

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

WHAT ARE THE PRINCIPAL CAUSES OF NUTRITIONAL DISTURBANCES IN THE BREAST-FED INFANT, AND WHAT MEASURES ARE TAKEN TO OVERCOME THEM?

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss M. Ramsey, 64, Enmore Road, South Norwood.

PRIZE PAPER.

In breast-fed babies, nutritional disturbances may be due to irregular feeding, feeding too quickly, unsuitable food taken by the mother, disease, illness or constipation of the mother, grief, worry, or anxiety (any of these causes may set up diarrhoea and vomiting). Prematurity weakness, nasal obstruction, cleft palate, hare lip, facial paralysis; loss of the suction reflex will prevent the baby feeding properly. In these cases the milk should be exhausted and given with a spoon.

Generally speaking, in the nutritional disturbances of breast-fed babies there is a definite cause for the same, although a baby's capacity for taking food is relatively much greater than an adult's, and is a function which is highly unstable. Whenever the child is indisposed, its digestion immediately becomes upset, as shown by diarrhoea and vomiting. As soon as this occurs, the first idea of the mother is to change its diet, and it must be remembered that this is not always because she is ignorant. Mothers as a class are more intelligent than they used to be, and are certainly getting much better educated in the matter of feeding their babies. They have, however, to learn that it is sometimes the child's or their own condition that is at fault. When a baby is feverish, or diarrhoea and vomiting is present, one must first endeavour to ascertain the cause of the disturbance. The mother should avoid excitement of any kind and give the baby her whole attention when feeding, which should be every three hours, but no night feeds. Violent exercise is harmful, as it causes the blood to become overheated. Occasionally the child seems in too great a hurry; a nipple shield should then be used for the first few minutes. With these too-hungry babies the stomach may become distended with wind, and the child will cry from pain. When at length the eructation of the wind takes place, the contents of the stomach are very often ejected at the same time. This not unnaturally gives to the mother the impression that in some way or other her milk disagrees with the child. The fault, however, may lie in the way in which the milk is taken—not in the quality of the milk. A distinction must be made between these over-hungry

babies who need more milk and the babies who are suffering primarily from under-feeding. The latter are, as a rule, quiet and apathetic.

It should be remembered that vomiting may be caused simply by the nursing or handling of an infant immediately after it has been fed. This should be carefully avoided, as it is even more important for a child than an adult to rest after food.

If constipation is present in the mother, pure medicinal paraffin should be taken daily. Plain, nourishing food is essential, avoiding alcoholic drinks. Plenty of water should be taken. If in spite of all precautions being taken the baby does not thrive, a doctor should be consulted.

If the child is gaining in weight, stools normal in colour, consistency and smell, bowels move regularly, the child eager for feeds, sleeps well, is happy and contented when awake, and there is an absence of flabbiness—then it may safely be assumed that all is well.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Mrs. Farthing, S.R.N., Miss Mary Lee, and Miss Sarah Paterson.

SERIOUS ILLNESS OF PRINCESS CHRISTIAN.

All classes of the community, especially the members of the Nursing Profession, have learned of the serious illness of Princess Christian with the deepest sorrow. The whole life of this Royal Lady has been devoted to the service of her country, and she has associated herself in the most sympathetic and intimate manner with the special work of the Nursing Sisterhood, who claim her as their special Princess.

THE MATRONS' COUNCIL.

A meeting of the Matrons' Council will be held, by the kind invitation of "Glaxo," at Glaxo House, 56, Osnaburgh Street, N.W., on Thursday, June 28th, at 2.15 p.m.

The members, on arrival, will be escorted round the packing factories, laboratories, offices, and the Mothercraft Exhibition, and will be shown the "Film" taken in the drying factories in New Zealand. Tea will be at 4 p.m.

The Business Meeting of the Council will be held on the termination of the tour of the various departments. We feel sure the guests will have a most interesting and instructive time at Glaxo House.

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