

When a sufficient number of these articles have been written and published in the *Savali* they will be put together and printed in booklet form, for distribution amongst the Samoan women, as a help and a guide to them in the care of themselves and their children.

Ignorance on the part of the Samoan mother as to the correct feeding of the babies is undoubtedly the cause of the high infant-death rate. Many mothers start to feed their babies on taro, banana, and breadfruit at about the fifth month, although the baby is still on the breast. They seem to have the idea that the baby is getting big and needs more nourishment than the mother is giving it. Irregularity in feeding the baby is very usual with the Samoan mother, who sometimes goes on the plantation nearly all day, leaving the baby at home without any food. The weaning of a baby in countries where cow's milk can be obtained is often a critical time for a baby, but far more is it so in a tropical country like Samoa where the Native mother cannot obtain milk at all. Advice on the above matters is given to all mothers. It is impressed on them that the baby needs no other food than its mother's milk, and not only is other food unnecessary but is doing the baby a great deal of harm.

The advantages of regularity in feeding the baby and in its habits are told to the mothers: how the stomach has a rest in between meals; the mother has a rest herself, and by discontinuing the night feed the baby and mother are both better and can have an uninterrupted sleep. They are advised to feed their babies six times a day. (The Samoans have no clocks, but tell the time by the sun.)

In the matter of weaning the babies, as there is no milk to be obtained, some suitable Native food must be used. The Samoan baby does quite well if at about the ninth month it is gradually taken off the breast and put on to suitable and easily digested Native foods such as baked or boiled ripe mummy-apple; soft jelly of the young coconut; rice-water (thick); gradually working up to soft boiled rice with about two teaspoonfuls of coconut-cream in each feed; *Vaisalo*, a food prepared from the native arrowroot, with coconut-cream; chicken-broth, and soft boiled rice; with plenty of coconut-milk and boiled water to drink. The baby at sixteen to seventeen months has been gradually worked up to soft-boiled eggs, well-boiled fish, taro and yam, thus getting on to the ordinary Native foods.

*Simple Treatments.*—The Samoan children do not suffer from many sicknesses, with the exception of yaws, that are not amenable to simple treatments, and the aim of this work has been to teach the Samoan mothers to give these simple treatments themselves. When the children are brought for medical inspection the nature of any ailment present in a child or baby is explained to the mother and the committee present, and what treatment is necessary for its recovery. Some of the common ailments the children suffer from are :—

- (1.) Acute and chronic otitis media: This is quite a common complaint amongst the Samoan children, and unless they were somewhere near the hospitals or dispensaries most of them had to go without treatment.
- (2.) Eye-diseases: Simple catarrhal conjunctivitis is common amongst the Samoans; but true Samoan conjunctivitis is also present, and is a much more serious condition. It has all the symptoms of a gonorrhœal conjunctivitis, with destruction of the cornea and blindness.
- (3.) Samoan scabies or itch: This is a very common condition among the Samoan children.
- (4.) Diarrhœa: This is one of the great troubles with the children and babies, and is largely due to improper feeding.
- (5.) Impetigo contagiosum.
- (6.) Coughs and colds.
- (7.) Wounds from all sources, which from neglect give rise to many septic conditions.
- (8.) Tinea imbricata: This is fairly common.
- (9.) Intestinal worms: The ascaris is very common, nearly every child being infected.

In order that the women's committees may be able to treat any case such as the above they are supplied from the Medical Department with various simple remedies, with advice as to how and when to use them. Full directions are given. What is aimed at is to have the children's ailments treated on their first appearance, when very little treatment is necessary.

The Samoan women's committees have taken a most intelligent interest and pride in this branch of their work, and are really doing wonderful work amongst the children. In the little while they have been doing this a marked improvement can be seen in the cleanliness of the skin and general well-being of the children.

*Medicines.*—The medicines given to the women's committees are few in number and simple, as too many would be confusing.

- (1.) Hydrogen peroxide, 1-4, for chronic otitis media. A dropper is supplied, and sterile cotton-wool.
- (2.) Eucalyptus-oil: This mixed with their own Samoan oil (coconut-oil), which they make themselves, is very healing for any itch or sores they may have.
- (3.) Some cough-mixture.
- (4.) Cod-liver oil, for any debilitated or marasmic children. It was much used during and after the whooping-cough epidemic.
- (5.) Castor-oil, for diarrhœas or other intestinal disturbances.
- (6.) Argyrol, 5 per cent., for eye-drops. A dropper is supplied.
- (7.) Tincture of iodine, for cuts of all kinds and for ringworm.
- (8.) A mercury and zinc-oxide ointment, for the impetigo.

These medicines are kept at the house of the president of the women's committee. The Samoan women, seeing the good results obtained from our medicines, will in time be educated to use and appreciate them, instead of their own Samoan medicines, which are usually useless, and, in fact, some are absolutely dangerous.