

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

WHAT ARE THE MOST FREQUENT SITES OF TUBERCULOUS DISEASE IN CHILDREN? WHAT CAN NURSING DO TO PREVENT IT?

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss Dorothy Humphreys, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, E.C.

PRIZE PAPER.

Tuberculous Disease and its Prevention in Children.—Tuberculosis attacks children most commonly in the brain, hip, peritoneum, cervical glands, and lungs. Tuberculous disease in children occurs most frequently in the hip-joint; more than half the cases occur before ten years of age, and over 90 per cent. before puberty. The brain is also frequently affected. Tubercular meningitis, which is synonymous with acute hydro-cephalis, is not uncommon among young children. The bowels are often the seat of tubercular inflammation; cases of children suffering from tubercular peritonitis may often be met with in hospital wards. Tubercular mesenteritis is closely associated with it. Phthisis, or tubercular lung disease, also attacks children. The lymphatic glands of the neck are often enlarged from tubercular disease. (The most frequent seat of tuberculosis in the tissues is the lymphatic glands.)

Prevention of Tuberculosis.—There is no evidence that tuberculosis, though commonly held to be an hereditary disease, is actually transmitted by heredity to the system. There may, however, be a tendency of the tissues to develop the growth of the tubercle bacillus. The nurse, therefore, who takes charge of a young child with a tendency to develop the disease has it in her power to help to prevent the same if the right measures are adopted. These deal chiefly with diet and hygiene.

Diet.—An infant should not be breast-fed by the mother if she is tubercular; a good sterilized milk mixture should be used instead. An older child should be given plenty of good food, but not more than he can readily digest. Fresh animal food, either roasted or boiled, should be given only once a day. After two years of age the child should have four simple meals a day; this is preferable to three larger ones. The diet should include eggs and plenty of milk. The amount of vegetables, in particular the consumption of potatoes, should be limited. Pasteurized milk is recommended in preference to fresh milk. Cod-liver oil, in the form of an emulsion, should be given in as large a quantity as possible without disordering the diges-

tion. This may be varied in hot weather with cream, fat bacon, olive oil, &c.

Exercise.—Plenty of exercise, well-ventilated rooms, and fresh air are most necessary. Outdoor games and suitable gymnastic exercises should be encouraged; deep-breathing exercises and those which correct round shoulders and contracted chest are specially suited for weak-chested children.

Fresh Air.—This is most important, and the child should have the maximum amount of fresh air and sunshine possible, and lead a healthy outdoor life. A certain amount of discretion must be exercised, for a tubercular subject must be kept from exposure to cold and wet; unnecessary exposure may have most harmful results, and even the most healthy children are exceedingly sensitive to changes of temperature, and suffer from cold, damp air. A dry, airy climate is most suitable, where the child can be out of doors most of the day without danger of taking cold.

General Hygiene.—Clothing should be warm, light, and loose; tight garments are very injurious, and interfere with the free play of the muscles. Pressure on the chest or ribs impedes the action of the lungs, and impairs the respiratory and digestive systems. The child should be bathed twice a day with tepid water, and gentle massage given after to excite the action of the skin. The child should not be allowed to sleep in the same room with a tuberculous person, nor to kiss anyone with the disease. The general health of the child must be most carefully attended to; tuberculosis has a curious relation to other diseases: the occurrence of the latter is very apt to set up the disease of tuberculosis in a predisposed subject, and this is especially the case with regard to influenza, measles, chicken-pox, and other childish ailments.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss Eva M. Chapman, Miss Dora Vine, Miss Hilda Reynolds, Miss Jane Chapman, Miss F. Johnson, Miss T. O'Brien, Miss M. F. Hanson, Miss Kathleen A. Roberts, Miss Henrietta Ballard, Miss Lucy C. Cooper.

Miss Hilda Reynolds points out that certain children are more prone to tuberculous disease than others; they are spoken of as being of a strumous or tubercular constitution, the chief points of which are a badly developed chest, a weak circulation, and a low vitality.

QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

Give three essentials in the nursing care of the mother during the first week of the puerperium.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)