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EDITORIAL.

THE CONTROL OF VENEREAL DISEASES.

A movement which is arousing the public conscience, and helping to disseminate knowledge of the existence of an evil, formerly concealed and ignored, is the organised international effort to suppress the White Slave Traffic.

The Fifth International Congress held in the Caxton Hall last week had, as we have reported, the sympathy of the King and Queen, and the Congress sent a telegram of thanks to their Majesties for the gracious message of sympathy and encouragement delivered to them at its opening Session, and for the invitation to Windsor Castle. Amongst those who presided at Sessions were the Earl of Aberdeen and the Bishop of London, and the delegates were entertained at luncheon at the Savoy Hotel by Lord Beauchamp on behalf of the Government.

No one could attend the Congress, listen to the speeches and reports, or observe the earnestness of the Delegates, without realizing that, though commercialized vice may exist throughout the world, the movement for its suppression is gaining force in knowledge, in earnestness and in effectiveness.

The reports of the National committees are inspiring reading, and give one cause to hope that eventually, through pressure brought to bear by such committees throughout the world, the organization of vice for gain may be eradicated.

One of the most fruitful causes of venereal diseases is well known to be prostitution, nor is the spread of contagion confined to those who practise vice.

Dr. J. H. Sequeira writing in the *Lancet* says, that *syphilis insontium* is far too little considered in the controversies which have raged round the subject, he refers first to the cases in which members of the medical

profession, dentists, students, nurses, midwives and maternity nurses have been infected in the discharge of their duties, which are, he says, only too common, and draws special attention to three groups of cases which he names (1) domestic, (2) marital, and (3) occupational. As illustrating the first he mentions a woman with a baby at the breast, her little daughter aged 5, and another daughter aged 12. The mother had a well-developed secondary eruption, the baby was gravely ill with the hereditary disease, the elder girl, who assisted with the children had a primary sore on the lip, and the little girl had a primary chancre in the mouth. He could not get the father to attend. In connection with the second group he quotes the wife of a baker, with a secondary eruption, sore throat, etc. She had been married three months. The husband who was suffering from untreated syphilis was continuing his avocation as a baker. The third group is illustrated by a boy, a glass blower's apprentice with a primary chancre on the lower lip, of which the significance is that his duty was to take the blow-pipe from a senior employee and to continue blowing. The elder worker was found to be suffering from active syphilis of the buccal cavity.

The movement in favour of notification is gaining ground, and Mr. H. W. Bayly writes "that one of the most widespread contagious diseases, which is at the same time terrible in its consequences, should be selected for special exemption from notification is a monstrous anomaly, and an insult to the intelligence of all persons of sober and unbiassed judgment."

The plea for the appointment of a Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases put forward by Sir Malcolm Morris in the columns of the *Lancet*, with its support, must commend itself to thoughtful people. He considers notification must precede systematic control.

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