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BABIES WRAPPED IN PAPER.

Pitiful Conditions in Budapest.

"LIKE SICK MONKEYS."

By CONINGSBY DAWSON.

BUDAPEST.

I have just visited a founding hospital here in the capital of a country which used to lead the world in legislation for the conservation of child life.

It was more like a palace than a hospital—an imposing series of buildings covering several acres—but only imposing from the outside. It was overcrowded and under-staffed. War, with its retreats and invasions, has filled the land with tuberculosis and rickets.

The nurses were in patched clothing and rags. The doctors were worn and pale as ghosts. I saw many attendants trudging through the snow without stockings. There was no soap, no linen, no anything.

Commodities so common as soap, powder, vaseline and linen are not to be pur-

chased. Children born in the hospital are wrapped in paper. Even the paper is so scarce that it has been washed.

After it has been washed it cracks. The edges become sharp as a razor. There is not a baby in that hospital whose tender little body is not covered with cuts and sores. Yet what can the nurses do? The babies have to be clad, and there is nothing but paper.

I wish the people who read this article could have accompanied me through those wards. It was the Christmas season. The occupants of the cots, the little children, the mothers who bent over them giving them the last of their strength, were more outcast than Mary.

Because of the coal shortage no ward in the hospital was properly heated. I was wearing a coat and had kept it on. In the little railed beds babies shivered against the bars on bare mattresses. They wore nothing but a single patched shirt, which left off at the legs for the sake of economy.

The impression they created was not even remotely human; they looked like sick monkeys from the tropics who had not become acclimatised. There were lines and lines of them, their bodies blue with cold and criss-crossed with scars. Most of them could not shift themselves; their heads were bumpy and their legs withered.

The thing that first struck me was their silence; they had finished all their crying. A doctor informed me that the mortality among them was over 30 per cent.