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## Editorial.

### THE WORK OF SCHOOL NURSES.

At the present time there is a great demand for nurses who are not only well trained professionally, but who are, by education and position, qualified to cope with the responsibilities and difficulties with which they are constantly confronted, and in no branch of nursing is this more necessary than in school nursing, where the relations of nurse and parent need tact and delicacy on the part of the former if her objects are to be achieved thoroughly and pleasantly. It is therefore regrettable there is some danger that education authorities should, for the sake of cheapness, sanction the employment as school nurses of women trained only in the rudiments of nursing, and drawn from the same station in life as the parents, with whom they have to deal. In relation to questions of health, cleanliness, and the bringing up of children, parents of the working classes will often receive and act upon advice wisely tendered to them by one to whom they look up and respect, but the hard-working mother of a family may be pardoned for resenting what she regards as the interference of a young girl of her own class, with a brief and inadequate training in nursing, in respect to the care of her children.

A very sore subject with most parents is the cleansing of children's heads, and they are immediately on the defensive when, after due examination, it is intimated to them by the nurse, acting as the agent of the Education Authority, that such cleansing is needed. Much tact and discretion are necessary in order that this part of a nurse's work may be accomplished with the least amount of friction, and practical experience is also a

guide as to the best method to be pursued. Thus a school nurse under the Devon Education Committee, whose work in this connection has, in some instances, been so greatly resented that it has been necessary for her to be shadowed by police in the performance of her duties, has found that the serving of official notices on the parents of school children whose heads are not clean, is greatly resented. The nurse now visits the homes of the worst cases after inspecting the children in the schools, and has found her advice as to the treatment of the heads welcomed, as well as other suggestions in regard to health matters. It is quite possible for a nurse, when visiting a parent and instructing her as to the necessary measures to be adopted, to assuage her outraged feelings by speaking of the liability to infection of clean heads in a mixed school, where children sit side by side, and where caps and hats may be interchanged during playtime, and to enlist her sympathy and help; for just as scarlet fever and measles run through a school if not promptly dealt with, so pediculi are quickly communicated from child to child, even to the children of the cleanest and most careful parents, and all should feel an interest in co-operating with the nurse to eradicate this evil.

It will be seen that in this instance, and in many others connected with hygiene and cleanliness, the way in which the situation is presented to the parents is all important, and Education Authorities cannot be too particular, or too careful, in the selection of the nurses upon whom these important and delicate duties devolve. It should be recognised that to hold office as a School Nurse is to be a public servant whose work is expert and honourable, and who, therefore, should command confidence and respect from the parents of the children.

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