

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

WHAT ARE THE DUTIES OF A NURSE IN THE CARE OF AN INFANT FOR TWENTY-FOUR HOURS AFTER ITS BIRTH?

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss Mary Harvey, Registered Nurses' Society, 431, Oxford Street, London, W.

PRIZE PAPER.

Preparations for the nurse's duties in the care of an infant for the first 24 hours of its life must begin before it is born. She must have its clothes ready, which usually consist of a flannel binder, 4½ in. by 20 in.; this should be of fine new flannel with raw edges: binding or hemming would make it uncomfortable; a knitted or woven vest, made like a jacket, with long sleeves and high neck; a soft diaper, a flannel pilch, a long flannel, and a nightgown. These should not only be well aired, but warm. She must also have a bowl of boracic lotion, and six or eight swabs of wool or pieces of sterilised old linen; and four ligatures, four strands of lustrine knotted at each end make good ligatures; these must be boiled and kept in boracic. As soon as the child is born its mouth and eyes must be well cleansed with the boracic lotion; it should then be made to cry, if it does not do so of its own accord, by dashing a little cold water on it, or slapping it; sometimes it is necessary to do artificial respiration. When it is breathing properly, and the cord has ceased pulsating, it should be tied about 2 inches from the child with a surgical knot; tie another ligature about 2 inches from the first, and cut the cord between the two with sterile scissors.

The child should then be well wrapped up in a receiver made of flannel or a clean old blanket, and put into its crib, or any place where it can be kept warm. A mackintosh should be placed under it, and it must be looked at frequently, because it may kick off its coverings and so get cold; also the cord should be examined, to see that there is no oozing.

The child should be washed and dressed as soon as possible. For the bath have two basins nearly full of hot water; olive oil or vaseline; a cake of good soap; two soft towels; safety pins, scissors, needle and cotton, sterilised gauze; starch powder; absorbent wool, and a good fire. Have the clothes within easy reach, and wear a mackintosh and flannel apron.

Weigh the baby in the receiver, deducting the weight of the receiver afterwards; measure its length; then take the baby on your lap, keeping it well wrapped up, having only its head uncovered; wash its eyes and mouth again

with boracic lotion; next wash and dry the face; then the ears, which must be thoroughly cleansed with swabs of wool dipped in warm oil, from the vernix caseosa, which sometimes covers the child completely, but in many cases is only found on the head, in the folds of the ears, in the creases around the neck, under the arms, and in the groin. Cleanse the hair in the same way; then soap the head and ears, rinse thoroughly, holding the head over the basin face upwards. It may take some time to get the hair really clean, so there should be a supply of hot water to keep the bath up to 100° F. Having finished the head, cleanse the body and limbs with the wool and warm oil, soap well, and put into the bath. The water will be rather dirty by this time, so the baby should have its final wash in the second basin. Take it out and put it face downwards on your lap, dry thoroughly, always using warm towels. Then turn it on to its back, and in doing so pull up the flannel apron so that it will lie on a clean dry part; finish drying, keeping the child covered as much as possible all the time. Rub it over with your hands, because by so doing you can make quite sure that it is really dry. The cord should now be tied again, then dusted well with sterile starch powder; fold round it plain sterile gauze, put on the flannel binder, and sew it firmly, taking care it is not too tight.

While washing the baby the nurse should note any swellings on the head, or, in the case of a "breech," on the buttocks; marks or abnormalities of any kind, and in a boy see if the foreskin will draw back properly.

Then put on the vest, which should have its opening at the back. Next grease the buttocks and genitals with oil or vaseline, because the first motions are apt to stick to the skin. It is a good plan to put a layer of absorbent wool between the child and the diaper; this can be burned; it saves the diapers from being so badly stained. Put on the diaper in the usual manner; wrap the pilch straight round, and fasten with a safety pin. Put on the long flannel, turning the superfluous length up behind, and not over the baby's toes. Put the nightdress on, feet first, and put the baby to the breast for five minutes; although there is very little for it, the baby should be put to the breast every four hours. The diaper should be changed when necessary, which is about every eight hours. It will sleep most of the time, and if the weather is really hot it can be taken out.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss J. G. Gilchrist, Miss C. M. Will, Miss E. Douglas, Miss Dora Vine, Miss

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)