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EDITORIAL.

HEALTH LEAGUES FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN.

We doubt not that the most thoughtful among nurses sometimes reflect upon the great benefits which have accrued to our respective countries by our international fellowship in nursing. It is precisely this which has caused such rapid progress. Charles Lamb, in his essay on "The Two Races of Men," brushes aside all distinguishing marks such as colour, manners and customs, and reduces all races to a category of two, namely, the men who borrow, and the men who lend. We see in it a principle readily applicable to the spirit of internationalism. We give and we borrow ideas, a right royal exchange. Here we have in a nutshell the true value of it. As with us, so in the United States of America, and other countries, new methods and new ideas are constantly presenting themselves, and are being acted upon, especially in Public Health Nursing.

We learn from our American sisters of a recent development, to which the attention of our own Public Health Authorities may usefully be drawn. In order to teach the value of self-help in the most practical way possible, in school nursing, there have been formed what are known as Hygiene or Health Leagues, the main feature of which is self-government by the children. Miss Mary Gardner, in her book on Public Health Nursing, tells us that the Health Leagues as organised in New York are proving very effective. Quoting from Dr. Baker, she says: "The fundamental idea is that the children are to be fully responsible for the government and conduct of their League, that its appeal is to their self-respect for themselves, their class, and their school, and that the children, through self-government, are responsible for the cleanliness and health conditions

of all the pupils . . . Each class elects two representatives to a general body; they are designated as Class Leader and Secretary. They meet the nurse once a week for instruction, and to report results obtained during the past week. Each morning the class leader inspects each child in the class to determine conditions of cleanliness with reference to clean clothes, clean face and hands, clean scalp and well-brushed teeth.

"A record of conditions is kept by the class secretary, the teacher acting as arbitrator in case of any dispute. . . The nurse gives frequent talks to the children on personal hygiene in order to stimulate them to help themselves in obtaining health.

"Each class room is provided with a banner or pennant stamped in gold letters Hygiene. The pupils are informed that each class in which cleanliness is strictly observed, and where all physical defects are either under treatment or have been treated, will receive a gold star to be placed on the pennant. In classes showing a certain number of failures to observe proper care, but where the intent to do so is manifest, a silver star is placed on the pennant. For classes where the children seem indifferent and show little, if any, improvement, a black star is given. . . Through the influence of the Leagues, the Nurses' home visits have been reduced, physical defects have received more prompt attention, pediculosis has in some class rooms wholly disappeared, and . . . cleanliness has increased fifty per cent. in schools in which Health Leagues flourish." This effective organisation has been the curative treatment of the ignorance and utter indifference of many of the mothers in carrying out the instructions of the nurses, plus the weak parental control, and subsequent rebelliousness of the children. Reformation through self-help and self-respect—admirable!

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