

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

STATE WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT PARASITIC WORMS OF THE INTESTINES. HOW ARE THEY TREATED?

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss Elsie Dickson, Dreadnought Hospital, Greenwich, S.E.

PRIZE PAPER.

There are several varieties of parasitic worms which invade the human alimentary canal.

Cestodes, or tapeworm, varieties of which are *tænia solium*, *tænia saginata*, *dibothriocephalus latus*.

Hæmatoda, or round worms, comprise *ascaris lumbricoides*, *oxyuris vermicularis*, *trichocephalus dispar*, *ankylostoma duodenale*.

The *tænia solium* and *tænia saginata* are the most common varieties affecting man, the first being the pork tapeworm, and the latter the cattle tapeworm. The worm in the adult stage consists of a head, narrow neck, and a number of segments; the head is about the size of a pin's head, and armed with suckers and a double row of hooklets, whereby it attaches itself to the intestines, either duodenum or jejunum. The worm resembles jointed tape, and may be ten feet long. The segments contain male and female elements, which, as they become mature, are cast off; these are swallowed by pig or cattle, the shells of the ova are dissolved, and the embryo escape, boring into the alimentary canal and settling in muscle or other organs, where they develop into larvæ or cysticerci, called measles or bladder worms. This worm becomes mature in four months, therefore if measly pork or beef insufficiently cooked is eaten by man, the head of the worm attaches itself to the mucous membrane of the intestines, and tapeworm, with segments, is developed. The presence of the worm may cause no symptoms at all, but in most cases disagreeable sensations in the abdomen are felt, with gnawing and colicky pains, irregularity of the bowels, and deficient or voracious appetite; itching at the nose or at the anus, salivation and vomiting occur. More remote symptoms are giddiness, faintness, languor, with headache and mental disturbance.

Dibothriocephalus latus, the laval form, is found in certain fresh-water fish, chiefly pike and eel-pont. The mature worm is broad, of yellowish brown colour, from two to ten yards in length. In contrast with the *tænia*, this worm produces an anæmia which cannot be cured until the parasite is destroyed.

Ascaris lumbricoides, or round worm, in shape or general appearance resembles a garden worm; it is pink, cylindrical, tapering at each end. These worms inhabit the small

intestines, where they may be passed per anum, or may reach the stomach and be vomited; they have also been found blocking the common bile duct, glottis, or nasal passages, and occasionally occur in abscesses in the groin. The symptoms resemble those of tapeworm, but this parasite may lead to more serious trouble as jaundice by obstructing bile duct, suffocation by entering the larynx; they have been known to form a convoluted mass in intestines enough to cause intestinal obstruction.

Oxyuris vermicularis is a threadworm, much smaller than the preceding species. The adult worm occurs in large intestines, chiefly in rectum and often cæcum; they are carried principally through drinking contaminated water. The symptoms are mainly local, the chief being itching at the anus; there may also be irritability of bladder, with frequent micturition.

Trichocephalus dispar are small threadworms inhabiting the cæcum, but rarely give rise to clinical symptoms.

Ankylostoma duodenale, a small hookworm, develops in the small intestine, attaching itself to the mucous membrane of the duodenum. It causes a persistent anæmia, which is unrelieved until all worms are expelled. The treatment in all cases consists in destroying the head of the parasite by drugs.

For the drug to have most effect the patient should have no food after 6 p.m., and take the drug early next morning. The most common drug used is liquid extract of male fern in dose of $\mathfrak{z}i$ to $\mathfrak{z}ii$, followed in four hours by castor oil; this applies to tapeworm. In cases of roundworm it is the administration of *santonin* ii gr. to vi gr., taken several mornings, followed by calomel or rhubarb powder. Jalap, scamony, and calomel will bring them away, but to kill them *in situ* this may be effected by astringent enemata, such as infusion of quassia, solution of alum or lime. This is repeated two or three times a week. To destroy parasites in the cæcum give saline purge frequently, or doses of infusion of gentian. The itching at the anus is relieved by application of unguentum hydrargyri. Every evacuation must be thoroughly examined, and treatment continued until one is satisfied that the head of the parasite is expelled.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss Catherine Wright, Miss K. Dinsley, Miss E. O. Walford, Mrs. Farthing, Miss R. E. S. Cox.

QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

Mention drugs which may produce rashes, and describe the rashes.

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