

## OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

GIVE THE GENERAL RULES FOR THE DISINFECTATION OF EACH OF THE FOLLOWING IN CASE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES:—(a) DISCHARGES AND EXCRETA, (b) LINEN, (c) UTENSILS, (d) THE NURSE'S HANDS.

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss Henrietta Douglas, Royal Southern Hospital, Liverpool, for her paper on the above subject.

## PRIZE PAPER.

(a). *Discharges and Excreta*.—In all infectious diseases where the source of infection lies in discharges, whatever is used to wipe them away must always be burnt. Cotton wool swabs for cleansing the mouth, wool or pieces of soft rag for the nose and ears. Handkerchiefs should never be used in diseases like scarlet fever, measles and diphtheria. Place a disinfectant in all expectoration cups before use. After use, add more disinfectant, and allow the sputum to stand for one hour. In some diseases, during the process of desquamation, particles of skin separate from the body, and may, like fine dust, convey infection. To avoid this, warm baths or daily rubbings from head to foot with carbolic acid dissolved in olive oil may be given. In dealing with excreta quite the safest way is to burn them. If possible, a pit may be dug in the earth, partly filled with chloride of lime, and the excreta buried in this. Earth closets should not be used for infectious excreta. The usual method for disinfecting stools is to pour a small quantity of carbolic acid (1-20) or 1-1000 perchloride of mercury into the bed-pan, plug the handle firmly with a rubber cork or carbolised tow. After use, cover with a cloth moistened with carbolic acid (1-20), remove from the room at once, and add sufficient disinfectant to completely cover the stool, and allow it to stand for one hour, when all microbes which abound in stools will be destroyed. Flush the drains well with disinfectant before and after emptying any excreta. Urine, which is often very infectious, should be mixed with an equal quantity of carbolic acid (1-20), and allowed to stand for one hour.

(b). *Linen*.—All soiled linen should be removed from the room immediately and placed in disinfecting solution. For this purpose carbolic acid (1-20) is the best; perchloride of mercury produces a stain. A bath is very convenient for large articles, such as sheets. Into this place all soiled linen covered with water containing carbolic acid (1-20), and allow it to stand for twelve hours; then stir well with a

stout stick, removing as much excretal matter as possible, place in water containing disinfectant, and wash with strong carbolic soap. Boil for one hour (at home if possible, if not, place the linen in boiling water for twenty minutes). Tie up in a clean sheet, and if there is a steam disinfecting station near, let the linen pass through that before going to any public laundry.

(c). *Utensils*.—All utensils used by the patient must be kept absolutely separate, and plainly marked, so that no mistake will arise, and contagion be conveyed in this manner. Knives, forks, spoons, and crockery should be thoroughly well boiled when finished with. Lavatory utensils should be completely immersed in carbolic acid (1-20) for twelve hours, then thoroughly cleansed externally and internally with strong carbolic soap and water. Chloride of lime and creolin are also good disinfectants for these articles. Then they should be well boiled in an ordinary washing boiler for one hour.

(d). *Nurse's Hands*.—It is of the utmost importance for a nurse to realise that she must take every possible precaution in disinfecting, for the slightest carelessness on her part may result in not only herself, but others, contracting any infectious disease with which she may be in contact. Consequently her finger nails (often a source of infection) must be kept quite short and absolutely clean. After touching the patient, bed, linen, utensils, &c., the hands must be immersed in perchloride of mercury (1-1000) for some minutes, then well scrubbed with a nail-brush in strong carbolic soap and water. A basin containing perchloride of mercury (1-1000) should be kept ready for use for this purpose. Her hands must be dried on her own towel, not the patient's. The hands must always be well disinfected and scrubbed clean before a meal.

## HONOURABLE MENTION.

Some of the papers sent in this week are admirable. The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss J. Gilchrist, Miss M. Eaves, Miss H. Scott, Miss A. Pressly, Miss M. Spencer, Miss G. Blundell, Miss M. O'Brien, Miss S. Shields, and Mrs. F. Dickson.

Miss H. Scott writes:—If any sputum is coughed up, either a little disinfectant must be put in the cup, or a good plan is to line it with paper, which can be taken out and burned, and the cup boiled two or three times a day. Any dressing changed must be burned.

Miss Gilchrist points out that infectious diseases are due to the agency of minute organisms termed bacteria, which are capable of convey-

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