

Bull the nuss used to call 'im. 'E's a tartar. I nearly buried 'im three months ago—the feumonia—'e was in the children's orspital for six weeks and came out a skilinton." Sister doesn't remember this John Bull very well, it's such a favourite name for the nine-pounders—so she quickly proceeds to find out about the other seven previous children. "Any varicose veins, nurse?" "Yes, Sister, very bad." They were bad—as bad as could be, and slightly inflamed. Sister: "You know what the doctor will say, Mrs. Smith: 'Go to bed, and stop there.' Nurse, take the temperature." Mrs. Smith: "Oh, I've always had 'em, Sister, and, you see, there's the children to look after, and my man is in orspital 'iself, and I clean orfices in the evening." Sister: "Haven't you got a sister, or a cousin or an aunt who could come and give a hand?" Mrs. Smith: "His mother lives with us, but she's eighty, and a bit feeble like." When the doctor does come, he looks grave and says Mrs. Smith must go to bed—unless she wants to leave her children for good and all. Tears come into her eyes, but her face brightens when the doctor suggests the Lady Almoner should see what she could arrange for her.

Enter Third. A poor slattern, Mary X., half-witted, evidently a degenerate, deaf, unmarried; it is hard work to get her dates. One trembles for her babe. She is lame, and her pelvic measurements suggest contracted pelvis. Sister gives a demonstration on the board, and points out the evidence of rickets, of which there is a history. "The forehead of a philosopher, the face of a monkey, the chest of a greyhound, the abdomen of an alderman, the legs of a grand piano." The pupil midwives try to look serious, but fail. Sister looks at Mary's teeth. They are characteristic. She points out how ill-nourished the woman is. She elicits the causes of rickets, and this leads to a talk on baby feeding.

It is five minutes to ten. The nurses fly round and put all in order. Sister casts a critical eye round the room. On the stroke of ten the House Physician and students arrive. All these patients are examined, and after the internal examinations the notes are completed and filed in alphabetical order. Mary X. is to see the Visiting Physician. The doctor, turning to Sister, who is a keen Suffragist, says: "How about giving *her* a vote?" Sister (severely): "If women had votes she probably would not be going to have a baby." She turns to Mary, and raising her voice says: "Mary, would you like to have a vote?" "No, Mum, I don't 'old with it. I don't know nothing about sich things." Sister (triumphantly): "There, doctor, is a type of an 'anti'!"

The doctor shrugs his shoulders, and beats a retreat. The morning's séance is at an end.

M. O. H.

THE BEST BABY IN THE WORLD.

An interesting feature of the Panama-Pacific Exposition is (says the *Daily Telegraph*) to be an

attempt to find and to honour with a prize of £5,000 "the best baby in the world." In other words, there is to be a baby show of a kind never before held, for every entry will be a champion infant selected by severely modern tests from every State and country that has the courage to present an aspirant for fame and wealth so hard to win.

As this is to be a rivalry based only on points recognised by science, with sentiment and favour entirely banished, the show will be entirely unlike other baby shows, where eugenic ideas seem not yet to have taken much hold, and such inconsequential things as fancy costumes and decorated baby carriages count in the awarding of the palms.

Such trifles will have no weight whatever with the San Francisco or the preparatory contests. Matters like measurements and weights will be decisive; and mere prettiness, except as it is the natural consequence of the baby's approach to physical and mental perfection, will be ignored. For reasons presumably related to the difficulties and dangers of travel, the contestants are to be considerably older than in the scientific baby shows hitherto held in America. Indeed, some of them will not be babies at all—for the age limits are between three and five years; and it is as adults-to-be, rather than as finished products, that these candidates are to be pronounced as good or less good.

There can be no bad babies at this show, since the conditions laid down assure that the only differences will be in excellence. It is expected that there will be nearly 1,000 entries; and every country, with the exception of the Far East, will be represented.

"THE HAND THAT ROCKS THE CRADLE RULES THE WORLD."

When the hand ceases to rock the cradle, will it still rule the world?

A hospital matron explained to the representative of a contemporary the other day, "No baby is rocked here. The action of rocking is very likely to produce indigestion, which is the beginning of all sorts of infantile disorders. They sleep just as soundly in these stationary cots."

All very scientific and correct, no doubt; but somehow it sounds cold comfort for the piccannies who just love to be cuddled and crooned over, and expand like flowers in an atmosphere of mother-love.

BEST SUGAR FOR INFANTS' FOOD.

A German writer advises the use of beet sugar rather than sugar of milk in sweetening the food of babies. It is much lower in price. In addition, children fed on it increase in weight, there is less intestinal fermentation, and the character of the stools is better.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)