

HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss Dora Vine, Miss Lucy C. Cooper, Miss Mary Mackenzie, Miss Edith Sanderson.

QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

How may nurses and midwives help to diminish the mortality amongst infants and children under five years of age?

 THE CHILD.

 THE CARE OF THE CHILDREN THE
 FIRST WORK OF THE NATION.

III.

In a previous article I dwelt on the subject of the direct infection of children by parents and other adults, suffering from phthisis, living in their own homes.

In cases of phthisis in children, generally speaking, it is found on examination that the bacillus is of human origin.

Now let us turn to surgical tuberculosis. Here the case is quite different, for *in the milk-drinking period of childhood* practically every child suffering from surgical tuberculosis is found to be infected by the bovine type of germ; it will therefore at once appear that these cases are entirely preventable.

From the tuberculosis health visitor's point of view—and remember she deals with the patient's home—these cases are among the most hopeless, unless it is found possible to get the child at once removed to some hospital or institution where the patient will receive continuous care and treatment over a space of two, three, or four years, maybe longer. Treatment in hospital for a few weeks and a return to the same surroundings is worse than useless: it is money thrown away. At home in a workman's cottage or in a city slum, proper treatment, rest, fresh air, and nourishing food are usually unobtainable. And where are the hospitals for surgical tuberculosis to be found? They are indeed few and far between.

Here, then, are two conclusions: surgical tuberculosis is mainly due to infected milk, and therefore preventable; treatment over a space of years is necessary for patients so affected, in hospitals or homes suitable for the purpose.

At once it will be evident that more care should be taken to ensure an adequate supply of pure milk for the people, and that there should be both municipal and county hospitals, where cases of surgical tuberculosis could be treated in its earliest stages, when, we are told, 90 per cent. might be cured.

In the year 1907 the deaths which occurred from all forms of tuberculosis, including consumption, numbered 56,101, of which more than 10,000 were in children under five years of age. When we remember that about 75 per cent. of children suffering from the tubercle bacillus are found to be surgical cases, the need of such special hospitals throughout our country will be more fully realised.

From the educational point of view this is also evident. These children should not be allowed, even if physically able, to attend ordinary schools, especially where these schools are of the old-fashioned barrack-room type; yet they need to be regularly instructed, if in after-life they are to become useful citizens.

In a properly equipped hospital, where the children are in residence, they can receive regular tuition by appointed teachers, under the educational authorities, at stated hours. Where this has been done, good results have been obtained. In many instances school can be carried on in the open air.

Milk and meat form the two principal means of the spread of tuberculosis by the bovine type of germ, yet we hear conclusively, on the evidence of experts, that no proper supervision exists for byres and dairies in cities, country towns, and especially in country districts, from which large quantities of milk are daily sent, by rail and road, to London and our provincial cities.

A startling feature of surgical tuberculosis is this: it has been found that very many of the patients come from country districts, where one would expect the children to be in better air and healthier surroundings. The question of infected milk will answer this piece of evidence, for in the country children are more likely to have nature's own food; in the cities this is often impossible, from the higher prices obtaining, and the poor housewife instead buys condensed milk of foreign manufacture preserved in tins.

It is not generally understood that a cow in apparently good health may give infected milk, while "The milk of cows with tuberculosis of the udder possesses a virulence which can only be described as extraordinary" (Report of the late Royal Commission). How, then, are the children to escape, for only a continuous system of public analysis appears to meet the need?

Institute without delay a public system of sterilization of all milk retailed to the people, and we come at once within a reasonable distance of the solution to the question. It has been proved that raising the heat of infected milk to boiling point (212° F.) renders it perfectly harmless, and to this end the public are

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