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**EDITORIAL.**

**THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON VENEREAL DISEASES.**

The report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the prevalence of Venereal Diseases in the United Kingdom, their effects upon the health of the community, and the means by which those effects can be alleviated or prevented, issued last week, is of the utmost importance, and the recommendations of the Commissioners show that they realize the gravity of the national problem revealed in the course of their inquiry.

The Commissioners are strongly of opinion that improved records of sickness in hospitals and Poor Law institutions are urgently needed, and they considered that the Local Government Board should devise a uniform system with the object of securing accurate statistical information as regards the prevalence of disease among persons who receive institutional treatment.

Of special interest to nurses and midwives is the evidence given by Miss Amy Hughes, and Miss Alice Gregory.

Miss Hughes in reply to a question from the Chairman as to whether the training given to midwives, and also to trained nurses, on the subject of these diseases is quite inadequate replied: "They are not told anything, occasionally they have an instruction lecture given them. We have asked for them to be given to Queen's Nurses, and we have had them given by the lady doctors, but they do not see the cases in their training. You do not get the midwives and nurses shown the prevalence of these diseases and how to recognize them." Miss Hughes considered that all nurses and midwives should be able to recognize certain specific symptoms attaching to these diseases. In a large provincial hospital a separate room is, she said, set apart for

these cases and the nurses are not allowed to go into it. "Yet, when we are trained, we have to go out and deal with sick people in every condition of life."

Asked "Have you had no lectures in the course of your training on this subject?" Miss Hughes said: "It was referred to but we were not taught it properly. There was a sort of veil drawn over it. It is left for you to imagine and find out for yourself." She was very strongly of opinion that the training of nurses and midwives ought to be effectively supplemented in this direction.

Miss Gregory, to whose evidence we refer in another column, was equally emphatic.

Amongst the recommendations of the Commission are the confidential registration of the causes of death, diagnosis and treatment of venereal diseases to be subsidized from Imperial Funds and the Local Rates, the provision of cards of instruction and warning at the public expense to be handed by doctors to their patients, further the detention, where necessary, of Poor Law patients suffering from venereal diseases, the prohibition of advertisements of remedies; communications by doctors to parents or guardians; with the object of preventing or delaying marriage with a person in an infectious condition from venereal disease, to be regarded as privileged; statutory recognition of the principle that infectious venereal disease constitutes an incapacity for marriage, and that the process should be made available for all persons, however poor, but nullity of marriage on such grounds should not render children illegitimate; the adequate practical instruction of medical students in these diseases.

The Commissioners conclude from the evidence that the number of persons infected with the graver form of disease cannot fall below 10 per cent. of the population in large cities, and that the whole number affected must greatly exceed this proportion.

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