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EDITORIAL.

THE PART OF NURSES IN THE WAR ON VENEREAL DISEASES.

The question of the incidence of venereal diseases, their cause and prevention has been brought prominently before the public just now by the discussion of the provisions of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, at present before Parliament.

The question for trained nurses is how best they can help to stamp out this appalling scourge, for they have a very special responsibility in relation to its cure and prevention. In the course of their work they are brought into direct contact with its results, and as health missionaries, they are concerned in the prevention of disease, and have many opportunities as trusted confidantes of the public for disseminating knowledge.

It is of first importance that they themselves should have a clear knowledge of the origin of these diseases, the way they are spread, and the means for their prevention.

Secondly, when nurses have gained this information they must use it with sympathy and discretion. The value of nurses and midwives as an instructive and remedial influence in the present campaign can hardly be over-estimated, and the National Council for Combating Venereal Diseases, which on Monday last held a public meeting, at the House of the Royal Society of Medicine, to establish a London and Home Counties Branch, will be well advised to get into touch with the National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland, the first body of women to organize a Conference in London on the subject, and to demand action, and which since 1909, when the Conference was held, has taken a very live interest in the question.

It was announced by Sir Macolm Morris that a meeting of women's societies is to be called to consider their representation

on the Executive Committee of the N.C.C.V.D. We hope that Nurses' organizations will be well represented.

The immediate cause of the activity of the Society is the realization that something must be done at once to provide free centres for sympathetic, and secret diagnosis and treatment, and to cleanse the streets of facilities for vice in view of the outbreaks of venereal disease which occur after every great war.

Already we have heard from Colonial nurses and others of the alarm and resentment of women in the Colonies, from which thousands of young men have crossed the seas to help to save the Empire, and have found themselves, when in London, and other great cities, in a whirlpool of vice, with little protection, and with results to themselves and posterity far more appalling than the loss of a limb. As Mr. Joynson-Hicks, M.P., remarked on Monday, it may not be possible to make men sober or pure by Act of Parliament, but it is possible, by legislation, to make vice more difficult, and it is the duty of the House of Commons to deal with the question now, and, further, to clear away the blindness of the average person in our midst, whose eyes have been shut from a false sense of prudery.

It behoved us to do all in our power so that when our men returned from the war they should not be exposed to the hideous temptations to which men on short leave have been subjected, and that it shall be made impossible for things to go on as at present.

We advise not only nurses but the public to secure the pamphlet on "Morality in Relation to Health" by the Honble. Albinia Brodrick, published by the Nursing Press, Ltd., 43 r, Oxford Street, W., and "Hygiene and Morality," by Miss Lavinia L. Dock, published by G. P. Putnam's Sons, 24, Bedford Street, W.C., in order to gain a sound knowledge of the question.

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