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EDITORIAL.

THE CENTRAL COUNCIL FOR DISTRICT NURSING.

The formation of the Central Council for District Nursing in London, the first meeting of which we report in another column, is proof that the importance of the organization of district nursing throughout the County of London is engaging the attention of those responsible for the National Health. This indeed was emphasized by the President of the Local Government Board, who stated at the meeting that his Department had to perform the functions of a Ministry of Health, and thus took the keenest interest in the organization of an adequate nursing service in London or elsewhere.

In London the question of an adequate service is concerned not so much with standards, as with an efficient supply—for no arbitrary line is drawn in the metropolis such as that defined by a noble lord when the Nurses' Registration Bill was in 1908 before the Upper House, who referred to the different classes of nurses who "attend the well to do, and people who have important operations performed by eminent surgeons," and "that type of nurse especially required for the ordinary ailments of the sick poor."

In London we realize that accidents and disease are no respecter of persons whether they occur in the palace or the tenement, and indeed that if any distinction is to be made the nurses of the poor should be the more highly qualified, since the poor cannot afford to give in for minor ailments, and their illnesses, when a nurse is called in, are usually very acute. The London poor therefore have the advantage of the highest medical and surgical treatment, and skilled nursing, in hospitals, and the care of Queen's nurses, Ranyard nurses, and others in their own homes, and of the School

Nurses of the London County Council in the elementary schools. All these nurses are required to hold certificates of three years' general hospital training, and often have additional qualifications—a standard which should be invariably maintained for the district nurse, whether working in London or elsewhere.

There is no one who has been brought into contact with the work of these thoroughly trained groups of nurses who will not willingly bear testimony to its great value, whether it be concerned with the actual care of the sick, or—as so much of the work of district and school nurses is concerned—with the prevention of disease, as in tuberculosis work, or in the care of the insured sick, in recognizing and adopting means to stamp out infectious diseases in schools, in the inculcation of sanitary laws, or in the hundred and one ways in which the nurse who is a keen social worker wages war on all the agents calculated to lower the standard of the national health. In relation to all of these there is a chorus of testimony to the great value of the work of these highly skilled workers, and the chief need at the present moment is that there should be more of them. They might be multiplied almost indefinitely with great advantage to the community.

The Central Council for District Nursing, under the chairmanship of Sir William Collins, has a great opportunity for good work ready to its hand, and will, we do not doubt, make the most of it. We should like to see it strengthened by the inclusion of more members of the profession concerned, *i.e.*, that of nursing, for the practical problems demanding solution can only be worked out by trained nurses themselves, and there are many splendid women competent to deal with them, women of eminence in the nursing world, whose names might with advantage be added to the Council.

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