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Editorial.

THE INFECTIOUS NURSE PROBLEM.

NOW that the London Borough Councils are elected, and settling down to their work, it is well to consider some of the powers which they possess, and to point out duties which in the public interest they may well undertake. It is incumbent upon these Councils to disinfect, at their own cost, infected premises, to remove infectious cases to isolation hospitals, to make adequate arrangements for the provision of medical assistance, hospital accommodation, and transport arrangements, during epidemics, to supply disinfectants, and to issue information which will enable the public to take precautions which will minimize the spread of infection. It is also required of the Councils to provide mortuaries. Perhaps we—though a member of the sex which our hereditary legislators have seen fit to disqualify for seats on these Councils—may be permitted to draw attention to another question which, in the interests of public health, might be profitably dealt with by the Councils. We refer to the compulsory disinfection of nurses who have attended infectious cases in private

families. This matter has for some time engaged our attention, as we have reason to believe that in many instances the isolation and disinfection of such nurses is very inadequately carried out, or even altogether neglected.

The danger of infection of other nurses, and through them of their patients, is considerably increased, owing to the fact that those who work on co-operative principles frequently lodge between their cases at Nursing Homes, and in these, unless effective isolation is enforced, a nurse who has just returned from a case of malignant scarlet fever or diphtheria, may sit side by side with one who may be summoned at any moment to attend a maternity case, or an operation in which the most stringent asepticism is requisite, and where its failure may, and probably will, mean death to the patient. It does not require an expert to grasp the gravity of the situation, it is one which the public can understand for themselves, and having once done so it is inevitable that they will demand that it shall be effectively dealt with. The subject has recently forced itself upon our attention, owing to a very flagrant case of carelessness, in which scarlet fever was contracted by many persons

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