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## EDITORIAL.

### THE CARE OF LONDON'S CONSUMPTIVES.

Of great interest and importance is the recommendation of the Public Health Committee of the London County Council made at the meeting on Tuesday last—

"That it be referred to the Public Health Committee to prepare forthwith and submit to the Council a scheme for dealing with tuberculosis throughout the administrative County of London; that the Local Government Board be informed of the action taken; and that, for the purpose of preparing the scheme, the committee be authorised to confer with the sanitary authorities, the Insurance Committee for London, and such other authorities, institutions, or persons as they may deem necessary."

The importance of the proposition is evident when we remember the Government has decided that the Local Health Authorities throughout the country shall take in hand the organization of the medical treatment of tuberculosis, the expense being borne in part by the Government; that there are in the metropolis 50,000 known consumptives; and that whatever scheme is suggested, although scant mention of nursing is made in the exhaustive report which prefaces the above Resolution, it is evident that the services of trained nurses must be requisitioned if this scheme is to be successfully carried out.

Many agencies including hospitals and dispensaries are at present coping with the disease; the Committee consider that the Council, in its position as the central health authority, is obviously best fitted to organize the arrangements to be made for dealing with the disease, as it is important that there should be no departure in London from the well founded principle of having one Central Health Authority for the County for the administration and co-

ordination of all matters relating to public health.

In hospitals and dispensaries the work of trained nurses is recognised as essential, but there is a much wider field for it than this. Some of the most important work of the trained nurse in dealing with tuberculosis is in recognising early and contact cases—for which, in district work, she has exceptional opportunities—and in bringing them to the notice of the proper authorities, in securing the best conditions for those cases which remain in their own homes—including outdoor shelters—or separate bedrooms with wide open windows—and in teaching the relations how to disinfect crockery and linen, and how to avoid infection. In short, there is ample scope for the work of the nurse who is not only proficient in the care of the sick, but who is ready to enter with enthusiasm upon the unlimited field of usefulness before her in the prevention of illness.

This applies not only to the district and visiting nurse, but to the school nurse, who, through her contact with the children in the schools, and by following up cases needing attention in their homes, has exceptional opportunities for work by which infectious diseases must be largely eradicated, and the general standard of health in the community be raised in consequence.

It will be realised that this work is of the highest importance, and our object in calling attention to it at the present moment is to impress upon trained nurses that if they wish to co-operate with health authorities not only in London, but throughout the country, in dealing with cases of tuberculosis in the most effective way, they must be willing to take pains to qualify themselves for this work, for during a three years' training in a general hospital they only have very limited opportunities for gaining the necessary knowledge.

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