

## OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

### WHAT IS THE CHIEF DANGER IN MEASLES?

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss A. L. Clarkson, Nurses' Home, City Hospital, Edinburgh.

#### PRIZE PAPER.

Measles is often spoken of and treated as a very simple and mild disease which needs very little care or attention, and is not at all serious. It is true that few patients die from uncomplicated measles, but at the same time all patients need to be well cared for, so as, if possible, to prevent dangerous complications arising, which are responsible for the very high mortality from measles, especially in children under two years of age.

The most serious complications are those which affect the respiratory tract.

*Broncho-pneumonia* is the most important and most fatal of all.

The mortality of cases of broncho-pneumonia varies from 20 to 80 per cent. Very young children have a very poor chance of recovery.

Broncho-pneumonia depends on a secondary infection by various germs. The measles patient, with the respiratory tract so much inflamed, has very little resisting power. This complication may occur in the prodromal, eruptive, or convalescent stage of the disease. The respirations are very fast—often from 60 to 80 in young children.

The face is pale and slightly cyanosed. In severe cases the lips may become purple. The nostrils expand on inspiration, and the breathing becomes laboured. The respirations are often more rapid than one would expect from the pulse rate, and the temperature may be high or may show very little elevation. A large proportion of these cases die about the end of three weeks. Death occurs in from one-third to one-half of patients thus affected.

A patient who recovers when broncho-pneumonia has complicated the attack of measles is very often left with a tubercular condition of the lungs.

*Treatment.*—The patient should be kept in bed from the moment the measles is suspected. The room should be large and airy, and draughts should be avoided.

The diet should be light and nourishing.

Great care should be taken to protect the chest. A light jacket made of gamgee tissue should be worn if the child has any tendency to bronchitis, and the chest rubbed with stimulating oils.

If broncho-pneumonia occurs in the eruptive stage and in the suffocative form the patient

often gets relief from hot poultices and the steam tent.

The ordinary form of broncho-pneumonia should be given as much fresh air as possible; steam should be avoided. The patient should be in the open air as much as possible, and should sleep near an open window. This treatment is specially advisable to try to prevent tubercular sequelæ. Of course, the patient must be well wrapped up and kept warm. Stimulation is usually necessary. Poultices should be avoided because of the weight, which is apt to impede the already laboured breathing. In very cyanosed cases leeches may be applied.

Even when nursed with the greatest care, measles may leave blindness and deafness behind. In the prodromal stage laryngitis may prove fatal, but it is broncho-pneumonia, so often followed by pulmonary disease, that is the great danger of measles.

#### HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss Amy Phipps, Miss G. Blundell, Miss Emily Marshall, Miss M. Smith, Miss M. Cullen, Miss I. D. Brand, Miss H. Scott, Miss S. Simpson, Miss S. A. Cross, Miss E. Martin, Miss J. G. Gilchrist, Miss E. L. Garrett.

Miss M. Cullen writes:—

In every case of measles the possibility of pneumonia setting in should be borne in mind, and the patient well protected from chills and draughts. It is best to wear next the skin a cottonwool jacket to keep the chest warm. The patient's strength must be kept up by food given regularly every two hours, and it may also be necessary to give stimulants. Isolation is necessary. Other complications, such as pleurisy, may be present; if the fluid is poured out into the lungs, it will become purulent, and then give rise to an "empyema"; in this case a surgical operation will have to be performed. Croup is another complication; also nasal and ear discharge, and sometimes diarrhoea and vomiting may be present, but pneumonia is the most dangerous of all.

#### QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

What are the signs before delivery that the child's life is in danger? What would you do in such a case?

#### THE DUBLIN CONFERENCE.

The Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, who is deeply learned in its history, has most kindly offered to conduct a party of nurses over this fine edifice on June 4th. He has thoughtfully arranged that they shall enjoy the singing of the choir, in which there are many lovely voices.

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