

NURSES' UNIFORMS WORN IN THE STREET

A NURSE in sickroom is supposed to wear clean clothing, her uniform is of washable material so that it may be clean and not hold the germs of disease. She is expected to put on a perfectly clean wash dress after going into the house of a patient, and to change at least once a week, or oftener, as occasion may require.

In cases of surgical operation her cleanliness of person and clothing is of the same vital importance that it is in the hospital.

Nurses in hospitals are not supposed to wear their uniforms on the street or outside of the hospital; the only nurses who are permitted to do this are the visiting nurses. Some hospitals are more exacting than others in regard to the enforcing of this rule, and some nurses will go out on the sly in their uniforms, knowing that they are breaking a rule of the hospital, as well as a law of hygiene.

A skirt that has been worn in our street-cars, trailed over our sidewalks, slimy with expectoration, drabbled through the mud of the streets in sloppy weather, is a danger in any sickroom. Patients whose resisting power has been weakened by any kind of illness are peculiarly susceptible to the contagious diseases, especially tuberculosis and diphtheria, two diseases that give off their most dangerous poison from the discharges from the lungs, throat and nose.

A woman who will wear her uniform in the street has either been badly trained or is disregarding one of the most important laws in regard to public health which her training-school has taught her; she is an unsafe person to have in the home, and the public should not employ such women, and would not do so if it understood the danger of having her dirty skirts in the home.

Furthermore, the wearing of the uniform makes a nurse conspicuous wherever she may be; the fact that she wears a long coat over her dress and apron, particularly when the coat is left flying open in the front and is slashed to the waist at the back, does not conceal her identity or protect her dress from the contamination of the street.

In fact, the long coat by holding the skirts down, causes a greater amount of dirt to adhere to the garments.

In England nurses have worn uniforms in the street until the dress has been adopted very widely by women of disrepute, who wish to gain entrance to the homes of the people for dishonest purposes, until it has become a great abuse in all of Great Britain.

No nurses except the district nurses can be justified in being seen in the streets in uniform. This special class of nurses should be dis-

tinguished by the fact that they are going earnestly about their business, not shopping in the stores or walking in the streets with young men, and to those nurses the uniform is a protection, although in many cities the district nurses go into the very heart of the slums without any distinguishing costume.

The wearing of the nurse's uniform in the street is first of all unsanitary for the reasons which we have cited, and it is unprofessional because it advertises the occupation of the wearer and makes her conspicuous. We think we can truthfully say that the custom is condemned by all nurses of the highest ideals. We think it is a matter that should be taken up by nurses' organizations, and we recommend a little newspaper publicity of such a character that the people will be made to understand the dangers of the practice and that it is only nurses of the second and third rate, or no rate at all, who are seen about in street-cars, stores, restaurants and theatres in their nursing costume.

PROGRESS OF STATE REGISTRATION

NEW YORK

SECTION 206 of the Nurse Practise Act of New York in effect April 7, 1903, contains the following:

Before beginning to practice nursing every such registered nurse shall cause such certificate to be recorded in the county clerk's office of the county of his or her residence, with an affidavit of his or her identity as the person to whom the same was so issued, and of his or her place of residence within such county. In the month of January, 1906, and in every thirty-sixth month thereafter, every registered nurse shall again cause his or her certificate to be recorded in the said county clerk's office, with an affidavit of his or her identity as the person to whom the same was issued, and of his or her place of residence at the time of such registration.

In section 209, under "Violations of this Article," we find "any violation of this article shall be a misdemeanor."

When any prosecution for violation of this article is made by the New York State Nurses Association the fines collected shall be paid to said association, and any excess in amount of fine so paid over the expenses incurred by said association in enforcing the provisions of this article shall be paid at the end of each year to the Treasurer of the State of New York.

It has been found that a great many nurses have neglected to comply with this condition of the law; large numbers not registering their