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EDITORIAL.

THE KIDDIES' DINNER.

The duties of trained nurses bring them more into touch with the people than probably any other class of workers, with the result that they understand the difficulties of their lives and the conditions under which they work. And there is probably nothing which makes a more profound impression upon district nurses than the patience and long suffering of the poor, more especially of the women, who strive with, and in many instances overcome, difficulties which would not for a moment be tolerated as conditions of life in other classes of society. They also are conscious of the understanding sympathy of the district nurses, and there is no factor which contributes more to the promotion of good feeling between the classes, and consequently to the maintenance of order, than the work of nurses in the homes of the poor.

And the reason is not because they bestow gifts of material things, for this is wisely not permitted by the regulations of most district nursing associations, but nurses bring things of even greater value, the sure friendship that can be counted on in trouble, the expert help in sickness, the instruction in matters by which knowledge is gained as to how sickness may be warded off, advice during the trying period of expectant motherhood, and help in guiding the babies through the first critical year of their lives, and then up to school age, when they come under the care of the school nurses, and are in a much better position to profit by it, and also to assimilate instruction, than if, owing to lack of previous preventive work, they had, in the first five years of life, developed disabilities which were likely permanently to impair their health.

The nurse in her daily round becomes a keen psychologist, and, in the unrest which is surging round her, she seeks for the cause. And she reads it, in part, in the faces of those she meets, the unemployed and their families, for hunger is plainly written thereon. The men, as they walk the streets, tighten their belts, and grimly and bravely face it alone, but it drives them to desperation when they see their own feelings reflected on the faces of their children crying for bread at home. It is that which sends them to Boards of Guardians to demand work; it is that which will not be put off with promises to consider their demands. "We must have it now," they say. "Where is the kiddies' dinner coming from to-morrow?"

That is the question which the community have to face. The unemployed are not asking for alms, but work. Are men who have fought the Empire's battles, fought to secure the freedom of the world, to ask for it in vain? It behoves every one of us to answer this question, and to answer in the negative. Then, equally, it behoves us to endeavour to find a way in which it can be provided.

Besides those whom we meet in the streets, there are others whose poverty is hidden away—the "new poor," who are hard to find, and when found difficult of access. It would be a good deed, this Christmas season, if those in comfortable circumstances would make a point of getting into touch with one such family, and doing something to brighten its penury. Christmas, perhaps, affords a better opportunity than any other time for conveying gifts, without wounding susceptible feelings, and our own Christmas will be the brighter by the knowledge that we have helped to gladden that of others. Our advice is whatever you possess—share with others.

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