# The Incubation of Babies in Paris.

By Miss Mary Burr.

"Have you seen the babies in the incubators in Paris?" This was the question addressed to me one morning just as we were starting out. No!" I answered. "Oh, you should see them. I am sure they would interest you, they are in a shop on a boulevard." Thereupon directions were given us, and off we started full of curiosity. Of course I had seen babies in incubators in hospitals at home, but babies incubating in a shop was certainly new to me, and I conjured up visions of the chickens incubating in the shop window in Regent Street.

Following to the letter the directions given us, we found ourselves in the Boulevard Poissonière, and after walking some distance saw the notice "Couveuses d'Enfants." A man outside was calling the attention of the public to the fact that inside, and *not* in the window, as I had imagined, were the babies in incubators, announcing also that there was no charge for admission, the sight was free.

The place was arranged museum-fashion, and to prevent crush there were two doors—the entrance on one side, the exit on the other. We entered, and found ourselves in a medium-sized shop, but where the counters usually are mere wooden railings. Instead of goods piled against the walls were glass cases, four on each side, containing the mummy-like figures of babies.

At the back of the shop, also railed off, was a staircase on one side, and on the other a portion of the remaining space partitioned off by huge sliding doors of glass.

After this first casual glance we began to inspect in detail. Passing to the inside of the railing we came to glass case No. 1. This contained what at first glance looked like a wax figure of a baby, and I must truthfully confess the thought flashed through my mind, "It's a fraud"; but no, the unmistakable cries from case No. 3 testified to the injustice of that thought. Our interest naturally increased when we saw No. 1 also moving; the child lay upon a hair pillow, tightly wrapped up in a white cloth, mummy fashion; there were no bedclothes. The wee mite lay there exhibited to the gaze of a curious public.

The case, or, to give it its proper name, incubator, stands about two and a half feet from the ground on a metal stand; the sides and double doors which form the front are of glass, the back and lower part being white metal. The bottom contains tubes filled with hot water, this being heated by gas outside. The temperature is regulated by an ingenious little regulator which, once adjusted, keeps the temperature exact. This, of course, is arranged to suit the age and temperature of the child, the following scale being about the usual temperatures:—

A child of 6 to 6½ months' term, temp. of incubator 35° C.; 6½ to 7 months, 33° C.; 7 to 7½ months, 32° C.; 7½ to 8 months, 31° C.; 8 to 9 months, 30° C.

If the child's temperature falls or rises above normal then the temperature of the incubator is raised or lowered, and during the last few days before being sent home the temperature is lowered to 25° C., so that the change shall not be too sudden.

Ventilation is maintained by an air-shaft, with an inlet beneath the hot-water pipes, so that it is warmed before reaching the child, whilst a tall pipe from the top of the incubator almost to the ceiling carries off the impure air.

Outside, upon the top of the incubator, in a frame, is kept the chart upon which is marked the child's name, dots taking the place of the surname, date of birth, and length of term, temperature, and weight, also the temperature of the incubator.

Of the eight incubators seven were occupied by babies who had arrived from three months to two weeks before time. No. 3, who had so audibly announced the fact of his existence, was taken out well covered by a small soft blanket, and taken into the nursery (the huge glass case we had noticed on entering), and there given to a nurse who at once proceeded to put the child to the breast, when his cries soon ceased.

These nurses, three in number, were dressed in holland overalls, which covered them entirely from throat to wrists and ankles. They were evidently the foster-mothers of these poor wee mites until the time when they could be handed over to their own poor mothers, to be cared for or neglected, to be fed or starved, as Fate and circumstances ordained.

Needless to say this is a charity and for the poor only, although incubators can be hired by those who can afford them. We were very fortunate in seeing little Victor D——, No. 7, bathed and dressed. He is a seven months' child, and had been in two days. He was taken to the nursery, where a bath had been already prepared for him, and covered with a white cotton cloth; he was forthwith undressed, protesting vigorously all the time, and indicating by his cries his dislike to being disturbed in such a fashion. When undressed he was placed on the cloth over the bath with the nurse's hand beneath him, and gradually let down into the water and bathed by the water being lapped over him by the nurse's other hand; he was kept in from three to four minutes, no soap, sponge, or rag being used, nothing but water from the hand of the nurse.

At the end of the allotted time he was lifted out, wrapped in a towel, then in a blanket carefully dried, and gently but well rubbed outside the blanket. Then came the exciting process of dress

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