

**BETTER BABY CONTEST**  
**KERSHAW COUNTY FAIR**  
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scientific tests. If the baby comes up to a certain standard it is eligible to enter the final contest for prizes. If it falls below the standard, the parents are told why. Again I hear the voice of the pessimist. "But what good does it do American babies if hundreds of them are disqualified?"

Better Babies system, is not final. The parents are not only told what is wrong, but how to change and better conditions for their babies. As an instance, here is a baby which has always been dull, perhaps what the neighbors call stupid. The parents have regarded this as a "cross" to be patiently borne, and have been thankful that anyhow the baby was right pretty. So they brought it to the show. The examining doctor pokes an inquisitive finger into baby's throat and what

does he find? Adenoids! The farmer-father of that baby would wonder what to do with a swollen gland on the throat of a prize-winning mare's colt, or blight on field of what ought to be one hundred per cent wheat, but he never heard of adenoids, which interfere with his child's breathing. But the doctors who are judges at a Better Babies contest do know all about adenoids. The baby goes to a specialist, has the adenoids cut out, begins to breathe properly, the little brain also clears and works normally, and the baby comes back to the State Fair next year, in an older "class" and wins a prize.

Or a small three year old passes his physical examinations with flying colors, but falls down on the mental development test. His disposition is sullen or irritable and he shows nervousness. A specialist looks at his eyes and finds a defect in vision which can be remedied with glasses. No wonder the small man is irritable. He is never free from headache, and what grown-up can endure chronic headache? The small contestant may never come back to another fair, because as a rule three years is the maximum age for entries, but thanks to a Better Babies Contest and examination he has been given a fresh start in life. His eyes have been fitted with glasses, the defect in vision is being cured and he will start into school and eventually a business or professional career free from the terrible handicap of weak vision and chronic headache.

Take as a concrete example the case of little Alice Milstein, daughter of a Polk County farmer, whose experience at the Better Babies contest at the Iowa State Fair is familiar to every baby specialist in the country. Alice's father raised prize grain and live stock. Alice's mother was a college bred woman. Alice herself was pretty, but delicate little baby when she was entered in the Better Babies Contest of 1911 at Des Moines, Iowa. She was what the country neighbors called "alling." Her parents listened to what the doctor judges had to say, then they commenced to put little Alice through a course of hygienic sprouts, from baths to sleeping, from food to playthings. And Alice took to this new sane system of living like a duck takes to water. What is more, she grew, thrived and became radiantly happy and beautiful. The next year at the Des Moines Fair she walked right off with the first prize.

Now you see just what standardizing babies means—just bringing them up to the standard of health and intelligence set by normal babies.

And the strangest part of it all is that the country baby needs standardizing just as much as the city baby, while the small town baby of well to do parents is often found to be of no higher standard than the baby of the tenements! That is why doctors the country over and intelligent parents of moderate and comfortable circumstances are so tremendously interested in the standardization of the American baby. It costs less to raise an educate a normally healthy baby, so the Better Babies Contest means a saving of actual cash to parents and the state.

The Better Babies Movement started five years ago in Louisiana. The prize winners at that first contest have been raised along methods of standardization and today are a source of pride to the state. Mrs. Frank de Garmo, who is nationally known as the leading spirit in the work for good roads for little school children, arranged the first contest, which was held at Shreveport, La., in connection with the State Fair. This was in 1908. The second contest, the following year, was even more successful, so Mrs. De Garmo carried the gospel of Better Babies to the national gathering of Mothers' Congress in Denver, 1910. Among the women who became interested was Mrs. Mary T. Watts, of Audubon, Iowa, who carried the message to her state and interested fair officials.

Out on the Pacific coast the movement was also taking root. Mr. O. M. Plummer, secretary of the Portland Stock Yards Company, and a man of authority in the matter of state fairs, made a trip to the little town of Goldendale, in Klickitat county, Washington. Goldendale was having its annual county fair, with live stock and agricultural exhibits, horse racing and a baby show.

But it was a different kind of baby show from any that Mr. Plummer had seen. There was a prize for the most beautiful baby, of course, but there were also prizes for babies who showed certain good physical points. Mr. Plummer decided that there ought to be a very special prize for the baby with the best all round development, and he promptly proceeded to offer it in the name of the City of Portland, and the railroad which connects Goldendale and Portland. The prize was a trip to Portland for the Goldendale prize winner and its mother, including a weeks stay in the Oregon metropolis. Well, Goldendale, small town and farming district, was simply torn wide open. The contest waxed fierce. The prize finally went to little Rex Russell, son of a local dealer in hardware, and built, as the physicians pronounced him, like a thoroughbred.

Mrs. Russell and Rex went to Portland and were feted for a week. Mr. Plummer saw to it that every booster's organization in the city, stock yard officials, state fair officials and legislature had an occasion to meet Rex, the prize winner. Result, the next year Oregon held its first Better Babies Contest at the State Fair in Salem, 1912. The Mothers' Congress, with Mrs. Robt. H. Tate in charge and the Parent Teacher's Society, with Mrs. W. Williams at its head, organized a splendid child welfare exhibit.

Every feature of the week's work for Better Babies was a popular success. This year Oregon State Fair officials will spend a thousand dollars on prizes and educational features, and Mr. Plummer is now working for a permanent home, through a legislative appropriation, for the Better Babies Movement in Oregon.

In January of this year the physicians of Denver held a Better Babies

Contest under the auspices of the National Western Live Stock Association. The examinations were conducted at the Savoy Hotel, and the prizes were awarded in the arena of the Stock Yards, where five thousand Coloradoans gathered to do honor to the State's splendid babies. I had been sent to Denver by the publishers of the Woman's Home Companion to award their special Better Babies prizes, amounting to two hundred dollars, one hundred dollars each to the best developed city baby and the best developed country or rural child.

When I saw those physicians in earnest consultation over the standardization of Colorado's babies, when I saw the mothers and fathers studying score cards and conferring with physicians on the results of the examination, I realized for the first time how simple was this process of creating a race of Better Babies for America. All that was necessary was to let the great mass of American parents know the physical and mental needs of their children, and the miracle would be worked. Parental pride, parental hope, parental love alike are all aroused by these contests. For after the prizes had been awarded, scores of parents came to my hotel to ask whether there really was a chance of their babies coming up to the standard and winning prizes in the year coming.

Another lesson learned at the Denver gathering was the need of a uniform or national score card, so that physicians in an Eastern state could compare the baby standards with those of the West. The work of preparing this card was entrusted to Dr. Ditson, chief scorer in the Denver contest, and Dr. Sanford Bell formerly professor of psychology at the University of Colorado. This card has been revised and endorsed by leading physicians of New York city, and the New York Milk Committee. The latter is famous the country over because it standardized milk for American babies. In 1911 it appointed a national commission on milk standards, composed of experts from various parts of the

country, which established standardized grades of milk. Their reports was accepted by the United States government and printed by Act of Congress. These standards are distributed free by the New York Milk Committee, from its main office, 105 East Twenty-Second st., New York City. The Milk Committee will use the Better Babies score cards at all its New York contests.

The state fair officials of Oklahoma, co-operating with the Federated Clubs of Oklahoma City and Federated Kindergarten Mothers' Club, will hold its first contest from September 23 to October 4 of this year. The Montana state fair officials, through their secretary, Mr. A. J. Breitenstein, are organizing county contests, one in each of the thirty-two counties, to be held during the summer, with prizes of ten dollars to each winner. At the state fair, the final contest will be held, the county prize winners will be re-examined and the state prizes awarded. North Carolina has taken up the Better Babies Movement as a means of fighting hookworm and will hold a contest in connection with the state fair at Raleigh, in October, 1913.

Other states which will have state fair contests this Fall are Iowa, Nebraska, Arizona, Minnesota, Washington, Idaho, Mississippi and Louisiana. State fair officials of Massachusetts, Vermont, New Jersey, Illinois, Alabama and Kentucky are securing statistics and suggestions of pioneer workers and may hold contests this year. From one end of the country to the other, small local contests are held every week. They are managed by clubs for women, child welfare organizations, pure milk commissions, medical societies, municipal boards of health, parent-teacher associations and all societies interested in the betterment of babies.

A "Better Baby Contest" will be held in connection with the Greater Kershaw County Fair in November.

For Cruelty to Animals. Mr. W. A. McDowell, constable for Magistrate Copeland, of Bethune, brought to jail Tuesday morning, Jim Robinson, colored, for cruelty to animals. Robinson is charged with cruelly beating a mule belonging to Mr. S. M. Broom, of near Bethune.

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