

## **1929 Address by Dr Margaret Lowenfeld on the Clinic**

Notes of an address to be given by Dr. Margaret Lowenfeld, of the Clarendon Road Clinic for Nervous children, before the Advisory Committee on Thursday, 14th November, at 5 p.m.

### **Introduction**

The work of the Welfare Centres marks a great advance in the campaign for a healthy nation. The time now seems to have come to explore the possibilities of a further step. Nervous health is as great a factor in the production of the successful and satisfactory citizen as physical health.

The strain of modern life makes this harder and harder to achieve. In the days of the coach and the weekly or monthly letter with no motor-cars, no telephones, and each town a day's journey from its neighbour, demands followed one another with a slowness that gave the individual time to organise his response.

The child of today has none of this. Not only is the competition harder when he comes to make a living but in his school days street accidents, the pressure of the modern school curriculum, the films, the constant appearance of new form of living, make tremendous demands upon his adaptability. The pace is faster at every point and very often the child finds it impossible to adjust to.

The Maudsley Hospital, the Tavistock Square Clinic, have all long lists waiting for help in the breakdowns that come in adult life, the treatment for these is at all points inadequate. All psychotherapists agree that the foundations of the nervous troubles that cripple adult life and fill not only our nerve hospitals, but our prisons and our reformatories are laid in early life.

Up to very recent years, our knowledge of these conditions had not reached the point where any real hope could be held out for the prevention of these conditions. But that day is beginning to pass. There is still a very great deal that we do not know about these matters, but we have now certain knowledge and understanding of a large part of the field and the time has now come to make a beginning in the work of cure at the early stage and of prevention.

## **The Clarendon Road Clinic**

Began in 1928 in Telford Road and has outgrown its quarters and moved to No. 85 Clarendon Road. It is in existence to cater for all children of either sex from the age of nine months to sixteen years who show such signs of nervousness or mental distress as to interfere with their general happiness or capacity to respond to the ordinary demands of life, unmanageable or delinquent children or young persons, children afflicted with habit spasms, tic or any other disabling "nervous" condition, and children who seem unable to withstand the ordinary infections and diseases of childhood.

The clinic undertakes no ordinary medical treatment and children needing such will be referred to their private doctors or in suitable cases to the Princess Louise Hospital. The reason for the inclusion of the latter group is that in the child who perpetually falls a victim to the common cold, mild attacks of influenza, etc., there is often an emotional factor also, depression, the feeling of being a failure, etc., at work which determines the failure to resist. When this can be removed the ordinary agencies of health which had been powerless before are not enabled to take effect.

The clinic has the following features:

- (a) No out-patient waiting in the apartment. All children as soon as they come, go into the playroom where the curative work, modelling, handwork, etc., is carried on, Mothers wait below in the canteen where books and papers are provided. Lay psychologically trained social workers whose work is to get in touch with each child individually and understand his problems.
- (b) Arrangements to take the quite tiny child whose conduct is undesirable, A very careful physical and bio-chemical examination of all cases.
- (c) It is hoped that the clinic will work in the fullest co-operation with every agency for the good of childhood in the district. The problem of nervousness in children is so big and so difficult a one that there is room for every form of attack. The clinic is open to inspection at any time and welcomes visitors who are familiar with the children.