

A cretin treated by thyroid extract / by Wm. Rushton Parker.

Contributors

Parker, William Rushton.
Coupland, W. H.
Telford-Smith, Telford
King's College London

Publication/Creation

[London] : [publisher not identified], [1896]

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/xapxnqnb>

License and attribution

This material has been provided by This material has been provided by King's College London. The original may be consulted at King's College London. where the originals may be consulted.

This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, without asking permission.



Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

A CRETIN TREATED BY THYROID EXTRACT.

By WM. RUSHTON PARKER, M.A., M.D. CANTAB.,
Honorary Surgeon to the Kendal Hospital.

M. E. K. was born on March 1st, 1888, her mother—who suffers from hare-lip and cleft palate—having two months previously suffered a great shock from the rapid death of one of her boys from croup. Otherwise there is nothing noteworthy in the family history—no goitre, no consanguinity, and the four grandparents living to a good age. During infancy it was noticed that she differed from other children in being always very still and quiet, in sleeping inordinately, and in never crying. Up to 6½ years of age she remained very stunted in growth, propped up all day on a chair, being unable to sit up or stand, usually very stolid, and sleeping indefinitely, breathing very noisily, and unable to recognise people or to speak. She was always cold, liking to be near the fire. Her actions were very slow, so that she would take a full minute to raise her arm when asked to shake hands. Her bowels were extremely costive, there being usually only two or three very painful motions in a month.

On November 24th, 1894, the child was photographed, being held up for the occasion by her elder sister. At that time her face was swollen, so that her eyes were often scarcely visible; her lips were swollen and livid; her tongue was swollen and livid, and commonly protruding; the teeth were black and stumpy; the mouth seemed always full of phlegm, and the breath smelt; the bridge of the nose was sunken and the tip flat; the neck was thick, the thyroid gland quite imperceptible; there were soft swellings above the collar-bones and similar masses outside the nipples; the limbs were short and stumpy, the belly was swollen, and an umbilical hernia protruded to the size of a walnut. The hair of the head was not noticeably scanty or coarse.

A 5-grain thyroid tabloid was given every weekday in one dose for the succeeding six months, during which time the swelling gradually vanished from the tongue, then from the face, then from the body and limbs, so that in a few months her mother thought she felt quite a stone lighter, although she had grown some inches in height.



Photograph taken November 24th, 1894.



Photograph taken November 28th, 1895.

On May 10th, 1895, she was again photographed, looking very much like any ordinary child of two years of age; she had then been able to sit upright for about two months, and could stand with the help of a chair; her bowels had long ago become quite regular, and the hernia long since disappeared.

In June the tabloids were increased gradually to 10 in a week—namely, one daily and an extra half on alternate days, and from October onwards she took 2 every day.

In July she could relish a meal like any other child; two lower and one upper permanent incisor had appeared. She enjoyed sitting out in the sun all through the summer, and was fond of rolling about on the hearthrug.

By October she was full of fun and activity, and quite affectionate; she could toddle about with a very little help; she had a large appetite; she was quite quick and intelligent in shaking hands, recognising people, etc.; she played and squabbled like any normal child.

On November 28th, 1895, after twelve months' treatment, she was photographed once more, having very much the appearance of any healthy child from 2 to 3 years of age, but being unable to talk—with the exception of saying a very few simple words like "dad," "mam," etc.—and having several healthy permanent incisors, most of the old black stumpy teeth having vanished.

The thyroid treatment caused no unpleasant symptoms whatever, so that it was never discontinued or the dose reduced; but the impression throughout has been that the child was taking just about as much as it could tolerate, being occasionally on the verge of diarrhoea and feverishness.