

## OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

HOW WOULD YOU COMBAT THE DANGER OF FLY INFECTION: (1) IN RELATION TO MILK; (2) IN RELATION TO THE SPREAD OF DISEASE?

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss Henrietta Ballard, City of Westminster Infirmary, Colindale Avenue, Hendon, N.W.

### PRIZE PAPER.

The common housefly is possibly the greatest carrier of infection, and, owing to its enormous numbers, is very difficult to combat.

#### IN RELATION TO MILK.

In order to prevent milk becoming contaminated by these pests the most essential thing is cleanliness. How often one sees a score or more flies on a dirty saucer or cup which has at some previous time contained milk, and is left unwashed.

By cleanliness one does not mean just the washing up of a vessel, and perhaps wiping dry with a cloth which may be not very clean, but surgical cleanliness is necessary. The very first vessel which is to take the milk from the cow should have been previously scalded and turned upside down to drain, not washed and wiped with cloths, and immediately it is used it should be covered up to prevent any of these pests reaching it; if this practice were carried out freely, and every vessel well washed and scalded, and immediately covered at use, very much less disease would be prevalent.

Milk, of course, needs to be placed in a cool place, and an ice cupboard is as good a place as any for its storage, and not to be closed down in cans, but just covered with muslin or a mesh is quite sufficient.

#### IN RELATION TO THE SPREAD OF DISEASE.

Dustbins should on no account be kept near a safe or food larder, as they provide a home for flies, and are swarming with their eggs, many hundreds being laid there each day for incubation. This also points to the necessity of keeping these covered. Manure lying about a farmyard is covered with flies very speedily, and how often they may come straight from this refuse to our food, bringing with them micro-organisms of many diseases. For instance, tetanus and malignant oedema germs are almost always present in the manure of the horse; wounds are frequently infected by this microbe, especially on the battlefield, and this can very easily be understood, as any sore left uncovered is very attractive to flies. Therefore to combat this all excreta should as speedily as possible be disinfected, or, better still, burnt.

Typhoid fever may be spread by flies contaminated by infected human excreta. The least thing used by a patient and left uncovered attracts flies, and the disease is rapidly spread; therefore it is most essential that all crockery, linen (bed and body), &c., be immediately disinfected, as well as all excreta.

Contamination of milk by flies plays an important part in infantile diarrhoea, which plays such havoc with children during the summer months of each year. Further disease, such as anthrax, smallpox, and, in fact, almost all diseases, can be spread by flies, and one cannot but recommend the sterilisation of milk as well as the above precautions, and the thorough disinfection of everything used by the patient in illness, including lavatories and bathrooms.

Food and drink, &c., should never be left about uncovered.

The common flypapers often used are not very successful, as they fall about anywhere and are anything but clean. The only really efficacious way of dealing with the fly peril is to prevent the development of this pest.

### HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss Dora Vine, Miss M. Mackintosh, Miss P. Thompson, Miss M. Elston.

It will be noted that Miss Ballard argues that as dustbins are some of the places most favoured by flies for laying their eggs, they should be kept covered.

Miss Dora Vine argues in the exactly opposite sense, and the view she expresses finds favour with scientists at the present time. Miss Vine writes:—Dustbins are the favourite fly-nurseries. Knowing this, the best plan is to use a little strategy. Leave the dustbin open: the flies are only too glad to enter and deposit their eggs. Then comes Nemesis, and the contents of the dustbin—flies' eggs and all—are destroyed. If everybody followed this plan, the common housefly would soon join the ranks of rare insects. People who live in flats should put their waste (scraps, &c.) into paper bags, leaving them open to catch the flies, and then burning the whole.

It should be remembered that flies cannot live without food, and that their particular fancy is dirt of all kinds; therefore all rubbish, manure, &c., must be most carefully disposed of.

### QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

What precautions would you take to prevent the spread of enteric fever in a house where a case has occurred? In what various ways may the patient have contracted the disease?

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