

SCHOOL NURSING IN TORONTO, CANADA.*

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A campaign for clean teeth forms a big part of our present inspection work. So few parents realize that teeth decay early and that sometimes a child of seven years has practically lost the most important teeth in his mouth. We urge every child to use a tooth brush, and, to overcome any excuse for not having one, the Board of Education provides tooth brushes and tooth paste for five cents each. This enables every child to obtain its own. The brush used is an especially good one made for the Canadian Oral Hygiene Association, and the paste is prepared in tubes specially for the schoolchildren and labelled so. The nurses are told that it will be a criminal offence if any child from now on loses his six-year molar. We hope before long to eradicate many of the diseases prevalent, through the care of the teeth. We know that many cases of tuberculosis have their source of infection in the cavities of the teeth, and who knows how many other diseases are contracted in the same way? Our School Dentist visits the schools twice a week to extract decayed teeth and protruding roots. This is only temporary work until the Civil Dental Clinic is started. A Dental Exhibit is also arranged for the schools, money for which has been already appropriated. Our whole aim is *prevention*, so we are proceeding along the lines of prophylaxis, rather than waiting until the disease appears.

This brings us to the question of the proper governing authorities of this system. Since it is educational and all our hope lies in teaching, does it not rightly belong to the great teaching body, the Board of Education? Much better co-operation is gained, too, by having all teachers under the same administration.

We have, unfortunately, a class of children which have not been so far provided for. They are the feeble-minded. An experiment has been tried in teaching, and it is found that, while the backward child can be taught the subjects he is deficient in, the feeble-minded child cannot be taught enough in the Public Schools to enable him to be self-supporting. For these a specially equipped institution with proper guardians is required so that they will not be a menace to the community, where they

will be protected and made happy, and where they will be taught whatever kind of work they seem to be best fitted for.

Our anæmic, ill-resisting, poorly developed children are being given special attention at present. Our first Open-air School has just been opened. Fifty under-nourished and delicate children are taken every morning to a delightful wooded park which has a large sandy beach on the lake front. The children are given breakfast, dinner and supper, with a lunch between each meal. They are provided with cots, and sleep for two hours after the mid-day meal. A teacher is employed, and they are taught for a certain period during the day, those behind their grades being given special attention. The rest of the time is devoted to recreation and play.

A nurse is on duty all day, who keeps a record of the gain and has general supervision of the health of the children. A Medical Inspector visits regularly, and any change in condition is reported to him. The street railway company has given a special car which takes the children to the Park at 8.30 every morning and leaves at 6.30 p.m.

We hope that this experiment will prove so valuable that our large schools will have open-air classes equipped on the roofs, and which may be carried on all the year round, so that when a child is found in the class-room below normal health, he may be sent to the open-air class, and with food, rest, and fresh air be brought to his normal health and take his place in the grade.

Many children who are otherwise losing valuable school-time and health as well will be saved and educated for the community. We hope to start classes for little mothers in different centres ere long. Classes would be held and demonstrations given on the care of infants, special attention being paid to, and demonstrations given on, the (care of infants) food, bathing, dressing. Instruction would be given for care during the summer months, when infant mortality is so high.

School nursing is in a large measure social service, and it is from the fact that the Board of Education in Toronto has given such able support and has not in any way hindered the service that it stands high in its care of the schoolchildren.

Toronto has the distinction of being the first city to give a post-graduate course to nurses wishing to supplement their general training by a period of school nursing.

The course is for one month. The nurse taking it goes daily with one of the regular staff, assisting with the work and being given

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