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## EDITORIAL.

### DOWDY NURSES.

We were interested recently to find in our evening paper a paragraph under the above heading, in which the announcement was made that the London County Council's arrangement for its nurses, in regard to uniform, is that they should be provided with new uniform outfits every six years. It is further stated that the dowdy condition of most of the nurses who have worn the uniform provided for them for the past four years, has caused the Council to appreciate the fact that even nurses cannot keep smart on the six-year system, and, in future, new outfits are to be supplied every three years, with new bonnets every twelve months.

One of the first necessities if a nurse is to set an example of the doctrines that she inculcates, is that her personal appearance should be one of spotless cleanliness, but this is impossible if the same weatherbeaten old cloak and bonnet does duty for six or even three successive years. Added to which these garments will not only be shabby and dowdy, but actually dirty, as will readily be realized if the hard wear they receive is remembered. Day after day, the wearer is in and out of trams, motor buses, trains, in schools, and in the homes of some of the poorest class of the community. Also her stock of washing dresses and aprons needs frequent renewal, for it wears out quickly with constant washing.

It must be remembered that the uniform of the trained nurse is made of inexpensive materials.

The most satisfactory plan, in our opinion, is to make a definite allowance for uniform of the approved pattern each year, and order it at stated times—so that

the nursing staff receive it, as part of their emoluments, and are always decently clothed.

Every nurse worthy of the name takes a professional pride in keeping her uniform trim, smart, and neat, and to be obliged to wear one which is shabby and dirty is an offence to her professional conscience, and the tendency is to lower the whole tone of her work, for self respect is of the first importance in maintaining it at a high standard, and the trained nurse should be able to take as keen an interest in the uniform which is the outward and visible sign of her calling as the soldier and sailor.

Public bodies who provide their nurses with uniform will therefore be wise to make a liberal allowance for its purchase. They will reap the reward many times over in a contented nursing staff to whose appearance they can point with pride.

Again the representatives of a public authority who go as its envoys to the homes of the poor cannot hope to command the same respect and attention if their appearance is shabby as if it is neat and trim. Clothes have a greater influence than many people are aware of, and none are more susceptible to it than the poor who know by hard experience how difficult it is to be always well brushed, neat, and clean, and appreciate these conditions in others, even if they do not emulate them themselves. From all points of view therefore the importance of a trim uniform is not easy to over-rate.

It is not fanciful to think that a nurse's uniform should typify to her that purity of mind with which outward purity should always be associated; that purity which is her talisman when she passes through the stagnant byways of life, and leaves behind her an atmosphere of freshness and wholesomeness.

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