

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

WHAT DISEASES MAY FLIES CONVEY? WHAT WOULD YOU SUGGEST TO PREVENT THE PRESENCE OF FLIES IN HOSPITAL WARDS CONTAINING CASES OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE?

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss Emily Lewis, James Street, Plymouth.

PRIZE PAPER.

The diseases flies may convey are:—Enteric fever, infantile diarrhoea, tuberculosis (lungs and general), cholera, plague, ophthalmia, gangrene, anthrax, and possibly diphtheria, leprosy, and smallpox.

The preventive measures I would suggest are first of all absolute cleanliness, both outside and inside the hospital; all courtyards and back premises should be kept free from dirt and rubbish; dustbins should be placed as far away from the hospital as possible and frequently emptied, an excellent plan to clean them is to place a good quantity of paper inside (loosely arranged) and set light to it. When well lighted shut down the lid. This will both disinfect and kill the germs, and also kill the eggs and larvæ of the fly, should there be any. Should there be stables within a mile of the hospital (flies have been known to fly a mile), a strict eye should be kept on them to ensure frequent removal of the manure; manure is a common breeding-place for flies, especially if undisturbed. A good plan to protect hospitals from flies is to spray the outside walls and trunks of trees in the evening or early morning with a *poisonous* solution of sod. arsenite 2 lb., honey 2 lb., treacle 10 lb., water 10 gallons. Early morning is the best time to catch flies. With regard to the inside of the hospital, every nurse knows the importance of keeping the patient absolutely clean and free from any traces of discharge and sputum; short and clean nails; the immediate removal and disinfection of all discharges and excreta; thorough cleansing of sputum cups, receivers, urine bottles, and bed pans, taking great care not to omit the crevices and corners; all w.c.'s, slop sinks, baths, mops and brushes kept perfectly clean, boiling all articles that can be boiled; no old rags, papers, or rubbish of any kind allowed to exist, as flies breed in these; all lockers should have a daily inspection, as some patients have a mania for storing food and paper. Water and all food (especially milk) should be kept in fly-screened larders or meat safes; squares of muslin, weighted with beads, should cover milk jugs, glasses, and food receptacles. In the absence of larders or safes,

muslin made to fit over a light wooden framework serves the purpose. These can be placed over the food on tables or cupboard shelves. It is important that the muslin does not touch the food to prevent soiling and moistening the muslin, because in this way dust will cling to it, and should a fly gain access, it can get at the food through the muslin. Refuse tins should be emptied after the clearing of each meal, and the lid always tightly closed. The same applies to soiled dressing buckets after each round of dressings, and the contents of both should be burned. If absolute cleanliness is observed in every detail, both outside as well as inside hospitals, the fly would be conspicuous by its absence.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss Gladys Tatham, Miss M. M. G. Bielby, Miss E. E. Please, Miss M. James, Miss G. Macintyre.

Miss Gladys Tatham writes that if the anopheles mosquito is counted as a fly, malaria must be included in the list of diseases due to its agency.

The ova of certain worms (*e.g.*, thread-worms) may also be carried by flies, and deposited by them on food. Trypanosomiasis is also a fly disease, the bite of the tsetse fly being responsible for the infection of animals and human beings. These diseases are all *known* to be conveyed by the agency of flies; very probably other micro-organisms are also conveyed by these little winged pests.

Miss Bielby says that in very hot weather the progeny of a house fly may be laying eggs, 150 at one time, about three weeks after the eggs from which they themselves developed were being laid, and in a normal summer a normal fly can become the ancestor of 95,312,500,000,000 descendants. The persistence of the species is secured by hibernation in warm places—bakehouses, kitchens, and stables. Hence the importance of killing the earliest flies as they appear in March or April.

QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

If it is decided under medical advice that an infant shall be weaned, what special points would you observe in the care of the mother and child?

NURSE N. FUND.

"A Friend from India" sends £1 for the Nurse N. Fund. We have also received 10s. from Miss D. Rolfs, R.N.S., 5s. from M. D., and 2s. 6d. from Miss Evelyn Thompson. The fund now stands at £22 6s.

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