

Making a Rose of Johnny

An Attempt of the Toronto Board of Education Which is Being Widely Copied in Other Cities

By MARY JOSEPHINE TROTTER



You could hardly expect her to be a posy when her natural atmosphere is one of squalor. Yet the attempt to transform her is being made, by means of the medical service in Toronto schools.

A "Thorn in the Flesh"

"JOHNNY ain't no rose, teacher; don't smell him, learn him"—exactly expressed the whole duty of teachers in public schools a decade ago. The words were those of the fond mother of a certain malodorous Johnny whose teacher had sent him home to consult a pump. And it was quite true that if the average Johnny were any part of a rose-bush the "thorn in the flesh," not the rose, was the proper image.

In Toronto, however, where cleanliness is the virtue which comes next to education, the Public School Board thought shame to itself that the former had not preceded the latter duty. Sometimes it was impossible not to "smell" Johnny, however the teacher might prefer to simply "learn him." The impression by degrees became a conviction that a pupil was only as a tinkling cymbal who perhaps could define the perihelion, but could not blow his nose nor use a tooth-brush; that skill to locate the astral "Dipper" profited Johnny nothing until he was sure of his way to the earthly tub. So how to make a rose out of Johnny and at the same time conciliate his dubious parents and win their confidence and co-operation became a first concern of the governing body.

Fighting Dirt's Twin-Brother

DIRT was the twin-brother, often, of disease; and the same becoming their recognized relation medical inspection was established in public schools. The controlling body was the Board of Education, and the innovation was made in 1910. The city was divided into twenty districts and a staff of trained workers was appointed for distribution among them, the chief inspector being Dr. Struthers.

Under Dr. Struthers at the present time is a staff composed of thirty-seven nurses and a superintendent of nurses, namely, Miss Paul, twenty-one medical inspectors, one dental inspector and four dental surgeons, to which last six are shortly to be added.

Mrs. Struthers, wife of the chief inspector, was Lina Rogers, before her marriage, and the first public school nurse in the world. She is a graduate of the Toronto Hospital for Sick Children and took post-graduate training in New York. It was while she was in the latter city that her heart was stirred by the sight of sick children expelled from the public schools as a menace to pupils who were well and yet for whose personal recovery of health and ultimate reinstatement among their fellows no steps whatever were being taken.

The Pioneer School Nurse

TO set the heart is to fix the hand in the case of Mrs. Struthers as truly as ever it was of Enoch Arden. She devised a scheme of public school nursing and secured permission from the Board of Health to try it out in a district in New York City. The experiment proved a great success; in fact, it was the direct beginning of that excellent system of nursing which now obtains there.

Mrs. Struthers went, subsequently, to Pueblo,



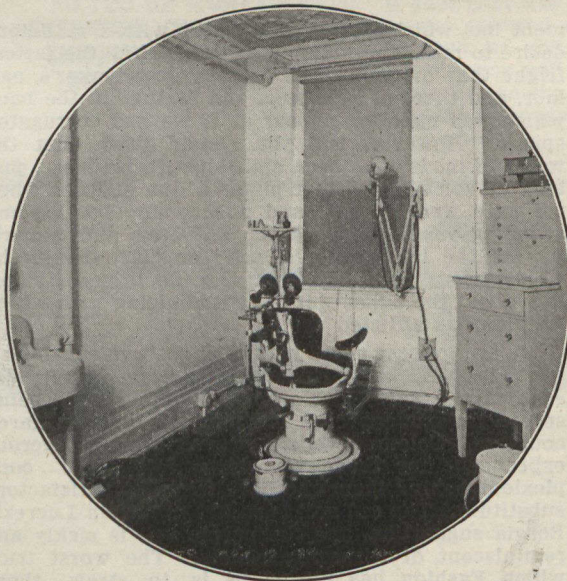
The dining-pavilion at the Forest School, at the far end of which in the present picture one sees Mrs. Struthers, the pioneer school nurse, and just to the right Dr. Struthers, chief medical inspector for Public Schools of Toronto.



Not only these pupils of the Forest School, but also the children of the city schools proper are drilled in the natural function of the tooth-brush.



Instruction on how to blow the nose is one of the methods resorted to as a safeguard against the growth of adenoids.



The five hundred dollar dental equipment installed in the Queen Alexandra School, Toronto. Funds for the same were raised and donated by the local school nurses, of whom there are thirty-seven.



"The line where hang the short and simple flannels of the poor" is one of the least formidable details encountered by the nurse on her visits in "the district." Our picture shows Miss Paul, the Superintendent.

where she organized nursing in the public schools, with the Board of Education as governing body. From which it will be seen that the first school nurse speaks with the force of experience behind her when she states that the Board of Education is the body under the direction of which public school nursing is best conducted. The fact that nurses, inspectors and teachers are responsible to one headship causes the medical inspection in the schools to be generally accepted as an integral part of the educational programme and not as an interruption or a thing apart.

Invited to Toronto

MRS. STRUTHERS, at the time Lina Rogers, was invited to Toronto a few years ago to establish a system of nursing in the public schools. She trained, in her capacity of superintendent, numbers of nurses who have since become heads of the same department of work in other cities. Miss Paul, the present superintendent in Toronto, is one of the nurses trained by Mrs. Struthers.

When Dr. Struthers married Miss Rogers, an event which occurred some two years ago, and for which one can hardly blame the one or the other, there was some fear that the public school nursing would suffer, its conduct devolving on less experienced shoulders. This has not been the case, however, for so excellent a vehicle of work had been established that the successor very capably operates it.

Mrs. Struthers is putting into shape for the press her book, "The Public School Nurse," which will serve as a text-book. In the meantime, her interest may be absolutely relied on, also her advice and assistance which are frequently sought, in connection with the work of the present nurses.

What Has Been Done

THE Forest School will shortly be re-opened—an out-of-doors school for sickly children which had its beginning last year as a direct result of medical inspection in schools.

Hundreds of children, hitherto thought "stupid," have compulsorily undergone operations for the removal of adenoids and have developed into bright and healthy pupils.

Hundreds of visits have been made by the school nurses to the homes of children in the poorer districts, where parents, otherwise, had been quite without knowledge as to how to care for their ailing little "Slightly Soiled." When a case of contagious disease is suspected the nurse reports to the proper authorities, and if the disease is pronounced contagious the nurse withdraws in favour of a member from Miss Dyke's force—she being superintendent of visiting nurses as controlled by the Board of Health. The line is distinctly drawn and prevents confusion.

Scores of photographs have been taken by order of the department, from which lantern-slides have been made and handed on as hints to other cities. A number of the same are herewith reproduced.

Regular instruction is given to the pupils on care of the hair, the teeth, the nails—in general, personal