

## OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

MENTION THE ANIMAL PARASITES WHICH MAY BE FOUND ON THE SURFACE OF THE BODY. EXPLAIN WHAT METHODS YOU WOULD ADOPT FOR THEIR REMOVAL.

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss Madeline J. Butter, Rosemount School Hospital, Aberdeen.

## PRIZE PAPER.

The word "parasite" is derived from the Greek word *para*, beside; and *sitoo*, I feed. Parasites are low forms of animal or vegetable life which live upon other animals or plants, from which they obtain their nourishment, and it is generally believed that epidemic diseases are produced by similar organisms.

The parasites which are to be found on the surface of the body are the several species of louse and itch, usually called the "external animal parasites."

## PEDICULUS CORPORIS.

Firstly, the *Pediculus Corporis*, or body louse, and *Pediculus Pubis*, or crab louse, are generally to be found in the folds of the under-clothing, and only frequent the skin at intervals when in search of food. However, it is a familiar fact to the majority of nurses that when a person is in a "run down" state of health these troublesome creatures become a daily pest to our poor sufferers, as their number seems daily to increase. Again, where the daily use of soap and water is not indulged in, and where clothing is not regularly changed, they are frequently found; for example, the poor class of people and children who live in the unhealthy alleys and slums of our big cities, and who have no idea of cleanliness, are generally in a verminous condition.

The methods I would adopt for their removal are: Give the affected person a hot bath, with the addition of a few ounces of strong disinfectant, such as Izal or Cyllin, and the free use of a disinfectant soap well rubbed into the skin, and should there be any sign of eruption over the body, I should apply sulphur ointment. As to the underclothing, it should be steeped in boiling water, to which some disinfectant has also been added, and, when dried, it should be ironed with very hot irons, so as to kill the parasites and their eggs. Literally speaking, the underclothing should really be baked. Should this fail, burning it is then the surest and safest method.

## ACARUS SCABIES.

Secondly, the *Acarus Scabies* is a minute animal parasite which causes the disease known as scabies, or itch, and in appearance resembles a cheese mite, and is most often to be found in the poorer class of people who are not particular in the cleanliness of their person. The male *Acarus* is smaller than the female, and it is the female who burrows in the epidermis and there lays its eggs, and it is on account of these burrowing operations that the disease so quickly spreads. The itch is very contagious, the shaking of hands being sufficient to spread infection.

The methods I would adopt for removal are: Hot disinfectant baths daily for ten days, with the free use of soft soap well rubbed into the skin, and when the body is thoroughly dried, sulphur ointment should be applied. The patient's clothing and bedclothes should be steeped in boiling water for twenty-four hours, otherwise the disease is liable to recur. Generally, the contact with sulphur is sufficient to kill these parasites.

## PEDICULUS CAPITIS.

Thirdly, we must not forget to mention the *Pediculus Capitis*, or head louse, as, although these lice are generally to be found in the head, they are sometimes to be found crawling down to the body in search of more food. They are especially found in the heads of children, running amongst the hairs, and multiplying with wonderful rapidity by means of their eggs, called nits, and the irritation which those lice produce often causes the person to scratch so much, that an inflammation of the head is caused, called "impetigo," and it is often the case that the head has to be shaved when this occurs.

The methods I would adopt for their removal are: I would endeavour to destroy the lice by first thoroughly washing the head with a solution of hot water and weak cresol, and then when the hair was fairly dry I would take the worst away by a small-tooth comb; then I would rub the well-known white precipitate ointment thoroughly into the roots of the hair with my fingers, thus saturating it. As a rule, the precipitate ointment generally destroys them. I should also small-tooth comb it daily for a week, with the frequent use of the above-named ointment.

This treatment, however, will not destroy the nits, which adhere so firmly to the hairs. For their removal the head should be bathed with vinegar and water, and a small-tooth comb be used for some days afterwards. If

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)