

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

DESCRIBE THE MOST PRACTICAL AND ASEPTIC INDOOR UNIFORM FOR WAR NURSING.

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss Dora Vine, Eversley, Exmouth.

PRIZE PAPER.

The keynote of uniform for war nursing must be its *simplicity*. It must be simple to make, simple to wash and wear, and inexpensive. There is no money nowadays for spending on luxuries, so the stiff starched caps, aprons, and strings that are the delight of some nurses must go. Besides, in some hospitals near the Front washing must be reduced to its lowest terms, and mending old and making new uniforms must not unduly encroach on precious off-duty time. Again, a "war" uniform must be planned so that exposure to varieties of temperature and insect pests is taken into account. Remembering all these points, I suggest the following uniforms:—

1. Dress of tobralco—in grey or blue, according to rank—to be made perfectly plain: no collar, sleeves only to elbow, skirt short (attached to bodice).

2. Aprons of "union" (linen is expensive, and needs careful washing to look nice). The aprons to be made as long as the dress, the bib to fit close to the neck, with wide straps fastening tidily to a wide belt.

3. Knickers of cravenette are a necessity for nurses who have to go out from block to block; in fact, cravenette is so light, durable, and waterproof that several valuable garments can be made from it. For instance: (a) A loose circular cloak, with hood, to slip on when going out to visit outlying blocks, &c., or to wear when going from billet to hospital, &c. It is a good plan to have the cloak machined up about 18 inches from the hem, so that one steps into it. The minute spent on getting into it is amply worth while, as the only drawback to the circular cloak—viz., its fly-away qualities—is hereby obviated, and the nurse is quite covered, and can easily carry whatever is necessary without getting wet. (b) A cravenette dress for off duty is a boon; also (c) a hood, bag, and cushion for use out of doors.

4. Caps must be of the handkerchief shape. They are easily made up, and *can be put on so that the hair is covered*.

5. Sensible shoes, with a little iodoform sprinkled inside, are needed. Iodoform is now, alas! very expensive, but it is an unfailing

remedy for insect pests, and quite a little on the stocking feet will drive uninvited guests away, and also prevent sore feet.

To sum up.—The nurses are to be distinguished by the colour of their dresses, every scrap of needless material being taboo. (Even brassards make a lot of work in a hospital where work is plentiful and labourers few.) The aprons and caps will look quite nice if simply washed and ironed, and the neck looks very tidy if care is taken to make the bib of the apron curve nicely, and if the exact length from waist to neck is measured.

The uniform dress must be made with four pockets—for watch and thermometer in the bodice, and two (one on each side) in the skirt. These two are godsend in use, and balance the "hang" of the skirt. The uniform here described is easily made and got up, and can all be boiled, ironed, &c., by a 'prentice hand. It looks attractive and nurselike, while unlikely to be patronised by outsiders, as the whole charm depends upon the little details of fit and measurement, which are conspicuous by their absence in the travesty of uniforms so often seen.

I have worn aprons, dresses, and caps made in this way since the beginning of the war, and have saved quite an appreciable amount through it, as strings, collars, cuffs, and belts are not wanted. I will give patterns of the apron if any nurse would care to have it.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss Gladys A. Johnson, Miss A. Harding, Miss Mary Harvey, Miss Lucy C. Cooper, Miss Madeleine J. Butter, and Miss Edith Gregory, whose paper unfortunately only arrived from France on Wednesday.

Miss M. A. Harvey writes:—"The best material for the dress is cotton crêpe, which can be bought in any colour, a novice can wash it, and if it is hung by the shoulders from a penny wooden coathanger to dry, it will require no ironing.

The neck should have a turned-down collar of crêpe, which would obviate the necessity for starched collars.

Miss Madeleine J. Butter favours a plainly made dress of white linen, all tucks and folds being avoided; Miss G. A. Johnson, a Princess Robe of holland.

QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

How would you combat the danger of fly infection: (1) in relation to milk; (2) in relation to the spread of disease?

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