

HOW HUMANITY CARES FOR BABIES



APACHE



GREEK



SWADDLED INFANT ROMAN



SWADDLING 15TH CENTURY SCULPTURE OF NOTRE DAME



CORSICA



VAUCLUSE



MORBIHAN



FINISTÈRE

HENRI COUPIN, a French anthropologist, who has been making an extensive study of the curiosities of the human race, has gathered together a large amount of entertaining material concerning the different ways that the people of savage and civilized nations carry and clothe their babies.

He finds that in general the lot of tender infancy is anything but enviable among savages. Often a child is a prisoner from the time of his birth until he is turned loose at creeping or walking age to look after himself. For in his early babyhood he is fastened into a cradle, usually made of wood, which is as hard and narrow as a coffin.

The inhabitants of Manchuria and the American Apaches, for instance, have the vaguest notions about the advantage of exercise for young babies. They crowd the infant into a narrow cradle with quantities of cloth and tie it with cords in such a way that, "is a wonder it does not become deformed. Nor is it in any better luck to be born a Lapp baby; for this little one is bound into a cradle made of hollowed wood, cut to a point at each end, and lined with moss. The mother carries this with her everywhere; when she stops she hangs it to a branch, or, if there are no trees near, she sticks it up in the snow. The savage woman of Australia always carries her tiny baby in a basket. When the child is a little older he is placed on his mother's shoulder, where he keeps his position by holding on to her head. Most of the Australian women are fond of their children; sometimes, indeed, they show their affection by eating them.

Civilization Cruel to Babies.

Among civilized nations the clothing of the newly born has preoccupied the people of all times, and from their reflections upon this subject have resulted the strangest and most anti-hygienic garments imaginable. Except among the Spartans, who left their children naked to develop naturally, without restraint, in order that they might become beautiful adolescents, what seems to have interested the ancients most was an anxiety to furnish a guard for the weak limbs and frail body of infancy. If all children had been well formed, or if all peoples, like the Spartans, had exposed upon Taygetus all the newly born who were ill shaped, this idea probably would not have arisen. Unhappily badly formed infants are not a rarity, and it is almost natural that our ancestors should have thought of martyring babies in order to give them straight limbs and deep chests.

If this orthopedic method had been applied to the deformed babies only, it would not have been so bad. But this didn't happen. When they saw the effects of rickets becoming general during the course of the second year, deforming the thorax, the limbs, and the vertebral column, no warning of these disasters having occurred at birth, they became certain that such deformities were the result of bad methods of treatment. They declared that the deformity could not have resulted if the child had been dressed from birth in such a way that its body was kept straight.

There was exhibited at the exposition of 1889 a curious statuette of terra cotta, molded in the form of a sheath, its head being covered with a little hood, and wearing about its neck a small disk called a "bulle." This is a precious document, which was found at Viterbe; it shows an undeniable method of the Romans for the swaddling of babies. Among them a child was plunged into a bath as soon as it was born. Then it was wrapped in linen cloth, bound on by a ribbon. Thus it was incased tightly from head to foot, care being taken that its arms were imprisoned. Little by little these members were given freedom, then the feet, then the legs.

Swaddling of New Born Infants.

In France in the middle ages children were still swaddled after the Roman method. The baby was first wrapped up in a piece of cloth; among the rich this was linen—but one must remember that at this time a linen shirt was a luxury, even for the rich. More often they swaddled the newly born in wool. About the swaddling clothes they wrapped bandages, sometimes in a way as curious as that which a fifteenth century sculpture of Notre Dame at Paris displays.

In the eighteenth century a Corsican baby and, as well, a child of Vacluse, were bound up neatly from the armpits to the feet, having the hands free—a point which in itself was an evidence of progress. On the other hand, the Bretons, Parisians, and the inhabitants of Luxembourg, whether poor or rich, had the baby's arms conscientiously rolled up in all kinds of covers; and if the swaddling in this case was less tight, the imprisonment was not less complete; for the unhappy child was reduced to immobility.

Under these circumstances it is not at all astonishing to see the considerable deformities from which children have suffered up to our century. Today the swaddling clothes, thanks to the doctors, who, more often formerly, are interested in the dressing of the newly born, cover and protect infants without torturing them. One must also thank J. J. Rousseau, who preached strongly against the fashion of tight swaddling clothes.

To most people bands, many yards long, which were



RICH BABY IN RUSSIA OF TODAY



A BABY OF MODERN BRITANNY



AMERICAN BABY IN CRADLE CAR



BABES OF L'ISLE DE FRANCE ANCIENT FRENCH AND LUXEMBOURG



PILLOW SACK USED IN CHICAGO



ALGERIAN MOTHER AND CHILD

adorned with embroideries among the rich, and with coarse stuff among the poor, and which surrounded and "sustained" the bodies of infants, are things of the past. Yet from time to time in the backward provinces one still finds a kind of corset used, with or without whalebones, laced up the back, and drawn tight to keep the baby's body straight. But its use is becoming less and less frequent, and we may hope that with the progress of education this practice will disappear completely. Otherwise the swaddling clothes are made much the same all over the world at the present day. The child's head is covered with a three piece bonnet, made large enough not to squeeze it, and fastened by two ties under the chin.

It is especially upon the baby's head that the slightest compression is dangerous. After the child's birth the bones are still soft, and the slightest pressure is likely to cause deformity, which may result in idiocy. The Carabes, who observe the unfortunate custom of shaping the heads of their children, are swarming with idiots. In 1834 Achilles Foiville, a specialist in insanity, had his attention led into this direction by noticing how many idiots had a circular depression about the head. The depression was caused by a bandage which it was customary at the time to bind about the heads of infants. At Toulouse, at this same epoch, Deshayes verified this discovery.

European Infants Emancipated.

In Europe today the child is still swaddled, but in place of the old fashioned bands which kept the garments on, safety pins are used. Usually the arms are free, and the legs, while covered, still enjoy a certain amount of freedom. The baby of Lorraine has additional comfort, for a little cushion is fastened on its back, so that when it is put down by its nurse it always has a little bed to lie on.

There are various modifications of the present European fashion. The Swiss baby, for example, does not have its arms free, and the baby of lower Charente is so wrapped that only its right arm is free, in order that it may not become left handed. In La Crosse a short strap is bound about the upper and the lower part of the body, hindering thus every movement of the arms and legs. In the lower Pyrenees, where mothers have to cross fields and mountains with their babies, to the clothing of the nursing is added a kind of sack, furnished with thorns which fasten to the woman's shoulders, so that she will not be hindered in her movements by the child which she carries.

Formerly in the Basque countries the child was placed in a linen sack, which was hung upon the wall like a bundle. In La Vienne they were satisfied with a belt fastened under the child's arms. In La Gironde, the method was much more barbarous. A tree trunk was hollowed out and its bottom was filled with straw and rags. When the child was placed within this instrument of torture the weight of its body came upon its arms and legs; thus the shoulders were pushed up, the chest deformed, and the legs bowed.

Barbaric Treatment of French Babies.

There are in France agents who make a business of carrying infants to nurses in the country, and of bringing nurses to the towns to secure places. The profession of these men was in years past less reputable; they carried to the hospitals babies whose mothers did not want them, and they did it in the most inhuman way, either laying the children down upon straw in boxes or panniers, or placing them upright, crowded close to one another, in hamper. In Le Poutou these agents carried the frail little beings in kind of saddlebags, one in front of the shoulder and one behind, without either protection from the cold or any care. It has been proved that only about 3 per cent of these foundlings were saved.

M. Coupin agrees with M. Felix Regnault that the manner in which civilized women carry their babies in their arms is inferior to that of savage or half civilized peoples who carry their children in such a way that their own activities are not interfered with. The French peasants, the Armenians, the Maronites, and the Tartars leave their babies in the cradle, tied in if necessary, while they work in the fields. In Russia, however, the mother is not separated from her baby. In White Russia, and among the Oestacks, she puts her child in a light oster basket and carries this cradle upon her back, well fastened by means of thongs.

Much preferable is the African custom. The negress carries the baby upon her back, but it is held firm by means of a loin cloth, and a piece of cloth which is fastened in front of her chest. She is always able to have her baby with her, whether she is weeding, grinding corn, or carrying a pitcher home from the well on her head. A variety of this same custom obtains among the Japanese, who have the reputation of being the people who give the most personal attention to their children. The kimono which they wear is a great advantage, since it is so ample that by pushing aside slightly the pieces which cross in front of the chest there is made at the back a funnel shaped space, in which the child is put; its head sticks out at the top, and its arms and legs are free. This the French savant regards as the ideal method of carrying a child, for it keeps the baby warm and comfortable, and does not cause a waste of time on the part of its nurse.



LORRAINE



SWISS



LOWER CHARANTE



LA CREUSE



BASQUE WALI POCKET



LA GIRONDE TREE TRUNK



SADDLE-BAG