

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

WHAT ARE THE EARLIEST SYMPTOMS OF (a) SCARLET FEVER, (b) MEASLES, (c) TYPHOID FEVER, (d) SMALLPOX, (e) WHOOPING COUGH, AND HOW SOON AFTER EXPOSURE TO INFECTION WOULD YOU EXPECT THE SYMPTOMS IN EACH CASE TO APPEAR?

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss A. C. Knight, Mount Vernon Hospital, Northwood, Middlesex.

PRIZE PAPER.

The Earliest Symptoms of (a) Scarlet Fever.—Sudden onset; headache, vomiting, sore throat with redness, swelling of fauces, tonsils, and pharynx. Pains in limbs, convulsions in children, and rigors in adults. A punctate erythema rash, appearing on the neck and chest and spreading over the body, comes out on the second day. The face is flushed, and there is a marked pallor around the mouth. The tongue is coated with the red tips of swollen papillæ showing through. There is a rise in temperature, pulse, and respiration.

The incubation period is from one to three days, but may be one week.

(b) *Measles* commence with catarrhal symptoms, watery eyes, sneezing, and cough. These symptoms last for three or four days. Koplik spots appear on buccal membrane of cheek, and are diagnostic of measles. The rash appears on the fourth day as red spots behind the ears and at the roots of the hair, quickly spreading over the face, trunk, and extremities, and forming raised crescentic blotches, giving the patient a characteristic appearance. Temperature is slightly raised during catarrhal stage, and shoots up with appearance of rash.

Incubation period, fourteen to eighteen days.

(c) *Typhoid Fever.*—Onset insidious, with severe headache, depression, loss of appetite, pain in limbs, back, and abdomen, sometimes epistaxis. The abdomen may be swollen.

The temperature during the first week of disease rises at night, and falls a degree or two each morning. The pulse is slow in comparison with the temperature. The tongue is slightly furred at first, and tends to clear round the edge and tip. The stools may be loose and resemble peasoup, or they may be constipated in character.

The rash appears as rose-red spots slightly raised, disappearing on pressure, coming out in crops, each crop lasting three or four days. They appear during the second week, first on the abdomen, and then may spread to the chest, and each spot is about as big as a pin-head.

Incubation period of typhoid fever is from fourteen to twenty-one days.

(d) *Smallpox.*—The onset is sudden, with severe frontal headache, vomiting, rigor, acute pain in back, the patient generally feeling very ill.

The temperature rises. Various rashes may appear before the true smallpox rash shows itself. The papules come out on the third day, first on the face and wrists, and then spread to the trunk, and lastly to the lower extremities. The papules are red, hard, and shotty. They become vesicles in three days, and pustules three days later. The temperature is usually very high in the pustular stage, due to septic absorption.

The incubation period of smallpox is almost always twelve days.

(e) *Whooping Cough.*—The earliest symptoms are a bad cold, with a slight rise in the temperature and a hard, dry cough. Then the paroxysmal cough—a series of short coughs which finish up with a long inspiration or whoop. The child often vomits during a spasm of coughing.

The incubation period of whooping cough is usually from fourteen to twenty-one days.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss M. Cullen, Miss L. C. Cooper, Miss L. James, Miss P. Robinson.

Miss M. Cullen writes:—“*Smallpox.*—The period of incubation lasts from one and a half weeks to a fortnight. Characteristic symptoms are attacks of shivering, pain in the back, headache, vomiting, high temperature. Invasion period lasts from two to three days; then the rash appears, first on the face, taking the form of little papules, these gradually spread to the rest of the body. Meanwhile, the temperature falls. In about three days these papules contain fluid (vesicles). About the eighth day the vesicles become purulent, when pustules develop. Inflammation takes place, and continues until about the eleventh day. The temperature then drops, pustules begin to dry up and form scabs, which gradually separate and are thrown off. This applies mainly to a comparatively mild case.

“*Whooping Cough* is an infectious disease of the air-passages, which possibly is caused by a germ, but so far none has been discovered. Characteristic symptoms are fever, cold in the head, and the typical cough, which may best be characterised by a long-drawn crow or whoop.”

QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

What are the duties of a Sister-Tutor, and how best can she be trained to perform them?

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