

## Nebraska Babies Delight Experts at the State Fair Show



**N**EBRASKA'S best crop—babies—was on exhibition at the State Fair at Lincoln last week. Six hundred lusty, crawling, cooing, smiling and shouting youngsters went through the booth, were examined and measured and tested, weighed and listed, all in the interests of—what?

It seems that we are suddenly become concerned as to the kind and quality of our offspring, as well as the quantity. We are going in for "breeding," if the term may be applied here, and, in order to know just what we are doing, we are going to put the infant of the species on record. One enthusiast at the Baby Show booth at the State Fair grounds even suggested the desirability of a futurity for baby shows; the possibilities of this will stretch out into delightful vistas of applied eugenics. Just think it over for a minute or two. Here come Strophon and Phyllis to the registrar; they have settled the preliminaries between themselves, and now they want to get down as exhibitors in the baby show futurity. Just fill out this picture to suit yourself—it offers a wonderfully attractive field for the imagination. The proposition also holds some comfort for the more experienced in the matter of baby-raising. At the booth they can be shown in a most practical manner just what is lacking—an ocular demonstration, as it were, of the mistakes made in the past and the opportunities for betterment, with encouragement to try again in hope that another time they may be able to show the baby that will get away from the judges' stand with a card showing 1,000 points duly registered. By all means, let us have the futurity class in the Baby Show!

But the Baby Show that was held at the State Fair last week had a great attraction for fathers and mothers, and much interest in the methods

and processes for testing. One result rather startled some of those who took enough of interest to follow it through from first to last, and that was the town-bred baby outstripped the rural baby by such a margin as to properly dispel the time-worn tradition that the country is the place to be born. The town-born babies showed up better in every class, and with such very desirable physique and general equipment as to almost warrant laying down a law that town is the place to be born; the farm may be the place to go to win a competence, to meet Nature face to face, and to do a lot of other things, but the town has something on the country when it comes to the matter of babies.

Six hundred babies were examined at the booth at the State Fair grounds last week, fifty-six Lincoln physicians assisting Dr. W. H. Wilson, secretary of the State Board of Health, who was the examiner in charge. Eight hundred babies had been entered, and the imposing feature of these numbers may be understood when it is set out that at the Iowa State Fair, the week before at Des Moines, but 166 were examined. Mrs. Anna Steese Richardson of New York, who is representing a paper that is contributing to the prize list, and who has been placed in charge of the work, says the Nebraska showing was the best she has so far seen. The doctors worked in relays of a dozen at a time, and gave over many hours each day from their regular practices in order to make sure that each of the kiddies entered in the contest had the right sort of examination, and got the correct markings. The method of procedure was the same in general terms in each case. The doctor first got the baby into either a good humor or a receptive mood by methods known to doctors and mothers, and then the rest of it was easy. Disposition, intelligence, size, weight, markings,

configuration, everything that might be taken as an expression of physical or mental makeup, was noted and the sum of all the points was marked up as the baby's final score.

An example of the methods used was given in the case of a little girl, 1½ years old, who was brought to the booth by her mother. The little girl was first taken to a tent just outside the building, where she was examined to see if there were any signs of any disease of a contagious nature or any skin eruptions which might bar her from the examination. Having been pronounced by the examining physician as all right in this regard, she was taken to the registering booth, where her age, sex, color of eyes, hair and weight at time of birth were taken. This baby in particular was 17 months' old, weighed at time of birth nine and one-half pounds and was not fed with a bottle for twelve months. She had twelve teeth, does not sleep alone and by open window. The father is Italian-American and the mother German-American.

This little girl was then taken to the department where an examination was made as to her mental development. This showed that she stands and walks without support, says a few words, knows her mother, interested in surroundings, hears, sees, is not irritable or highly nervous, has good temper and easily managed. In this test she passed 109 per cent.

She was then given the physical test which showed that she weighed twenty-one and three-quarter pounds. In the test measurements of the body she showed to the worst advantage, her percentage being 40. Very few children pass anywhere near perfection in this test, and still may be considered good and healthy children. As there are very few perfect men and women when it comes to body measurements, the same applies to the children, and the mere fact that they fall low in physical development is no indication that the child may not or is not a strong and healthy specimen. The measurements of the head and body are the test, and vary considerably in the child as in the full-grown person.

However, when it came to the physical examination outside of the measurements, this baby passed perfectly, the score being taken on features, size of head, hair and scalp, fontanel, eyes, ears, nose,

lips, neck, arms and hands; chest, abdomen, genitals, spine, legs and feet; posture and gait, general nutrition of the body, mouth, throat and teeth. According to the rules laid down by the society a child at 1 year should have eight teeth; 16 months, 12; 18 months, 16; 2½ years, 20.

The score is based on 1,000 points, and, notwithstanding that this child scored only 40 points out of 100 on measurements of the body, she scored 940 on the total test.