

The Midwife.

THE PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD.

The third lecture of the Advanced Course on Infant Care was delivered on Monday, February 7th at the Royal Society of Medicine, 1, Wimpole Street, by David Forsyth, Esq., M.D., F.R.C.P., on the Physical Development of the Child.

Infants, said the lecturer, were practically all born sound, and all developed along identical lines. There were certain changes which should all be completed in the first week of birth, and in most cases this was accomplished.

As an instance of failure in this respect was what was known as congenital heart disease, which was a misnomer as the heart was normal at birth, but the changes which should have been effected in it during the first week had failed. In the child there was the phenomenon of growth. It was erroneous to regard the infant as a miniature adult, for there were important differences of proportion, noticeably there was the head which was large in proportion to the body, and the body that was out of proportion to the legs. Great changes were noticeable in the skeleton of the infant. The spine which in the adult took a double curve was straight in the infant, but as soon as it got upon its feet, the curving began. Nature in this way providing that the shock of placing the foot on the ground should be broken. So in the moulding of the pelvic bones. Before the child begins to walk, these bones have no pressure to sustain, but from that period the constant pressure causes them to become more and more moulded, so that at the age of two years there was not so very much difference in their shape compared with that of the adult, but there was the greatest difference compared to that of a new born child. Then again the foot of an infant was not nearly so shapely as in later years. The arch for example was absent and not till infants begin to walk do they get a normal instep. The arch of the foot also minimises shock. The heel attachment to the muscle of the calf also undergoes development. The lecturer pointed out the seriousness of ricketty softening of the bones, especially of the pelvis in girl babies. He explained the bad effects of adenoids, and the deformity of the chest which they were likely to produce. He next explained the growth of the long bones, and pointed out the rapidity with which it took place in the first few years of life. A child at birth measuring 20 inches, would attain to 30 inches by the time it had completed its first year. At four years it would measure 40 inches. The rapidity of growth was stupendous. The next period of

rapid growth took place just before puberty. Height is less at the end of the day because the elastic cartilages of the spine are pressed together. A recruit for the army recently, being under the regulation height, took 48 hours in bed, and thus attained the requisite inches.

Dr. Forsyth explained the difference in warm and cold blooded animals. The young infant, which of course belongs to the former class, has no means of controlling its temperature as has the adult. The loss of heat which occurs depends largely on the amount of heat which is stored. He illustrated this by pointing out that if a cup of hot water and an egg cup of the same were placed side by side, the latter would become cold long before the contents of the cup.

The smaller the animal the greater amount of heat loss. Hence the necessity for keeping the infant warm with artificial heat. Nature provided partly for this in young children by the thick layer of fat to be found under their skins. In the newly born there was no power of heat regulation, and if not protected their temperature would fall till it reached the level of the external air.

THE LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL. CERTIFIED MIDWIVES PRACTISING WITHIN THE COUNTY OF LONDON.

The Midwives Act Committee reported on Tuesday to the London County Council that Section 8 (5) of the Midwives Act, 1902, requires the Council, as the local supervising authority for the administrative county of London, to supply to the Central Midwives Board, during the month of January in each year, the names and addresses of all certified midwives who, during the preceding year, notified their intention to practise within the county. 564 certified midwives gave such notice during 1914 (an increase of eight over the previous year), and a list of their names has been forwarded to the Board. In addition, 15 notices were received during the year from persons who acted as midwives on specific occasions, and 12 notices from certified midwives who intended to practise in the county during periods of less than one year.

LYING-IN HOMES—ESTABLISHMENTS FOR MESSAGE OR SPECIAL TREATMENT— REGISTRATION FEES.

The Public Control Committee reported that it is necessary that a non-incorporated society, association, or body carrying on a lying-in home or an establishment for massage or special treatment should, when applying for registration under the London County Council (General Powers) Act, 1915, submit a certified copy of a resolution authorising a matron, superintendent, manager, or other responsible person to act on

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