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Editorial.

THE WEARING OF UNIFORM.

The question of the desirability of outdoor uniform is one which has been much discussed of recent years, and while its use by nurses who are at private cases, or who are doing district work—that is to say, by those who are on duty—is both fitting and convenient, there is much to be said in support of the views of those who prefer to discard it when off duty.

An out-door uniform was adopted in the first instance on account of its convenience to busy nurses, who slipped it on over their uniform dresses and aprons and thus, economising time in dressing, were able to spend the more out of doors.

But an increased knowledge of the methods by which infection may be conveyed has made it incumbent on nurses to change the dress worn in the wards before going out of doors and into public conveyances, and to many nurses it is now more convenient to don a coat and skirt than to have a special uniform dress solely for outdoor wear. The bicycle also has been a factor in causing a decline in favour of outdoor uniform. Nothing is more invigorating or pleasanter than a spin on a bicycle when off duty, but a costume more unsuited for this purpose than a loose cloak and close fitting bonnet could scarcely be devised.

Whatever may be the pros and cons of the question, there can be no doubt on one point. Those who do adopt an out-door uniform should always be careful to remember that they are publicly wearing the badge of an honourable calling, and that it is incumbent upon them to take a pride in keeping their uniform trim and

neat. We hear much of the disrepute which women who have no real right to this distinctive dress bring upon it by their careless and slipshod ways; but are trained nurses always scrupulously careful as to how they wear it? Do they always take the same pains in being accurately measured and fitted for a uniform cloak as for one for smarter wear? Scarcely, or there would not be so many abroad with ill-fitting cloaks, often showing two inches of their dresses underneath; or with liberal splashes of mud round the hem, though the sun is shining overhead and the streets have been dry for twenty-four hours or more.

Again, when it is a choice between new uniform, and a new dress for ordinary occasions, is it not sometimes the uniform which has to "do" in order that a considerable sum may be spent on the dress, which, after all, is seldom worn?

Surely uniform should be held in higher esteem than this. It should be a point of honour with the wearer that it is replaced whenever it begins to get shabby, and that it is kept in good order and well brushed. Who ever saw a soldier's uniform otherwise than speckless except when it bears the honourable stains of active service, and a nurse should take the same pains in her care of this outward and visible sign of her calling as does the soldier.

Lastly, it is by no means uncommon to see several nurses wearing the uniform of the institution with which they are connected, and to note some difference in each case, yet uniformity implies one distinctive model, which should be scrupulously followed by all concerned. It should be the pride of every nurse that in every particular her uniform conforms to the prescribed pattern.

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