

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

HOW WOULD YOU AMUSE A CONVALESCENT CHILD AGED 5 TO 8 YEARS, ISOLATED WITH INFECTIOUS DISEASE?

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss Alice Rhind, 11, West Mayfield, Edinburgh.

PRIZE PAPER.

My experience with children—wealthy, moderately well-off, or poverty-stricken—is that they are much the same in one particular, and that particular is this: It is not the expensiveness and elaborateness of the toys that matter, but that the child's interest be aroused in the toys and amusements at hand.

In a case of an infectious nature expense is usually a matter of considerable importance. Toys are difficult to disinfect satisfactorily, and it is much the wisest plan to have a few simple, inexpensive things, and interest the child in the fire they are going to make at the end! In this way there are no heartburnings on separating from cherished objects.

A pair of old scissors, not too sharp, and without points; plenty of old newspapers; an illustrated catalogue from one of the large stores or similar establishments; one or two penny notebooks; a slate and slate pencil; a skipping-rope (if the doctor allows); some wool; a cork, needles, pins, and some variously coloured thread—give me these, and I will guarantee to keep even the most fractious child happy and contented for several hours a day for weeks, if necessary.

There is no end to the wonderful things that can be contrived with a pair of scissors and a newspaper. Caps, boats—and boats that will sail, too! bags, baskets—all kinds; whole families, papas, mammas, brothers, sisters, uncles and aunts, can be cut out separately or joined together in rows; milkmaids with pails, little boys with hoops, and so on, one design leading to another.

The illustrated catalogue I have found an unbounded source of delight. The long-desired articles, the beautiful people in all sorts and conditions of attire, can be cut out, sewn into the notebooks, or "pricked" kindergartenswise on to sheets from the same notebooks, and sewn, facsimiles in outline appearing to our astonished gaze; and if a box of crayons be ours, the prospect is limitless!

The cork must have a hole down the middle, and is used for making "rat-tails," so dear to the hearts of ladies and gentlemen "bout 7." The slate usually condescends to little more

than a blackboard for "x and o" competitions, and sometimes "railway crossings."

Oh, many and wonderful and time-beguiling are the adaptations possible from these wonderful commonplace articles; they cost next to nothing, and can all be burned when the little one is announced safe to return to the family fireside and her "live" playfellows.

Physical exercise can be made to be a grand entertainment, and at the same time achieve another purpose.

One more item—and the child it does not appeal to I have not yet met—the evening story. The subject may—and usually is—set by the patient's self, but in any case the nurse who would be a success with children, whole or sick, must have unlimited imagination and the knack of giving vent to it. Lords and ladies, fairies and gnomes, dragons and genii, wild beasts and terrible storms; shipwrecks and desert islands, and—well, everything, nothing less than everything; the nurse must know of and be able to communicate to the charge whose tedium it is her duty and her pleasure to beguile.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors are accorded honourable mention:—Miss M. Dods (who sent a very excellent paper), Miss A. M. Smith, Miss Gertrude Phillips, Miss S. A. G. Lett, Miss A. Wellington, Miss O'Brien, Miss Macfarlane, Miss G. Tatham.

Miss M. Dods writes:—Children are generally conservative little mortals, apt to view a newcomer, especially in sickness, with suspicion. My own experience is that they have decided individuality almost from birth, brothers and sisters being quite unlike each other in character and tastes. One often hears grown-ups say, "Oh, children are all alike," but that is quite wrong. To be successful, the nurse who is in charge, and responsible for the welfare and happiness of a sick child, should make a careful study of each one under her care. A child's mind is a wonderfully complex thing, always ready to take fresh impressions, happy or otherwise, frequently very reserved and sensitive. Therefore, to makes its convalescence a happy time, it is necessary to put oneself down (or it may be up) to the level of the little ones. The principal points to be observed are avoidance of boredom and fatigue, mental as well as physical; to choose occupation for fingers when possible, to arouse intelligent interest, but to avoid excitement. Frequent change of programme is advisable. The nurse must in all cases be care-

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