

THE PREVENTION OF VENEREAL DISEASE.

If, as Mr. W. W. Corbett (a member of the Executive Committee of the Society for the Prevention of Venereal Disease) tells us in an open letter addressed to parents and guardians, there has recently been an alarming increase of venereal disease, so that it already infects more than half of the male population, it becomes the imperative duty of all citizens to do everything in their power to prevent the spread of infection.

The report on the Prevention of Venereal Disease drafted by a Special Committee of the Birth-rate Commission, therefore, deserves grave consideration at this time, for knowledge must precede effective action, and effective action is imperative.

From the medical standpoint the report points out that there are two methods of arresting the spread of an infectious disease: (a) preventing the conditions under which contagion occurs, and (b) destroying by disinfection the infective organism before they have penetrated the tissues of the body. The first method is, of course, the best.

The Committee therefore consider that in any appeal the following should be the order of the conditions to be observed:—

First place, to the appeal for chastity as itself a moral obligation as consistent with good health, and the most certain safeguard against venereal disease.

Second place, to the moral obligation to consult a doctor if exposure to risk has occurred, or disease been contracted, to prevent its development and extension.

Third place, to the facts regarding the serious danger of communication to innocent persons which is involved, and appeal to family affection, patriotism and humanity should be made.

Fourth place, to self-disinfection.

The report also states:—

While the Committee fully realise that chastity is the best safeguard against the spread of venereal disease, they are also compelled to recognise that a large number of persons, male and female, do not respond to moral appeals, but indulge more or less frequently in promiscuous sexual intercourse, and thereby incur the risk of contracting disease.

They are of opinion that for the sake of both individual and national welfare, steps must be taken

Either to prevent intimate contact between healthy and diseased surfaces, or to destroy or prevent the growth of disease germs before they can invade the tissues. This means that some method of disinfection must be carried out as soon as possible after sexual intercourse, either by the individual concerned, or by or under the supervision of a medical practitioner or trained assistant.

The Committee therefore recommend that

No difficulty should be placed in the way of either—

1. The spread of knowledge . . . as to the use and value of disinfectants.

2. The obtaining by individuals of such disinfectants from chemists or other sources which may yet be recommended.

Prevention is better than cure, and the Committee's advocacy of methods of prevention should supersede treatment through ablution centres, emphasising cure rather than prevention.

NURSING ECHOES.

We have received several letters from nurses on the question of a standard uniform for Registered Nurses, all approving of the institution of such a uniform, but one correspondent doubts whether the present-day nurse who has not the same respect for discipline as her predecessors, will ever realise how to wear a uniform—as she has been accustomed to vary that worn according to her own sweet will, and adorn it with all sorts of unsuitable accessories. She fears women—unlike soldiers of the King—will never realise the imperative importance of a button, or the keeping of such button bright! and that discredit will be brought upon the “registered” uniform by careless and untidy wearers.

We wonder.

We also wonder if a sufficient number of nurses will be prepared to pay for a handsome, well-made suit, for such a suit must be made of good material, well-cut and fitted, and then be kept scrupulously clean. Shoes, stockings, gloves and headgear should be “uniform,” and the wearer must be proud of her outfit if it is to be worn attractively.

At present most uniform appears as if it had reposed in the rag bag and was merely flung on to save expense. If a “registered” nurse's uniform inculcates respect for her cloth amongst nurses, it will be a boon and a blessing; but if, as at present, this respect is lacking, then the profession will benefit nothing by its adoption.

We shall see.

In the meanwhile, will all those with “ideas” on the subject submit them to the Registrar, General Nursing Council for England and Wales, Room 104, 3rd Floor, Ministry of Health, Whitehall, London, S.W.1?

Lady Baddeley, wife of Sir John Baddeley, who is a certificated nurse of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and a member of the Executive Committee of its Nurses' League, has been appointed a Justice of the Peace for the Stoke Newington Division, and is, so far as we are aware, the first trained nurse to be so appointed. Her colleagues will watch with interest her career on the Bench. The special knowledge which she brings to her duties should make her services of great value.

At the recent meeting of the Council of Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses, which met at 58, Victoria Street, S.W., last week, Sir Harold Boulton, Bart., and Sir Cameron Gull, Bart., were re-elected chairman and vice-

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