

# THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED  
**THE NURSING RECORD**  
EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

No. 1,390

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 1914.

Vol. LIII.

## EDITORIAL.

### THE COMBATting OF VENEREAL DISEASES.

It will be an unfeigned pleasure to nurses associated together in the National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland, who have taken so much interest in the above question, to know that a "National Council for Combatting Venereal Diseases" was last week founded at the house of the Royal Society of Medicine, Wimpole Street, London, W., the President of the Royal College of Physicians being in the chair. Sir Thomas Barlow stated that the movement had its origin in a request from Major Leonard Darwin, as President of the Eugenics Education Committee to Sir Rickman Godlee as President of the Royal College of Surgeons, and himself, to support a movement for national education on the subject of venereal diseases. A strong Association was formed, with the co-operation of Sir Henry Morris, President of the Royal Society of Medicine, to report on the incidence and prevalence of these diseases, on the provision existing for their treatment, and on the amount of instruction usually offered to the medical profession on the matter, still further, an extremely important part of the work of the committee was to examine the need for popular information. They found, as might be expected, the prevalence of these diseases great, the provision for treatment poor, and the instruction given inadequate. The breaking out of war drew attention to the fact that "the abnormal state of the country gives rise to conditions which demand to be dealt with. There is great need of disseminating sound knowledge on this subject among the men collected together in large camps, so as to safeguard both their interests and those of the women

in the vicinities. Furthermore there is need to anticipate, and if possible to check, that exacerbation of venereal disease which always follows in the wake of a great war."

Sir Thomas Barlow announced that the work which the National Council proposed to do was heartily welcomed by Lord Kitchener, who had already approved a scheme for educating the Army on such matters by qualified lecturers.

Amongst the objects of the newly formed Council are the following:—

To provide accurate and enlightened information as to the prevalence of these diseases and as to the necessity for early treatment.

To encourage and assist the dissemination of a sound knowledge of the physiological laws of life, in order to raise the standard both of health and conduct.

To co-operate with existing associations, to seek their approval and support, and to give advice when desired.

To promote such legislative, social, and administrative reforms as are relevant to the foregoing aims and objects.

Already, at Liverpool, lectures have been given by selected men to male audiences and by selected women to members of their own sex.

The *Lancet* in a leading article on the subject says that the Council by attempting to disseminate a sound knowledge of the laws of life are going to the root of the matter, for physiological ignorance is at the bottom of much of the prevalence and spread of venereal diseases. This it is, every whit as much as any feeling of shame, sends the victim to a quack. . .

Physiological ignorance again allows the terrible results of latent infection to wreak themselves upon women and children, and still more strikingly is it apparent in the malignant teaching, once so common, that

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