

state of the skin, whether hot, dry or moist; the presence or absence of any rash or skin eruptions; the shape of the chest and the degree of abdominal prominence. It must be borne in mind that pigeon-breasted chests are very common in diseased children. A protuberant abdomen is regarded as normal. Pass the hand over the head; first investigate the state of the *anterior fontanelle*. This closes normally between the fifteenth and twenty-fourth month. If it remains open after the second year, it is often a sign of disease, most usually of rickets. Too early closing of the fontanelle occurs in some forms of microcephaly and idiocy. The degree of tension of the fontanelle is of much importance. In health it pulsates distinctly and is on about the level of the bones, neither shrunk nor unduly elevated. When we find a depressed fontanelle it is a sign of exhaustion; a tense fontanelle indicates increased intracranial pressure. It must, however, always be borne in mind that a crying child has a tense fontanelle. If you place your ear over the fontanelle, a systolic bruit is heard, but it is of no clinical importance. Investigate the shape of the head. Nodes on the frontal and parietal bones is a common occurrence in rickets, especially in syphilitic children. We ought also in infants to look for craniotabes (thinning of the bones of the skull) and in older children for rheumatic nodules. The general shape of the head must be noted. In rickets it is box-shaped, in hydrocephalus it is globular. It may be abnormally large or small or asymmetrical. In children, it is of great importance to examine the long bones, as many of the commonest and most serious diseases of infancy affect these bones more prominently than any other part of the body. Look for thickening or tenderness along the shafts of the body. This may be due to the following causes: scurvy, syphilis, suppurative periotitis or to tumours. Examine carefully the *epiphyses*. In rickets they become enlarged. This is most easily seen where the ribs join their cartilages, the thickening there forming a bead-like row of prominences called rickety rosary. It is also easily seen at the wrists.