

## OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

DESCRIBE SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT DISORDERS OF NUTRITION. THEIR SYMPTOMS, AND NURSING CARE.

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss Amy Phipps, Council Office, 16A, South Street, Romford.

### PRIZE PAPER.

The diseases of nutrition may occur as a primary disease or may be secondary to those caused by pathogenic microbic invasion, and while they may show the acute symptoms during infancy, the results may be seen throughout life; they also act as powerful predisposing causes to the incidence of other acute diseases. Amongst the serious diseases of nutrition, existing directly or indirectly as such, may be mentioned:—

1. *Rachitis*.—This is characterised by weakness, swelling, and tenderness of certain muscles and joints, various nervous disturbances, copious perspiration, especially about the head, hyper-sensitiveness of the skin, abdominal distension, diarrhoea, colic, indigestion, and some pyrexia and convulsions; some of these may occur as complications rather than symptoms. The patient is very liable to contract the specific fevers, broncho-pneumonia, &c. The changes in the osseous system are of importance, the skull being affected early.

The frontal and parietal prominences are usually exaggerated, with a flattening of the vertex and occiput, and the fontanelles remain open long after they should be closed; dentition is usually delayed and irregular. The thorax will be seen to have enlargements at the junction of the ribs and cartilage, and the spine tends to bend, the ribs tend to fall in, causing "pigeon-chest," the extremities show enlargement at the joints and tend to bend readily, causing such deformities as bow leg, &c.

This, as all cases of nutrition disease, needs early and expert medical care. The treatment includes good hygienic conditions, plenty of fresh air, good, wholesome, and well-chosen food, containing a sufficiency of fats, absolute cleanliness, and warm, well-made clothing.

A warm bath at night, followed by gentle rubbing with olive oil, is often beneficial, and such drugs as phosphorus, cod liver oil and malt, &c., may be ordered, and often prove valuable. Deformities and other local conditions will be treated as directed by the medical attendant.

2. *Scurvy*.—This is a morbid condition of

the blood and tissues, usually due to a defective diet; it is characterised by great debility, tenderness of the bones and skin, which will cause a child to cry out when touched, and will cause the skin to bruise very readily, and, further, there is a tendency to bleed from all parts; the gums are spongy, and the teeth tend to drop out, and the breath is very offensive.

The child's diet will need immediate revision; plenty of fresh milk (unboiled), fresh raw meat juice should be given; also fresh fruit and potato, the necessity being to introduce a sufficiency of water (a very important factor) into the dietary. Local symptoms must be treated as they arise, the limbs wrapped in cotton wool if necessary, and the gums gently smeared with glycerine and tannin. Abundance of fresh air and sunlight throughout, and iron, cod liver oil, and sea bathing will aid convalescence.

3. *Convulsions*.—These occur rather as a symptom than a disease, but may be mentioned here as being due, in many cases, to intestinal irritation from mal-nutrition, and causing reflex cerebral trouble. The well-known symptoms are muscular twitchings, the face purple or livid, frothing at the mouth, rolling of the eyes, &c.

The usual treatment is an immediate hot bath, and cold cloths to the head, to treat the acute and urgent symptoms; the cause must then be found and dealt with effectively.

4. *Gastro-intestinal Catarrh*, 5. *Enteritis*, 6. *Enterocolitis*.—The three latter, although each a distinct disease, have a certain similarity of symptoms. They are caused by improper and irregular feeding, causing indigestion; and unhygienic surroundings. In addition, enterocolitis, or inflammatory diarrhoea, is always caused by micro-organisms and the toxins they produce.

These cases need plenty of fresh air and sun, and nourishment which can be digested, often ranging from albumen water only, to gradually introduced barley-water, milk, &c., and such other treatment as is ordered. In most cases of this kind prophylactic treatment is of the first value and importance.

### HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss B. James, Miss Alford, Miss M. Jenkins, Miss D. Moore, Miss H. Ballard.

### QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

Mention some of the more common skin affections, their causes, and the treatment you have seen applied.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)