

are being employed to instruct parents on this question with very good results; the work is so new that I cannot give you much information as to results.

Let me now speak of my own work with School Nursing. The Board of Education has laid it down that medical inspection of school children is to be carried out all over the kingdom. Medical men have therefore been appointed, and with them their competent assistants, the School Nurses; but the School Nurse had been started in London before medical inspection became compulsory. The Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute used to visit some schools here and there and inspect the children for cleanliness, attending to small accidents, such as cuts and bruises; but there was no attempt to deal with the problem as a whole, and to provide attention systematically for all schools, until the London County Council took the matter up and appointed a few nurses to go round and report on the present state of things. Since then the number of nurses has steadily increased as the need for them was felt, and a large increase was made when it was decided to let the school doctor be assisted by a nurse. Most necessary, indeed, she has proved; for she weighs and measures the children, questions the parents as to previous illnesses, tests the eyesight, and reports on the child's condition as to cleanliness and clothes to the doctor.

All parents are urged to come up to see the doctor, but many fail to come, partly through slackness and partly because many a woman has to work to keep the home together, and is therefore frequently out all day.

If the parents do not come up, the nurse has to deliver treatment cards at the home, and, if possible, see the mother and explain the doctor's advice and get her to act upon it.

If "cleanliness is next to godliness," then the School Nurse must add considerably to the general sum of godliness, as she carries on a continuous crusade against dirt. I will not horrify you by dwelling on the very dirty, and even verminous, condition in which a large number of people live; it has been a great difficulty to know how to deal with them, and up till last year, when the Children's Act was passed, no effective method of dealing with the children and their clothes had been found. This Bill gave the Education Authority power to examine every child in school, and it further stated that it was allowable, where the parent had not cleansed the child, to remove it from the school and thoroughly bath it and steam the clothes.

A bathing place is necessary to carry out

this scheme, and there are at present three at the schools in charge of nurses, who are responsible in regard to the safety of the children in their going to and from the school, and who keep a careful record of all children attending the station; they also see that the woman who baths the children does so in a proper manner. The value of the School Nurse's work to the community cannot, it seems to me, be over-estimated; it extends from a curative into a preventive sphere, and assuredly the latter is the more universally important. The need for it is very great, for it is deplorable to find how many children are in school with one defect or another.

There is one branch of this work which I ought to mention, and that is the large number of cases reported to the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Where any nurse finds a case of wilful neglect by which the child's health of body or mind is endangered, it is at once reported for the Society to deal with, and although often it is a case where no action can be taken, the visit of the officer to the home does much good. By means of the nurses' work it is being gradually impressed on the parents that they have a duty to their children, which they are bound to carry out to the best of their ability. A man once said to me: "The girl is mine! I will do what I like with her," and he seemed much surprised when I said: "She is only yours as long as you do well by her."

I will conclude by giving you some idea of the importance of all this activity to the community at large. First, we hope for a much greater general attention to the care of the body in health; to prevent its getting ill, instead of spending all our energies upon it when ill. Then, for greater cleanliness and, as a result, less preventable disease. Who can estimate the disease spread by vermin of all kinds, among the most mischievous being fleas, with their amazing jumps from one person to another. Just for one moment think of the educating influence of these nurses, who have themselves learnt the lessons of patient, self-sacrificing work. As they visit these poor people in their apologies for homes, they learn to be very sympathetic, and, understanding their difficulties, to help them out of them. How often I have wished, when I hear sharp criticism of the thriftless ways of the poor, that more trouble were taken to understand the mental condition which is bound to result from the constant, depressing struggle for bare existence, and I am thankful that nurses are constantly doing their best to lighten this depression and lessen their burdens.

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