

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE IN A CASE OF CHRONIC PHTHISIS WHICH HAD TO BE NURSED AT HOME?

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss R. E. S. Cox, The Bungalow, Park Road, Monton, near Manchester.

PRIZE PAPER.

In giving advice where a phthisis patient is to be nursed at home, one must take into consideration all the varying circumstances under which the patient is placed, as it is impossible for very poor people to nurse a consumptive with anything like the degree of comfort which attends the better-class patient, but there are certain rules and instructions which can easily be carried out in both cases.

One of the first things to impress upon those who are nursing a chronic phthisical case is that, although a contagious disease, it can, with care, be nursed at home without any others of the family taking it. They will also need to exercise a great deal of patience and tact, as these patients are often very trying.

In choosing the patient's room, he should have the largest, airiest, and sunniest room procurable, with as little furniture as possible. The floor should be scrubbed, polished, or covered with a linoleum which can be washed. There should be no more curtains or hangings than absolutely necessary, and what is very important is an open fireplace, and the chimney should never be stopped up, as is often done in many small houses; also the patient will need a fire in cold weather if he is in bed all the time. If the patient is well enough to be up and walking about he must take some gentle exercise in the open air every day, and if not a very advanced case, some light gardening will be very beneficial both to body and mind.

A separate set of utensils, such as cup and saucer, plate, knife and fork, etc., must be set aside and always washed separately. Towels, bed and personal linen should also be washed separately. Paper handkerchiefs are best, as they can be burnt when done with. Papier maché cups can also be bought, which may be used for sputum receptacles, but a flask will be required for this purpose if the patient is able to go out. Both of these articles should have some liquid disinfectant in the bottom. The sputum must never be allowed to dry. This is very important, as while in a moist condition it is less infectious, and cannot blow about and mix with the dust. Whenever the

weather will permit, meals should be taken out of doors.

The phthisis patient will require good, nourishing food—milk, eggs, butter, vegetables, and, when able to eat it, meat once a day, soups, and beef tea. In cases where there is a lack of means, the local health authorities often supplement milk and butter to notified cases. It will be well to vary the diet as much as possible, as they soon get tired of one kind of food; in fact they are sometimes very capricious and difficult to please in this matter. Medicines will, of course, be given in accordance with the instructions of the doctor in attendance, but in most cases one of the extracts of cod liver oil and malt are ordered. In all cases the patient *must* have a separate sleeping apartment, and be made to realise the danger of spitting about, and the need for using a sputum flask. The ideal condition for a chronic phthisis case is a hut in a garden, without windows, and only a curtain drawn across when the weather is very bad, but failing this, the sparsely-furnished bedroom, with wide-open windows, is the next best. It is very important to teach the friends what to do in a case of hæmoptysis. They should be told not to get excited or allow the patient to become so, but should at once send for the doctor, and in the meantime lay the patient down with the shoulders slightly raised, open the window and door to allow a current of air through, loosen all clothing about the neck and chest, and apply cloths wrung out of cold water to the chest, and give two drops of turpentine on a lump of sugar, if the doctor has not by this time arrived.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss E. O. Walford, Miss W. Appleton, Miss Adeline Douglas, Miss P. Thomson, Miss M. James, Miss A. M. Burns, Miss E. I. Griffin.

Miss Griffin writes:—"I would advise the choice of a sunny, warm, dry room, facing south, as the tubercle bacillus cannot live in the presence of a lot of sun, and when possible the bed should be in the open, or on a balcony; failing this the window should be removed. The patient should be given hot bottles, bed socks, and plenty of warm blankets, to keep him from taking cold."

QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

Mention the principal baths used for hygienic and therapeutic purposes, and the instructions you would give, or the methods you would adopt, to ensure their efficient application.

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