

### RICKETS!

In the last lecture of his course on "Babies," at the Infants' Hospital, S.W., last week, Dr. Vincent said that Dr. Hall, of Leeds, had examined the children of the Board Schools in that town and had found 50 per cent. of them suffering from rickets. He had also examined the children of the Jewish Schools in the same town, which were situated in the poorest quarter, amid great squalor and misery, where the people were in extreme poverty, and he found that instead of fifty per cent. of the children suffering from rickets, only seven per cent. were affected.

What was the reason of this? It was that the Jewish mothers always breast-fed their children, and also that there was a powerful tradition among the Jews against women going out to work.

Such investigation showed that there was a main factor; rickets being entirely a food disease, due to failure of the function of digestion—failure to create structure from food—failure to grow. The characteristic of rickets is that it is a disease of growth—a baby cannot develop any of its symptoms unless it is growing. A rickety baby might be compared to a jerry-built house, where the materials employed in the structure were not of a quality to enable it to fulfil its duties.

Rickety infants usually show an excess in size as opposed to those suffering from atrophy. The baby grows, and creates the best structure it can out of inadequate materials. The symptoms are seldom seen before the sixth month. They become well established at eighteen months.

Its causation is to be found in the diet, and the greatest cause is the absence of fat in the food, continued over considerable periods. It also occurs in infants fed on boiled bread, with large amounts of sugar.

Some of the symptoms are—

Sweating of the head—the pillow frequently becoming soaked.

Great restlessness, throwing off the clothes, grinding of the teeth. Dejections: clayey, pasty, and constipated.

Deformities in the bones. The structure of the bones is such that any departure from the normal is obvious. In the ribs are found large round swellings just where they are joined by cartilage on to the sternum. This condition, owing to its similarity to a string of beads, is described as the Rickety Rosary. The same condition is to be found at the ends of the long bones, and in the phalanges. Next there is the "bossy" head, with its apparently depressed

sutures, described as the "hot cross bun head," due to the great thickening of the bones. The head in time becomes almost square. Another symptom is the "pot belly," due to muscular laxity, caused by indigestion. Indeed, every organ of the body may be complicated to a greater or lesser extent.

Dr. Vincent, in concluding his lecture, pointed out that by careful dieting the ill effects of rickets can be got over. He said that in the Hospital they described the treatment for these cases as unpicking a baby and re-making it.

The simplest measures were always the best, and for infants the only food was fresh milk in suitable quantities, modified to resemble their natural food as far as possible.

### OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss Mabelle Augusta Fussell, East London Hospital for Children, Shadwell, E., for the following article on the question:—

MENTION SOME TALENTS AND HOW SHE SHOULD USE THEM, THAT A NURSE MUST CULTIVATE IF SHE WISHES TO BE SUCCESSFUL AS A SISTER OF WARDS?

The Nurse who is desirous of becoming a Ward Sister must clearly realise her chief duties; they may briefly be described as follows:—The comfort, care and happiness of her patients; the training and teaching of her nurses; that the doctor's orders are efficiently and consistently carried out; the general appearance of the ward, and the care of the linen and stock.

In order to become a really successful Ward Sister the nurse must consider what talents to cultivate, to enable her fulfil her duties in a satisfactory manner.

She must remember the tone of the ward is set by the Sister, she must cultivate an infinite amount of cheerfulness, patience and good temper, and must possess plenty of tact in dealing with her patients and nurses. She must be able to teach probationers and inspire them with a desire to learn, and be a good disciplinarian.

She should above all things be keen, and have the talent of getting the best out of everyone, this will prevent the ward work from becoming drudgery and the nursing of trying cases a burden.

It is important to cultivate method in arranging her own work as well as other people's, as without method nothing can go smoothly.

She must be careful in the use of all ward stores, and must prevent waste of any sort.

Loyalty is essential, and she must uphold the authority of the superior officers.

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