

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

HOW WOULD YOU CARE FOR THE DEAD, IN A HOSPITAL, FROM THE HOUR OF DEATH UNTIL THE CORPSE IS REMOVED FROM THE MORTUARY?

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss A. Millicent Ashdown, 11, Manvers Street, Bath, for her paper on the above question.

PRIZE PAPER.

Death having taken place, the eyelids are gently closed. The friends having left, the bed is stripped to the top sheet. Hot-water bottles, pillows, cradle, etc., are removed. The body is then undressed and laid absolutely straight in the centre of the bed, the arms crossed over by the sides. The bottom sheet is tidied, and, if necessary, the drawsheet changed, provision being made in case of any discharges occurring. Jewellery and false teeth, if any, are removed, the mouth carefully closed, the jaws being kept in position by a bandage. The eyelids are kept closed by small oval pads of lint soaked in cold water. In some cases it may be necessary to have a firm pillow under head. The feet are kept upright by a bandage. The body is then left covered with a sheet. The bedclothes, etc., are then removed from behind the screens, leaving the locker, chair, and head-board quite tidy. Care must be taken to see that the screens are so arranged that nothing is visible to other patients. The charts, prescription, and case papers are removed; the window opened. At the end of an hour, having previously seen that everything is ready, so as to avoid any interruptions, and procured help, the washing is commenced. A prayer is said before beginning, remembering the solemnity of the occasion and that all must be done as reverently and silently as possible. After removing the bandages, the body is thoroughly and carefully washed, with Lysol in the water. The teeth, lips, and nostrils are washed, nails cut and cleaned, any stains on the skin removed with ether, and the orifices plugged with cotton wool. Wounds, if any, are dressed, any tubes or other appliances removed, the bandages stitched in position. The hair is brushed and combed, and, if the patient is a woman, plaited in two plaits and tied with white ribbon. Bottom sheet and drawsheet having been tidied, or changed if necessary, the body is clothed in a clean nightdress or mortuary gown, and wrapped neatly in the mortuary sheet, the bed then covered with a sheet. Washing utensils, etc., having been cleared away and arrangements made for the removal, the porters are preceded to the bed,

doors and screens opened and closed for them. When ready, the stretcher is covered with a pall, screens are reopened, and the porters accompanied to the mortuary. The body having been placed on the slab, the sheet is removed, and care taken to adjust anything that requires it. The body is then covered with the quilt and slip sheet provided, the face being covered with a linen handkerchief and a few flowers placed on chest. The body is visited daily, and any discharge from mouth washed away. When the coffin is brought, the mortuary gown is replaced by the garment provided, care being taken to see all is in order when the body is in the coffin.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss Amy Phipps, Miss Emily Marshall (London), Miss Elizabeth Martin (Halifax), Miss E. Helen Gibert (Birmingham), and Miss S. A. Cross (King's Lynn).

Miss Phipps writes:—"The nurse should not forget that she is carrying out a very sacred duty upon the scene of a Divine visitation; therefore it is well that the task be performed as much as possible in silence, if two nurses be present.

"After a death the bedding should be stoved before re-using, and all clothes, etc., well washed; the bedstead should be treated with disinfectants, and the floor around scrubbed."

Miss Marshall also thinks that "the casket which once held the soul should be made to look as beautiful as possible. I should take every possible precaution for the safety of the living, and use plenty of disinfectants, carefully removing all discharges, if any, with swabs of cotton wool well soaked in 1 in 20 carbolic acid, always using forceps for this purpose."

Miss Martin points out that "often there is a good deal of discharge after death; therefore all orifices of the body must be well closed with cotton wool. All wounds should be covered with clean lint, which is either strapped or bandaged in position; all discharging wounds must be well packed, and all tubes, etc., removed."

When all that is necessary has been attended to and the body clad in a clean shirt or nightdress, "the body is then wrapped in a sheet, which should be a very long one, so that the ends may be twisted and tucked neatly underneath to avoid the use of pins, as undoubtedly they are a source of great danger to the attendants' hands. The body is then conveyed to the mortuary, and there placed in the usual mortuary linen."

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)