

thanks for having snatched the time to come there from a very busy life.

The Conference then adjourned for an interval, during which tea was served and the very interesting exhibits of which a notice appears in another column were inspected.

SECOND SESSION.

PEDICULOSIS AND ITS CONTROL.

Dr. Barbara Tschaykowsky took the chair when the Conference reassembled, and claimed as a school doctor to know something of the work of nurses. As a school medical officer she came up against the subject of pediculosis, and said she would like to take the opportunity of testifying to the devotion, the energy, the enthusiasm with which they performed their work, which were responsible for practically wiping out pediculosis in the L.C.C. schools.

She then called on Mr. A. Bacot, Entomologist to the Lister Institute, to give his lecture, illustrated by Lantern Slides, on "Pediculosis and its Control in Connection with the Spread of Disease."

Mr. Bacot described in detail the lice parasites which infest man, which belong to a group of insects named the Anoplura, and are allied to the group of small parasitic insects termed Malophaga. He said that the Anoplura are sometimes termed sucking lice, because they pierce the skin and suck the blood of their hosts, while the Malophaga are termed biting lice, because the more primitive nature of their jaws allows of their feeding upon the debris of skin and feathers. He referred to the metamorphoses, complete or incomplete, which insects undergo. Lice and bugs have an incomplete metamorphoses, fleas a complete one.

Pediculus capitis (the head louse), *pediculus humanus* (the clothes louse), and *phthirus pubis* (the crab louse), were all displayed by the lantern and minutely described by the lecturer in regard to egg-laying, fecundity, hatching, resistance to cold habits, and many other details. Both *pediculus humanus* and *pediculus capitis* are negatively phototropic, crawling away from the source of light, or, if diffuse, towards any dark object or shadow in their vicinity.

Lice are now known to be transmitters of Typhus Fever, or, as it used to be termed in this country, Gaol fever, on account of its prevalence in prisons. It is significant that this disease died out when the prisoners ceased to be herded together, and were afforded more cleanly conditions, with the opportunity of changing their underclothing.

Lice are also the agents through which relapsing or famine fever is conveyed. In the case of this disease it is necessary that the louse be crushed, so that its body juices come in contact with skin that is sore from scratching, a not unlikely event to happen with very lousy persons.

The louse is now very generally thought to be an agent in the transmission of trench fever, but as yet no definite information is available concerning either the method of transmission, or

whether any incubation is needed before the insect is able to convey the disease.

Pediculosis, said Mr. Bacot, is a sign of and depends for its continuance upon a low standard of life. With the possession of a change of garments and the institution of the weekly washing of shirts and underclothing, the number of parasites is speedily reduced; when sufficient means and leisure obtain among the people to allow of the regular change and cleaning of bedding as well as of clothing *pediculus humanus* must die out. As regards *pediculus capitis*, when the conditions of life are not so hard that the mother has to spend the time that should be devoted to the care of her children to the winning their bread, the head louse will follow its relative into obscurity.

The lecturer then discussed at some length the remedies for the destruction and removal of nits, and finally dealt briefly with lice in connection with the war. In regard to proprietary preparations for dealing with lice in the trenches, Mr. Bacot said his first objection to them is the cost which is almost invariably too high; the second is that very many are all but useless. Of the profiteers he said: "If I had my way I should imprison a number of them in lousy dug-outs and leave them to test the efficacy of their own preparations, charged at market price. I have tried them and suffered; they have not. At best they appear to me as profiteers; at worst, they are infringing the law against obtaining money under false pretences. What is the Public Prosecutor doing as his work? As a sufferer I offer my services for the prosecution."

DISCUSSION.

MISS BEATRICE KENT asked whether the same insecticide could be used on every skin, and the same for the body and head. Mr. Bacot replied that greasy preparations such as paraffin, which were suitable for the hair, were unsuitable for clothing, and any preparation used on the skin would be quickly transferred to clothing.

MISS MARSTERS referred to the opinion held by some people that insects are a cause of infantile diarrhoea.

MISS DOWBIGGIN spoke of the question of stoving. Soldiers on leave had their things stoved, but, in her experience, they were often infected again on the way home.

The lecturer suggested that clothes should be hung up in a hot room. Stoving should be done twice, at an interval of about three weeks, as eggs sometimes lay dormant.

A member enquired whether there was any way of knowing whether nits were alive or dead.

Mr. Bacot thought not; he often had dead nits sent to him from cleansing stations.

In reply to a question, he thought treatment of the hair with hot curling irons might be useful.

MISS DOWBIGGIN wished to know what was the action of acetic acid and why a metal comb was more efficacious than an ordinary one. She

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