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EDITORIAL.

THE DISTRICT NURSING OF MEASLES AND WHOOPING COUGH.

The Scheme for the District Nursing of Measles, German Measles and Whooping Cough, outlined by the Central Council for District Nursing in London, of which Sir William Collins is Chairman, will, undoubtedly, if carried into effect, lessen the mortality from these diseases.

It is stated that the object of this scheme is to secure the provision of timely nursing care—in proper relation to medical advice—with a view to saving the lives, and preventing permanent injury to the health, of young children attacked by measles or whooping cough.

It is generally agreed that if due care were taken from the onset, the mortality of measles and its complications would be greatly reduced. It often occurs that medical aid is only summoned after the illness has developed a serious character, or complications have arisen which might have been avoided by proper care and attention. It is hoped that on the advice of an experienced nurse such timely aid will be brought to the patient and not deferred until it is too late.

In confirmation of the influence which care has on the mortality from measles, it is reported by the Central Council that "the mortality increases in proportion to overcrowding and poverty; it diminishes step by step as the 'social status' improves. Moreover, the mortality from measles is not a complete index of the mischief wrought. Measles is a frequent cause of retarded growth and development, and of ill health; it often lights upon latent tuberculosis, and deafness, and defects of eyesight, are in many instances attributed to it. Hospital treatment for the majority of cases of measles or whooping cough will probably

never be practicable, even if it were desirable, and should be reserved for the most urgent and necessitous cases."

The District Nursing Associations of London by their experience and organization, are especially qualified to take part, in the care of cases of measles and whooping cough, and local authorities desiring to provide for their poorer inhabitants may, in the case of the Borough Councils, do so by arrangement with the Associations in accordance with the Public Health (London) Act: if Guardians, under powers conveyed by the Poor Laws Act.

A further Report from the organization sub-committee outlines the arrangements made so far, with recommendations and suggestions for future procedure. The Committee state that they have had the advantage of a conference with the Medical Officers of Health in the Metropolis, representatives of the Local Government Board also being present. From these, and from information furnished by the District Nursing Associations and other sources it appears that although the need is fully recognised, little has as yet been done to give practical effect in the Metropolis to the powers conferred on sanitary authorities, by the Notification of Measles Order, to provide medical attendance, including nursing, for the poor.

This Committee advise that a District Nursing Association undertaking the work of nursing measles should do so in accordance with a scheme approved by, and in co-operation with the local sanitary authority, and that given suitable training and special instruction district nurses, acting as they do under rule and supervision, may safely be trusted to undertake the nursing of these diseases in the course of their ordinary work. They further recommend the desirability of making arrangements, through the Central Council or otherwise, for the mutual assistance of associations by the loan of relief nurses in time of epidemic stress.

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