

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

WHAT ARE THE INCUBATION PERIODS OF MEASLES, SCARLET FEVER, WHOOPING COUGH, ENTERIC FEVER, AND TYPHUS FEVER? ALSO STATE THE COMMON LENGTH OF THE DISEASES AND THE LENGTH OF THE PERIOD OF INFECTION.

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss K. Dinsley, Walham Grove, Fulham, S.W.

PRIZE PAPER.

1. *Measles*.—Incubation period seven to twenty-one days, usually fourteen days. The commonest mode of spread is by intimate contact with a patient suffering from the disease. The most infectious period is the stage of invasion, when the chief symptoms are those of a severe cold; about the fourth day the characteristic rash appears. An early sign, and one by which a case of measles can often be quickly recognised, is the presence of Koplik's spots—small, bright red, irregular spots inside the middle of the cheeks, usually appearing about twenty-four hours after the onset of the disease. An ordinary case is over in a fortnight or three weeks.

Quarantine.—The patient should be isolated for at least three weeks from the commencement of the illness.

2. *Scarlet Fever*.—Incubation period two to five days, most commonly three days. The most important mode of spread is by intimate contact with a person suffering from the disease. Mild unrecognised cases mixing with other people are responsible for a large number of the cases of scarlet fever. It is at times spread by a contaminated milk supply. The onset is sudden; the rash appears on the second day, lasting from twenty-four hours to nine or ten days. The febrile symptoms last seven to ten days, then peeling commences. This is the most infectious period; the particles are full of poison, and are easily disseminated when they become detached. Desquamation may be slight or well marked, occupying a longer or shorter period, often eight weeks, or even longer.

Quarantine.—At least six weeks from onset of illness; in any case, peeling should have ceased, the throat must be normal, and there must be no discharge from nose or ears, or any sores round the mouth.

3. *Whooping-cough*.—Incubation period five to fourteen days. It is very infectious, and the most fatal of all the infectious diseases of childhood, death being due to lung complications. Two stages are seen: the catarrhal stage, during which the patients appear to have a feverish cold; after about ten days, the convulsive stage commences with a ticklish dry

cough, soon followed by the characteristic paroxysms of coughing, bouts of coughing interrupted by long-drawn inspirations producing the "whoop," though this may be absent, especially in young babies. The disease usually lasts six to eight weeks from the commencement of the catarrhal stage; cases are often prolonged to three or four months.

Quarantine.—All cases must be isolated at least six weeks from the commencement of the whoop; if the cough continues after this time the patient must be isolated till all cough has ceased.

4. *Enteric*.—Incubation period five to twenty-three days, commonly ten to fifteen days. The germ causing the disease is found in the excretions of the patient, and the disease is spread by contamination of water or food with such excreted matter. The stools of some people who have had the disease periodically contain the typhoid bacillus, and outbreaks of the disease have been traced to such persons; they are known as carriers. In a mild case the illness may last about three weeks, but convalescence is exceedingly slow.

The excretions, especially the urine, are infectious for at least six weeks; special instructions should be given to convalescents with regard to the use of disinfectants and personal cleanliness.

5. *Typhus, or Gaol Fever*.—Incubation period usually twelve days, sometimes much shorter; it occurs in epidemics in ill-fed, dirty, and crowded communities, and tends to disappear with the removal of these conditions. The disease spreads by direct contact with the sick and by fomites. In epidemics occurring in time of war the disease often proves fatal in a few days.

The invasion is sudden, and the rash—mulberry rash—appears about the fifth day. The second week the symptoms attain their fullest development; then the temperature falls by crisis, and in favourable cases improvement takes place. The evacuations from the patient are infectious, and must be mixed with disinfectants. The patient should be isolated five weeks from the commencement of the illness, and all articles of clothing, &c., must be thoroughly disinfected.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss D. Saddington, Miss J. G. Gilchrist, Miss E. E. Hall, Miss M. P. Weir, Miss M. J. Butter, Miss D. Humphreys, Miss L. C. Cooper, Miss Dora Vine.

QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

What do you know of Trench Feet, and how have you seen the condition treated?

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