

was shocked to note that in a block of urinals and water closets recently erected, no provision whatever was made for washing. In water closets in some houses a towel is hung. What for? Is it a recognition that the fingers may be soiled? Is a dry towel an adequate means of purification?

"This is an unpleasant subject, but medical men must shirk no educational work that tends to health, and a hospital journal read by students and nurses is an appropriate medium to ventilate the question. So obnoxious do some surgeons regard the micro-organisms that live in the colon that they cut out people's colons in order to restrict the germs' activities. But what is being done to educate the public to the danger of these micro-organisms being carried to other parts of the body or to other people?

"The extremely prevalent complaint, pruritis ani, is undoubtedly due to the irritation of the skin and external mucous membrane by faecal material. Is the medical profession teaching the public that this contamination can possibly be prevented by the common use of dry paper? In the East a bowl of water is a marked feature of the toilet of defaecation. Adequate cleanliness is impossible unless a wash-basin is provided in the water closet. Are in-patients in hospitals instructed in the toilet of defaecation? When confined to bed, are they provided with adequate apparatus? Are hand-basins brought to them immediately after the use of the bed-pan?

"It is well known to the profession that the number of women suffering from bacillus coli infection of the urinary tract is enormously greater than the number of men. The reason is clearly based on anatomy. Is any attempt being made to instruct women as to the simple measures that should be taken to avoid infection?

"The prevention of thread worms in children depends on a similar educational crusade." The writer thinks that the Ministry of Health 'with more time at its disposal might turn its attention to the prevention of the wholesale transfer of obnoxious microbes from dust collecting carts to the contents of vans delivering open tarts to the tea shops of refreshment contractors. Two such carts may often be seen drawn up by the pavement end to end, and as the dustman empties the contents of his basket into his cart, a strong wind may carry much of it on to the trays of delicacies in the adjacent van.'

"To return to more personal matters . . . bacteriological cleanliness, the writer considers the basis of the propaganda of the Society for

the Prevention of Venereal Disease. The teaching should have come long ago, as soon as the deleterious effects of micro-organisms were recognised. But in this matter the profession has been dilatory. True, much has been done to attack germs when they have obtained lodgment in the human body. Attempts are made to raise the patient's power of resistance by injections of vaccines and antisera, and the patients have been warned and duly alarmed as to the invasion of their bodies by all sorts of foreign germs from other persons. It is true we warned them to take care that the germs that they are bound to harbour or come in contact with in living their own lives and pro-creating their species should be swiftly and safely dealt with. These are not matters which can be shouted from the housetops, but medical men and nurses can do much to educate those with whom they come in contact, and parents properly instructed can hand on the knowledge to their children . . . The profession has not yet taught us to be bacteriologically clean."

### NURSING ECHOES.

Queen Mary and other Royal Ladies have sent Christmas gifts of money and toys to several of the hospitals, and all over the land preparations are well advanced for giving the patients a good time. A hospital ward is always more or less a cheerful place, as the patients bear pain with marvellous fortitude, and the nurses are all very happy women in spending themselves for the welfare of others. Christmas Day is a real festival in hospital.

The Editor begs to thank her numerous nurse friends for kind letters and good wishes for Christmas and the New Year, and also for all the nice things they say about the *B.J.N.*, which journal exists, as they know, for no other purpose than to give them a professional organ in the press (and sometimes a little advice), through which their real interests and those of their patients may be advanced.

In this and our next issues we are printing two papers on Trade Unionism, one from the point of view of the employee, and the other from that of the employer. In "A Short History of Nursing," Miss L. L. Dock and Miss I. Stewart write concerning Trade Unionism: "A slight but suggestive hint of what to-morrow may bring in the new forms of labour relationship is given us in the activities of young nurses in some of the countries most closely touched by the war.

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