

" But here she has only to sort out sick children, contagious or suspicious cases, untidy children. She takes notes, inquires, questions, and tells the child that she will go and see her at her home. The second part of her mission, the most arduous, begins with the visiting.

" Outside the school, her visits to the parents are a means of investigation and controlling, an efficacious way of helping. The English and Americans understand and practice 'District Nursing.' Nurses call on the poor sick people belonging to their circumscription, take up their abode there, and attend to them. The School Nurse has a more difficult part to fill; it is no longer a case of attending a sick person, she must give a humiliating lesson. She must, according to the case, during her visit: (1) Verify the declaration of sickness given by an absent pupil. (2) Assure herself of the execution of the necessary measures in cases of contagion. (A child sent away from school is often seen playing in the street with its little *camarades*). (3) Instruct the mother in sanitary rules. (4) She will point out to her the precaution to be taken to rid the child of all chronic and disagreeable ills, so unsightly in a school, impetigo, crusts of eczema, not to speak of lice."

To avoid all hesitation, and warn the masses that might have been led to believe that we were organising an infirmary and a dispensary in the school, it was decided that "in no way should she give attention, except in urgent cases." There was no question of establishing a small hospital in the school! It is thus that the nurses have been able to undertake slight dressings, but whenever it was a question of a sick child, they were there to lead it to the dispensary of the locality, or the appropriate hospital. To avoid all ruction, it was agreed that the nurses should never be employed to look after the children or direct them, a task incumbent on the school teachers. It is useless to repeat here, at this Congress, where the Paris Public Board of Charity and the School for Nurses at the Salpêtrière bring a testimony of the interest they take in the work of School Nursing; it is not necessary to recall the occupations of our nurses, you know them better than we do, and you also know in what consists this noble task of School Nursing.

I cannot resist, however, I, who have followed my pupils in this attempt in which they have been, for France, the pioneers of a new idea, I cannot resist the pleasure of quoting a few pages taken from their diaries. One of them writes:—

"The Directress sent me to visit several families to inquire about children who had missed school for some time. I was rather

nervous about these visits, especially as I was to go alone, but I was really surprised to find myself so well received. All the information I required was given me most willingly; they showed me their children without my asking them to do so; besides, many of them already knew of my presence at the school, through the children I had examined in the morning. One mother, whose little girl was at the school, told me that the child, on her way home, had fallen down in the mud and dirtied her drawers; she was no sooner home than she asked her mother to put her on a clean pair, in case the nurse should look at her in the afternoon. This little incident shows me that the minds of these little girls are awaking, and that I shall have very visible results before long.

"I have been well received everywhere, and if a child is ill, the parents show him to me at once. This confidence which I meet with everywhere is certainly due to my nurse's uniform, and I am pleased to know this. I saw a little girl with chicken-pox, and although a doctor is attending her, the mother asks me for advice about contagion, as there is another child. I gave her all the necessary instructions on the precautions to be taken."

All this goes to prove that school nursing is a most efficacious weapon against contagious maladies, which diminish the population in our crowded quarters, and demonstrates to the most biassed opinion that the school nurse is, indeed, for the poor, that noble woman who, in a few visits, by a few words, soon gives advice which will save human lives, and which will at least stop the spread of an epidemic.

What have we not heard concerning this visiting? The doctors have openly accused us of competing with them. When the nurse, to control the illness of a child, or take home a suspicious case, will enter a family, the doctor will no longer be called in, she will take his place, she will prescribe, and the doctors will lose their patients.

For you, here present, who are all professional, who know the superior rules and traditions of our profession, you know how ridiculous and false these accusations are; but bear in mind that this hatred of the hospital nurse is a drawback in France to the efforts of those who wish to raise the standard of nursing. They insist on believing that the hospital nurse wishes to be a semi-doctor, when she knows that her rôle is to be his helpmate, his right hand, his auxiliary, learned, expert, understanding at once, with a perfect knowledge of the human body, and the care to be given, disciplined and wishing to be like a soldier faithfully fulfilling his duty. At the school of

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