

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

HOW WOULD YOU CARE FOR THE FOLLOWING WARD APPLIANCES: MACKINTOSHES, TEST TUBES, HYPODERMIC SYRINGES, WINDOW BLINDS?

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss Henrietta Ballard, Northern Fever Hospital, Winchmore Hill, N.

PRIZE PAPER.

Mackintoshes need equal care, whether in use, cleansing or storing.

1. *In use*, care must be exercised to ensure that creasing does not occur; ointment or grease of any kind coming in contact with the rubber, or urine being allowed to soak into it, all render it porous, and the mackintosh must be immediately removed and cleansed.

2. *To cleanse* a mackintosh plenty of soap and water are necessary. First well wash its surface, and then, if very dirty, scrub with a soft brush. If in use on an infectious bed, use carbolic solution (1-20) before washing with soap and water. After well washing, dry as far as possible, and allow to hang over a rod in a cool place.

Do not allow it to soak in strong solutions of soda water, soft soap or disinfectants, unless absolutely necessary, as the rubber surface will peel off and the mackintosh become porous.

3. *To store* mackintoshes, secure a cool place, away from hot pipes or radiators, and a piece of round, smooth wood, and roll on when absolutely dry; soft paper or rag rolled between is an advantage.

Never fold a mackintosh, or it will crack and become porous; and on no account put it away damp.

Test tubes.—Immediately after use, put under running cold water tap, to prevent coagulation of any serum or albumen which may be present; then thoroughly wash in Lysol or other solution, and in soda water with a small bottle or camel-hair brush kept for the purpose. Put into steriliser and boil for a few minutes. If for use, lift out with forceps and seal with sterile swab or cork, or put in disinfectant. If to store, dry thoroughly and put away in stand or wrapped in soft paper or between layers of wool or gauze.

Hypodermic syringes are made of all glass, glass and metal, and all metal, are very expensive and very easily damaged by careless treatment. Nothing is more aggravating than to find a blocked needle or fixed piston at the moment a syringe is wanted for use.

Glass syringes are perhaps the best, as they can be sterilised by boiling or disinfection. Boiling metal syringes tends to loosen the washers, and certainly aids rust forming. The

needles should be fitted with wires running through them, which must be withdrawn before sterilising. Immediately after use, draw clear water through the needle and syringe, and then alcohol; take syringe to pieces and well wash each part separately with water, and, if to be boiled, place in a small dish; protect the needle with lint or wool, and the barrel of the syringe; cover with cold water; add small pinch of soda bicarbonate and allow to boil in steriliser slowly. If not boiled, place in alcohol for twenty minutes, then well dry. If in frequent use it may be kept ready for use in a sealed jar of alcohol, otherwise smear a little oil or vaseline on metal parts.

The needle must have its wire drawn repeatedly through until quite dry, and new wire put in. All blunt-pointed or damaged needles must be immediately replaced.

Window blinds are in constant use in most wards, and frequently need repair, but much can be saved in this respect by a careful nurse.

When the blind is lowered, holding the cord, and not just letting it drop, will prevent the trouble of "coming off the roller."

When drawing up, holding of both cords, and allowing it to be guided up straight, saves many a pang to the observant eye, for nothing makes a ward look more untidy than blinds askew, torn, or unevenly drawn up.

Blinds should be dusted and brushed frequently, and either washed or cleaned at regular intervals.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss Rose Ellen Salt Cox, Miss Linda M. Smith, Miss T. Robinson, Miss M. James.

Miss Salt Cox writes:—The life of window blinds may be considerably lengthened by careful treatment. They should never be jerked up and down, but carefully drawn according to the mechanism by which they work. (New-comers should always be shown this mechanism.) About once a week they may be drawn down their full length, and brushed with a soft brush. If washable they should be sent to the laundry periodically, because, if full of dust, they will soon become rotten and break; also they will disseminate dust in the ward. Any slight damage should be reported immediately, for repair, to prevent the blind becoming too badly damaged to be of further use.

QUESTION FOR THE WEEK.

What do you consider should be the qualifications for a Health Visitor? Describe a typical day's work of a Health Visitor.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)