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Near East Mission
United Church Board for World Ministries
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Dear Friends,

The most dramatic work of the Near East Mission goes quietly on every day in the Azariah Smith hospital in Gaziantep (and hopefully soon in the Talas Nute Clinic). The ills and sorrows of the people for a hundred miles around are ministered to by the "healing community" of the hospital, doctors and laundry-women, nurses and volunteers alike in their concern. But the hospital goes even beyond this ministry in its program of education of mothers who bring their babies to the out-patient clinic. One of the nurses, Miss Esther Spafard, has prepared this account of the baby clinic there.

WEDNESDAYS IN GAZIANTEP

Wednesday is baby clinic day here in Gaziantep. Early in the morning the mothers begin coming to the clinic from the nearby towns and



villages with their babies in arms and children at their side. They come to get powdered milk which is obtained through CARE, medicines, immunizations, and instructions in nutrition and health care. By mid-morning the clinic waiting room is alive with mothers busily talking and children screaming for food and attention.

The clinic is opened every Wednesday, except during the summer months, from 2 p.m. until 4 p.m. for babies under a year and a half; the babies under a year are given priority. During the two hour clinic between 30-35 babies are seen.

Many willing hands help willingly to make the whole load easier. Seher Hanım, the wife of one of the Turkish surgeons here at the

hospital, and Sabiha Hanım, the wife of the Turkish business manager, take care of the food demonstration. One of the big problems is that the mothers just do not know what to feed the baby when he is ready for solid food and so they continue the baby on breast milk long after it is necessary or start feeding the baby the food normally served to the adults in the family. When the baby fusses about taking the food the mother takes the path of least resistance and does not force the food into the child. Because of this all types of nutritional problems develop. Seher Hanım and Sabiha Hanım show the mothers how to fix cereals, fruits and vegetables which are readily available on the market and then they demonstrate how to feed the baby so that he will eat the food. The mothers are encouraged to feed their own children as many are afraid or don't know the proper way to feed a baby. A list of foods for babies at different ages and how to prepare these foods is made available to the mothers if there is some member of the family who can read.



After finishing at the food demonstration table the mother goes to see Sennur Hanım, the wife of the Turkish medical doctor and director of the hospital, who has charge of registering all the babies. If the mother is bringing the child back for a follow-up visit they have the number of the child's record. A record is kept on all babies with information such as height and weight at each visit, immunizations and dates, and other pertinent notes.

Berna Hanım, the wife of the Ottoman Bank director, weighs and measures the height of each child and records it on the record. Each mother is always very interested to know whether the child has gained any weight or grown any since the last visit. It is very difficult for the mother to understand when you have to tell her that the baby has lost since the last visit.

Emma Jean Graham, an American nurse, and Meliha, one of our own graduate nurse aids, have charge of giving the immunizations to the babies as they are ready for them. They give typhoid-diphtheria and polio. They also check the baby and offer any teaching that appears necessary for the particular child. The babies often come in with skin rashes, due to heat or diapers, bites from bugs, etc.

Let us follow one of these babies and see what help is available. One Wednesday not too long ago a mother brought her twins to the baby clinic. (Twins usually have a little more difficulty than single babies - the family is poor or the mother does not have enough milk to feed both of them adequately.) This was the first time that she had been to the clinic, but because of the condition of the babies the mother was registered immediately and the babies weighed. The smaller of the two weighed 1.600 kilos and the larger weighed 2.300 kilos (1 kilo = 2.2 lbs.), and they were five months old. Both were absolute skeletons but the smaller one looked like a little old woman with wrinkled skin. She was so weak that her cry was almost non-existent. Both were seen by Dr. Updegraff who advised immediate admission.

The twins were put to bed in the hospital and the treatment was started immediately. The first thing was to get a small amount of nourishment into them at frequent intervals. A mixture of salt, sugar and water was ordered in the amount of 20-30 c.c. every hour. This is very time consuming as these small babies cannot take the fluid very fast. Many volunteers are available to help feed these babies. Viola, a teacher of the mission children here at the hospital, loves little children and is always glad to help with the feedings. Fatma, the smaller of the twins, was so weak that it was very difficult to make her suck. Ayşe, the larger one, after a little encouragement, began to take the formula eagerly. For Fatma help had come too late and she died shortly after admission. Ayşe, however, slowly began to put on weight and continued to take the formula offered with much eagerness. Her cry was still very weak and pitiful, and her movements were not that of a five-month old baby.

Ayşe stayed in the hospital for seven days and continued to gain a

little weight every day. Gradually her liquids were increased and her mother was encouraged to be there at feeding time to learn what to feed the baby and how to prepare the food. The mother seemed interested but every day she had to be encouraged to return. At discharge Ayşe weighed 3.100 kilos or the gain of one kilo in one week. Her address was recorded by the nursing staff so that a home visit could be made later. The mother was given an appointment at the clinic for a follow-up appointment. The next month Ayşe and her mother came back twice. She was continuing to gain weight and by the end of the month she weighed 3.700 kilos. At her last clinic visit Ayşe began her series of immunizations against diphtheria and polio.

The first part of October, after Ayşe had been discharged from the hospital for a little over a week, Ginny Updegraff, Sennur Hanım, Emma Jean Graham and I went to visit Ayşe. All of us are interested in making these visits and hope to do them on a regular basis. Upon finding the house we were welcomed and invited to sit down. All the neighbors and their children seemed to appear at once. Ayşe was brought to us and appeared to be gaining in strength. However her formula bottle was found sitting on the windowsill with no covering. Ginny again tried to teach the mother how to boil the bottle and put it into a clean bag when not in use. Together they prepared the formula and the cereal and the baby was fed. Sennur Hanım had made a new outfit for the baby and she proudly dressed the baby in the pink dress.

This visit seemed to please the mother and give her a feeling that someone was interested in her family. Hopefully this home visit and its teaching has helped the mother and Ayşe. There are many babies that need this kind of care in Turkey but because of many reasons we never see them or they come too late for any help. Perhaps through these home visits we can help others to see that we are trying to help them.

