

Association are prepared to support its work for the profession whole heartedly, but every individual nurse should do so individually. We invite nurses to fill in and send to the Secretary of the Association the application form which appears on the back cover of this issue.

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

WHAT IS A PARASITE? WHAT EXTERNAL PARASITES ATTACK MAN. DESCRIBE IN DETAIL THE TREATMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF A CASE OF SCABIES, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE PREVENTION OF THE DISEASE.

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss Catherine Wright, Dryden Road, Bush Hill Park, Enfield.

PRIZE PAPER.

A parasite is a living organism; it may be of animal or vegetable origin; it derives its existence from feeding on another living organism. Choosing for its environment preferably "man," it breeds prolifically; the power of movement is constant and sustained. Parasites move together in large numbers; surviving best in crowded and unwholesome atmospheres, they create a serious condition, which learned bacteriologists have proved by unquestionable scientific research to cause epidemic diseases, resulting in a very high mortality amongst human beings.

The parasites which most commonly attack man are the "louse" family, either as "pediculi capitis," those attacking the scalp, or "pediculi corporis," those attacking the body, and the "pediculi pubis"; the latter form is rare.

The former pediculi hatch their nits, or eggs, which adhere to the hair, cause great irritation; the skin becomes abraded by scratching, crusts form, the glands of the neck become infected; the victim thus becomes a source of infection, and this condition is found, in England, principally amongst school children.

The procedure of the "pediculi corporis" is the same, the body lice causing indescribable discomfort, and causing the same degree of danger by infection. The pediculi pubis are found in the eyebrows, axilla, or pubis, and necessitate medical treatment. The larvæ of these parasites are a source of great danger, and food for human consumption must receive special protection and scrupulous hygienic precautions to avoid contamination.

There are two vegetable parasites which attack human beings. Children of foreign

origin principally have the affection of "favus." It is found in the form of a fungus in the head, yellow incrustations of a cup-like shape form; it is treated medically, often in the X-ray department of the London hospitals, and is highly infectious unless isolated.

The second vegetable parasite is the fungus of ringworm, attacking the scalp and the body. Both should receive medical attention, which will lessen their infectivity.

"Scabies," or "itch," is due to a parasitic insect, "acarus scabies," a minute object, invisible to the naked eye; the female acarus forms a burrow in the skin. Here it lays its eggs, and this is a source of incessant irritation; the hands, between the fingers, are affected, spreading to the inside of the wrist; other parts of the body become infected. The irritation is intense, especially at night, resulting in a very short time in a highly nervous condition through restlessness and sleeplessness. School children are very open to the infection, which may spread through the whole family.

The hands of school children should be frequently examined, because an early diagnosis and exclusion from school may be of practical use in preventing the spread of the disease.

A daily bath of soap and water, and an application of sulphur ointment, repeated for two or three days, relieves this condition. The clothes worn should be steeped in boiling water, and the child should have its own toilet requisites and sleep by itself. Exclusion from school is an important point.

This disease of scabies is prolific in the East End of London, and is intensified in crowded areas. The London County Council have arrangements for municipal baths, where a routine treatment of medicated baths is supervised by the trained nurses on the school staff. The children are kept under careful supervision until all infection is over and every symptom of the disease has disappeared. All clothing is specially sterilized. Mercurial ointment is a valuable asset in curing the condition of impetigo, which may follow the scabies condition, and good food and hygienic conditions will act as remedial and preventive measures for further or future infection.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss M. M. Bielby, Miss A. M. Burns, Mrs. E. E. Farthing, Miss J. Robinson.

QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

What points would you endeavour to impress upon a mother as of primary importance for the rearing of a healthy baby?

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