

## OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

### WHAT IS LEPROSY? WHAT PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN ITS TREATMENT?

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss Bessie Grey Johnson, Baldwyn's Park, Bexley, Kent.

#### PRIZE PAPER.

Leprosy is a chronic, infectious, endemic disease, characterised by nodular lesions of the skin, nerve trunks, and mucous membranes, caused by the bacillus lepræ, which effects an entrance by the nasal and upper respiratory passages, mouth, abraded skin, or genital organs.

Recently the bacilli have been found in mosquitoes, so there is a possibility of transmission by insects.

The disease begins with malaise, fever, and lesions of the skin and mucous membranes, first showing themselves as brownish red spots on the trunk and limbs, ranging from half an inch to three inches in diameter, which sometimes fade when the pyrexia subsides, leaving pigmented stains or white spots, or they may soften and break through the skin, leaving indolent discharging ulcers, which may eat deeply into the parts beneath.

Great deformity is produced on the face; the cheeks, nose, ear-lobes, eye brows and lids becoming thickened. Nervous symptoms often co-exist with the above condition, causing anæsthesia to touch and pain. The muscles become atrophied, deformity of the hand, wrist, and foot resulting.

Leprosy is usually contracted in early life (not infancy) or in early middle life, and affects males more than females; it is not congenital, and heredity seems to share little in its recurrence.

Cases are only seen in England in people who have lived in countries where leprosy is common—*e.g.*, West and East Indies, China, North-East Africa, Burmah, and Central America, &c. It is also more common in Norway than in any other European country.

Until recent years the sole treatment was directed to sanitary control, administered in some countries under barbaric restrictions and methods.

The disease is practically incurable, but it may be hoped, with the research constantly going on, that it will not always remain so. Hospitals and asylums are now provided by the different Governments, where strict hygienic regulations are enforced, so far as *habitat* and *diet* are concerned, and much good has resulted.

Chaulmoogra oil is used extensively, and may be given in pill form, combined with arsenic or strychnine, or in liquid form, beginning with five minims and increasing to three or four hundred minims daily.

Vaccines prepared from the streptothrix have been used with promising results.

Weekly injections of nastin with benzoyl-chloride cause diminution of the nodular growths.

N.B.—Nastin is a neutral fat isolated from streptothrix which has a bacteriolytic effect on the lepra bacilli.

#### HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss Lois Oakes, Miss C. G. Cheatley, Miss P. O'Brien, Miss M. Mackenzie, Miss B. James.

Miss Lois Oakes writes that leprosy can be nursed in an ordinary hospital with no more risk to attendants than in the case of tuberculosis.

#### QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

What diseases may be conveyed by carriers, and how do they carry typhoid?

## MAL DE TANK.

In a "Londoner's Diary," which appears in the *Evening Standard*, it is written:—

"I have just met a member of the crew of a 'Tank.' He has been invalided home—not with sea-sickness, but with a special variety which must be associated with his calling.

"He tells me that his particular 'earth-ship' had an exceptionally rough voyage the last time he was aboard. The waves of trench which rose to meet them were successfully negotiated, but the process, to those inside, was not exactly 'armchair' sailing.

"Anyhow, my friend was so tossed about that he can only compare the after-effects to a bad attack of jaundice, and his subsequent week in a base hospital left him in such a condition that he was sent home to recuperate.

"He speaks of the sense of security enjoyed by those within a 'Tank,' and of the steps taken to ensure against bruises, in padding the body from heel to crown.

"Talking this morning to a civilian who has had a ride in a 'Tank' over a rough experimental course, the experience was described as 'like a voyage in a very small ship in a very big sea.'"

The war has revealed several new diseases, but "Mal de Tank" is the very latest. Let us hope that the occupants of tanks will, like sailors, become seasoned.

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