

if they alight on wounds, hinder healing by causing pus to form, and may even lead to septicæmia. Dust has also a mechanically irritating effect in all disorders of the respiratory system.

The ideal, then, in a sick room is to remove constantly the air-borne dust as it settles on every surface the room presents, and to prevent as far as possible the intrusion of such dust.

When the window of the sick room opens on to a road with motor traffic, dust may be excluded by the simple expedient of a piece of coarse muslin or gauze the width of the window hung from the top, and long enough for the lower end to be placed in a pail of water. To avoid the uncomfortable sense of imprisonment which a white-veiled window causes to many, the gauze should be dyed a cool green by means of one of the dolly-dyes procurable everywhere. When there is much dust, such a curtain so quickly becomes loaded with it that it requires to be washed out daily.

People in normal health are able to resist the hundreds of disease germs they encounter in this way. But where vitality and resistance are lowered by illness, and more especially where wounds exist, the dangers in the presence of dust are increased a hundredfold.

In sick rooms which are simply furnished, having washable walls and polished or linoleum-covered floors, the removal of dust is a very simple matter. The principle of scientific dusting is to remove the dust entirely, not merely to transfer it from one part of the room to another, as often occurs in the ordinary method of house cleaning. This can only be effected by dusting with a damp cloth, and for the purpose I know nothing to surpass worn flannellette. For walls, ledges, woodwork, and floors a solution of Izal, Lysol, or Sanitas may be employed, using a wet duster in one hand and a dry one in the other. For polished furniture liquid furniture polish may be used to moisten the duster. A cheap method of cleaning windows is to add a few drops of strong ammonia to a pint of soft warm water; wring out a chamois leather in it and wash the panes. It requires no dry polishing, and leaves the glass brilliant.

Where there are carpets it is impossible to remove all the dust. A good plan is to squeeze tea leaves or sawdust in a solution of disinfectant, sprinkling the floor with it before sweeping with a carpet-sweeper. In households which do not possess the latter, a shilling "Baby Bissell" will prove a satisfactory substitute. The broom and dustpan method inevitably fills the air with dust. The best plan of all

for cleaning carpets and furniture is by means of a hand vacuum cleaner, which may now be purchased for less than a couple of sovereigns. The dust removed by such cleaner should be at once burnt. Failing an appliance of this kind, all light-upholstered furniture, rugs, and hangings should be taken from the room and be shaken and brushed out of doors.

In the selection of an antiseptic and spirit for dusting purposes the idiosyncrasies of the patient should be considered, and some patients find one smell objectionable, as some another.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention: Miss G. E. Hinchcliffe, Miss E. M. Pye, Miss G. A. Blundell, and Miss Sarah May.

Miss E. M. Pye writes:—The presence of micro-organisms in the air was demonstrated by Pasteur in a series of most interesting experiments. He prepared a series of flasks containing a sterilized substance suitable for the growth of bacteria should they come in contact with it. These he exposed one after the other to the atmosphere of a dusty town, of various country places, and a number he carried with him to the mountains and opened one by one at higher and higher altitudes.

As soon as each flask had been exposed to the air for a few moments it was closed with sterilized wool, it was then placed in heat suitable for the growth and development of the germs if there should be any there. After 24 hours, the flasks opened in crowded places swarmed with germs of various kinds all in process of active growth, those opened in less dusty places showed a less virulent growth, while those exposed in the pure and high air of the mountains shewed hardly any traces of activity, thus proving what his brilliant mind had conceived to be the truth, that spores and germs of disease remain suspended in the dust of the atmosphere."

"For the protection of those outside the sick room the damp cloths which have been used in dusting should be washed before being dried, and if the illness is of an infectious nature, plunged into disinfectant, and left to soak, or boiled."

Miss G. E. Hinchcliffe lays stress on the value of ventilation of the sick room before commencing the cleansing of a sick room daily, and all the routine work such as removing ashes, making beds, moving articles of furniture, &c., should be done before dusting—with damp cloths.

When dusting is done, wash dusters in some antiseptic, and dry out of doors if possible.

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