

Miss Chadwick's Appointment

Members will learn with interest and satisfaction that our Vice-President has been appointed Inspectress of Nursing for Madras Presidency.

The Florence Nightingale Memorial Fund

A cheque for Rs. 2,175-1-0 has been received from the Augusta Fund of the International Red Cross in Geneva, towards sending an Indian candidate for the International Nursing Course in London.

The Annual Conference

There will be a Sale of Work at the Annual Conference, for the funds of the Association, and members are asked to kindly send or bring small gifts, suitable for Christmas presents.

There will also be a prize for the best model made by a class of Student Nurses, and it is hoped that many Units will compete.

The Midwives' Union

A letter expressing great interest in the *Journal* has been received from the Editor of *Nursing Notes and Midwives Chronicle*, the official organ of the English Midwives' Institute, which she is good enough to send us in exchange.

It is therefore hoped that Indian midwives will be stimulated to send in more contributions to the Midwives' Union page.

The Secretary

Miss Hartley will be at Rynmere, Tapp's Corner, Kodaikanal, from June 1st to the 17th and hopes to visit Bangalore on the 18th and Mysore on the 22nd returning to Madras via Vellore. Will members kindly let her know, if they would like her to visit them on route.

Notepaper

In future, it will be possible for District Secretaries to obtain Association notepaper, direct from the office, unless they prefer to have their own printed.

THE HOUSE FLY (*Musca Domestica*)

BY

DR. W. A. BROWNE, L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S. (Eng.),
2nd Resident Surgeon, Presidency General Hospital, Calcutta

The house fly is intimately connected with sanitation, or rather insanitation, and after you have read something about it, you will no doubt agree as to the important rôle it plays in the lives of everyone of us. The fly has been with us through all the ages. It figures largely in Biblical history. This loathsome, and voracious insect is found everywhere, in all countries, and in all climes. It is an enemy to mankind—an emissary of Satan. Like other noxious insects, no one can ascribe any reason for its creation.

The house fly is responsible for more deaths in the world than all the wars put together. It possesses, or appears to possess remarkable

intelligence, and is endowed with extraordinary eyesight. Wherever there may be food, the fly discovers it, and tries to get at it. It is a pity that this intelligence does not restrain it from falling into, and bathing in bowls of milk.

There is, however, one redeeming feature—flies are inactive during the dark hours. If it were not so, the damage they could do would be trebled, there being no agencies to inhibit their activities at night.

Exterminate the fly, prevent its breeding, and a tremendous stride would be made towards the extirpation of disease.

There is not much mystery in the life history of flies, which haunt our homes, unless it be the mystery why we tolerate them.

The flies which invade our houses are not born there, but are reared in corruption and horror, in dung-hills, and in deadly disease-breeding dumps.

It is there the adult female lays her eggs: the fly bursts through its pupal case, and has to crawl through filth till it sees the light of day. Its feet and its hairy body bring with them myriads of deadly microbes straight to the food, and milk, thus grossly infecting them, and causing fatal illnesses to babies, sickness and possibly death to adults. A large number of the abominations which poison our food and make our lives melancholy, and brief are being swept away by modern sanitation, yet the fly, deadly as any, is still suffered, through ignorance and indifference. The fly carries living corruption about its body—it carries corruption with the food it has eaten, and when it meets a more attractive diet, it ejects this poison in the fresh food in order to enjoy a more alluring diet,—especially so is this the case when it finds a supply of milk. Into this goes the poison which will kill a baby, which every September—the fly month of the year, slays infants wholesale.

The house fly keeps the germ of typhoid alive in its body for 28 days—the typhoid germ retains its life and virulence for another 23 days after leaving the body of its host.

In addition, the fly brings into our homes, diarrhoea, cholera, dysentery, and attacking the eyes, ophthalmia, that affection of the eyes, which mars the beauty and use of innumerable bright eyes in the East. Probably also the germs of tuberculosis find a carrier in the fly—and I personally believe, the fly plays a large part in the transmission of Kala Azar.

Yet this slayer of children, and poisoner of our adults is tolerated. The refuge heaps in which it breeds are permitted to remain uncovered, and unprotected at the cost of innumerable lives every year.

It is not necessary for the fly to sit on our foodstuffs for half an hour or one minute or even half a minute: the mere fact of its alighting on food is sufficient to contaminate it—one fly may carry seven million bacteria and deposit 7 million at every meal. We must wage a relentless war against flies. If we see a single fly in the house, we must treat it as we would a scorpion.

Flies will only come where there is food—No food, No flies! By no food I mean, unprotected food.

We are therefore faced with the problems of first preventing the breeding of flies—secondly, to prevent them gaining access to our foods.

The former is largely a question of general sanitation, and is in the hands of the Health Departments of our public bodies. As regards the latter, we can do a great deal in our own homes. We can protect ourselves to a great extent by unremitting care in the storage of our food, in the disposal of scraps, refuse, etc. No food should ever be left uncovered. We can also safeguard ourselves by the care we exercise as to the source of purchase of our foodstuffs, especially sweets. Those places where the shopkeeper has not taken any steps to protect the foodstuffs and sweets exposed for sale should be boycotted.

BETTER HOUSES

BY

MRS. TARR

Yercaud, Salem District, Madras

'New lamps for old' cried Aladdin long ago in China, and some modern Alla-ud-Din might echo that call in rural India, bartering new houses, commodious, airy, and lasting, for the price of the insanitary hovels, which collapse in the rains.

From a little distance, a cluster of huts, with mud walls, and tiled roofs, nestling in the shade of a green mango-tope, is picturesque enough, but a nearer view reveals the dirt and squalor, of the quaint irregular houses, which line the village street.

Let us examine one or two of them closely. They are built mostly of mud and wattle, or of sun-dried bricks. In the first case, a flimsy framework of interlaced twigs and branches, is woven round uprights of bamboo. These walls of basket-work are then plastered inside, and out, with liquid mud, bamboo rafters are added, and the roof is tiled. A high ridge pole is used, to give interior space, for the ascending smoke. All cooking is done indoors, and there are no windows. Windows would be appreciated, but being unglazed, they give access to thieves.

The tiles are made locally, from the clay soil by the river, and are shaped by hand. They are irregular, and do not fit well, leaving gaps in the roof, for sun or rain. Moreover they are easily dislodged, and blown away in windy weather. Monkeys often tear them off, as a pass-time, and throw them at the passers-by.

The house is built too near the road, and encroaches on it. There is no plinth, and the main room is below street level. An unsavoury gutter runs in front, and the floor is awash in times of flood.

It may be, that a little milk is kept indoors, for an ailing baby. What is to hinder a snake coming in for the milk, and biting the baby in passing? Every villager has one or two head of cattle, a cow perhaps, and a goat or so. They are often diseased, and are certainly verminous. They share the house at night-time with their owners.

Next door, the dwelling is built of sun-dried bricks made of the same material as the tiles. This clay is also the basis of a thriving industry in rough pottery, and would make excellent tiles, were they dried longer, in symmetrical wooden moulds. But bricks need the fierce heat of a