

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

WHAT DISEASES MAY BE CAUSED BY FAULTY DIETING? MENTION SOME OF THE EFFECTS WHICH MAY FOLLOW THE CONSUMPTION OF PUTRID OR DISEASED MEAT?

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss J. G. Gilchrist, Gillespie Crescent, Edinburgh.

PRIZE PAPER.

The diseases which are commonly met with in one's practical experience and may be termed constitutional are: *Rickets*, a disease of infancy most evident about the first and second years of life and characterized by impairment of general nutrition and by alterations in the growing bones. The essential cause is faulty dieting, the chief factors being the use of poor condensed milk, many proprietary foods (which nearly all contain starch), and too much starchy food generally, with a deficiency in animal fat, proteids and lime salts. Contributory factors are lack of sunshine, pure air and exercise. It is especially common in large cities amongst the poor, ill-clad and ill-housed. If the digestive disturbances can be remedied by early treatment, enabling good nourishment to be taken, deformities in the bones may be prevented and the child regain tone generally.

Late Rickets.—Recurrence of early rickets may be seen in rapidly growing girls, from nine to fifteen years, due to faulty dieting and strain put upon young children in poor districts where mothers are in the habit of going out to work all day, leaving the children to manage as best they can on "pieces," tea, &c., with a properly cooked meal occasionally. The disease may manifest itself in flat-foot, knock-knee and lateral curvature of the spine. Remedies are good feeding, regular meals, porridge, pure milk, eggs, fatty tonics—such as malt and cod liver oil, and Virol.

Scurvy may be seen in infants as well as adults, in rich as well as the poor. It is due to a limited diet—mainly the consumption of preserved, salted or artificial foods, and a lack of tonic properties such as are obtained in fresh fruit and green vegetables. In the child the exclusive use of sterilized milk may bring about the condition. The characteristics of this disease are usually seen in the swelling of the salivary glands, sponginess of the gums, unhealthy mouth generally, and pallor. Raw meat juice, fresh foods, whole milk, fruits—lemons and oranges especially—counteract the tendencies of the disease.

Anæmia.—The ordinary chlorosis is common in young girls, from fourteen to seventeen, who are underfed and overworked, especially

if living or working in close, unventilated workshops and unhygienic homes. The appetite becomes capricious, and they usually come to prefer acids and highly spiced foods, which exaggerates the lack of hæmoglobin—the protein and iron contents of the blood—and cause further dyspepsia and constipation. Green vegetables, especially cabbage, which contains iron, and wholesome, easily digested foods, simply and well cooked, should be given.

Diseases due to over-indulgence or excess in foods which are richly prepared, fatty and sweet articles, alcoholic liquors and wine (such as champagne), are unnatural *obesity* and *gout*. Abstinence, plain food, exercise in open air are indicated.

Gastritis, inflammation of the stomach, may be caused by irritating, highly seasoned foods, frequent drinking of boiled tea with excess of tannic acid. Other organs, such as the liver and kidneys, may be affected in their functions by faulty dieting.

Eating fish out of season, or tainted or decomposed food stuffs of any kind, leads to poisoning of the digestive tract and interference of function.

Meat may be dangerous, through the development of putrefaction; disease of a more or less virulent character may follow the presence of parasites which may not be killed in cooking.

In this country tuberculous or diseased meat rarely comes into the market, and the meat is usually sufficiently cooked to destroy the parasites, which may be worms of two kinds, the cestoda or flat worms—the nematoda or round worms. Should those parasites gain an entrance into the body, they usually adhere tenaciously to the intestinal mucous membrane, causing local irritation of more or less severity.

Bad meat has a very irritating effect on the alimentary tract as the result of the action of the bacteria, which produce an accumulation of poisons or ptomaines. Tinned meat is often subject to excessive decomposition, if at all moist or the tins imperfectly made, or air not wholly excluded.

The symptoms of ptomaine poisoning may be very severe—vomiting, purging, or diarrhœa, intestinal pain, collapse or shock; mental prostration may be severe and the heart affected and beats slow. Prompt skilled treatment is necessary to get rid of the irritant and soothe the digestive canal.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss A. E. Noblett, Miss Susan Grey, Miss May Farmer, and Miss Alice M. Burns.

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