

Guardians, nurses, and others—on "Hygiene in Relation to Rescue Work."

EDUCATION IN RESPONSIBILITY.

The last paper was presented by Mrs. James Gow on "Education in Responsibility, Personal and Social, in Rescue Homes."

The speaker thought that in most girls the instinct of motherhood is hidden deep, and that this might be utilised in Rescue Homes so that the older girls might be a help to the more recent arrivals. In regard to the rule of silence so often enforced in Rescue Homes, she pointed out that it meant shutting up a girl with her own thoughts. The restraint of a Home might prove too much for girls who had previously been governed solely by their own impulse at the moment, and they should have more than one chance. There was, to her mind, a touch of real heroism about a girl who consented to enter a Home.

In the discussion, the question of instruction to the young in sex questions was brought forward by a lady Guardian, who said that among the upper and middle classes a sense of responsibility was springing up, but the early Victorian attitude had descended to the poorer classes, who thought it their duty never to touch on these questions with their children.

Mrs. Creighton said that nothing was more touching in rescue work than the number of girls who sent young ones to the Homes though they would not enter them themselves.

Miss Curtis thought that innocence was apt to be assumed where it does not exist. Mothers would like their children to be thought innocent when they knew they were not.

Mrs. Gow, in a brief reply, said that mothers made the mistake of thinking they could choose whether their children should know things or not. The position really was not whether they should know them, but who should give the information.

The proceedings of the Conference will be published *in extenso* by the National Union of Women Workers.

The "Florence Nightingale" Pledge.

The present is an appropriate moment for the repetition of the Florence Nightingale Pledge for nurses:—"I solemnly pledge myself before God and in the presence of this assembly to pass my life in purity and to practise my profession faithfully. I will abstain from whatever is deleterious and mischievous, and will not take or knowingly administer any harmful drug. I will do all in my power to elevate the standard of my profession and will hold in confidence all personal matters committed to my keeping, and all family affairs coming to my knowledge in the practice of my calling. With loyalty will I endeavour to aid the physician in his work and devote myself to the welfare of those committed to my care."

The Child.

Dr. T. N. Kelynack, the Editor of *The Child*, is to be congratulated on this new monthly, which deserves well of all the friends of children. In appearance, production, matter, and illustrations it is all that can be desired. The price is two shillings monthly, or £1 1s. per annum.

Amongst the subjects dealt with in the November issue are, "Fear and the Evolution of the Child," by Dr. H. Macnaughton Jones; "Medical Inspection of Schools," by Mr. J. C. Bridge, M.R.C.S., D.P.H.; "Holiday Colonies for Children in Switzerland," by Dr. O. Amrein; "The Inspection of Boarded-out Children," by Miss M. H. Mason; and "The Verminous Child," by Miss M. E. Bibby, B.A., Sanitary Inspector for the Public Health Department of the Metropolitan Borough of St. Pancras.

Poor little "verminous child." He "has no doubt existed," we read, "for uncounted years, but as a problem vexing the soul of sanitary and educational bodies, his recognised existence is comparatively recent." With no one is he a more vexed problem than with the School Nurse. When the Cleansing of Persons Act, 1897, was passed, presumably children were included in the persons for whom local authority could provide means of cleansing free of charge, but no separate baths for children existed until 1903, when, as a consequence of representations made to him by a head mistress, the Medical Officer of Health for the Borough of St. Pancras caused inquiries to be made as to the vermin-infested children of the district, with the result that the Borough Council of St. Pancras made separate provision for the treatment of verminous children, an example followed by other councils. Care was taken to make the cleansing process attractive and pleasant to the children, and to make the bath educative. The improvement in the children's health was noteworthy.

The verminous child, until eight or ten years ago, was "an object of disgust not to be spoken of among his superiors, a part of the natural order of things among his associates." Now, authority provides for the parent "a remedy of doubtful efficiency—namely, a fine not exceeding ten shillings if a second time his child is found by an educational official to be verminous."

The Medical Officer of Health of St. Pancras many years ago advocated the conversion of basements from living places into bath and wash-rooms, and in the opinion of Miss Bibby few single measures would at one stroke do as much for child life.

In addition to the cleansing of the children attention should be given to their clothing. Cleanliness is, says Miss Bibby, not a beatific state once obtained and ever afterwards possessed. It is rather an unstable and temporary condition maintained with great difficulty, part of that difficulty being the provision of adequate change of clothing.

It will be seen that *The Child* deals in a thoroughly practical way with present-day difficulties. We wish it all success.

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