The Co-operation of the Health Visitor and the Voluntary Worker.

By Miss E. M. MOUNSEY.

(ABSTRACT.)

THE supreme importance of caring for the Mothers and Babies of every country is being forced upon us with increasing urgency, and the work that may be undertaken in this direction gives wide scope for the energies of Health Visitors, Medical Officers and Voluntary helpers alike.

Co-operation in the work is most desirable and its value may be taken into consideration from different points of view.

The Health Visitor's duties cover a very wide scope, but her work needs supplementing in many ways that can be carried on by voluntary workers, and new developments are often more easily carried out by voluntary workers who can take the initiative themselves.

The voluntary worker can be specially effective in educative work, in creating public opinion, and by sympathetic service to those in need.

In many places there is considerable prejudice to overcome among the women it is desired to reach, before they will make up their minds to have their babies weighed regularly and to follow the advice given at the centres. Superstition and ancient theories die hard, and may be more readily broken down when ladies they know and trust range themselves on the side of the Health Visitor, and make it obvious that the officially promoted course is a wise one and need not be feared.

The successful co-operation to be aimed at depends largely on the workers themselves; above all, voluntary helpers must prove themselves reliable, regular and punctual in fulfilling the duties they undertake.

The real love for the women and their little ones, with the keen desire to help them to live nobler, truer, and less difficult lives, should be the real link that unites all workers together, and makes other interests subservient.

Possible future Developments in the Public Health Service affecting Women Public Health Officials.

By A. SAYLE.

(PRÉCIS.)

THE present position of Women in the Public Health Service may be set out as follows; shewing the multiplicity of duties and appointments :—
Women sanitary inspectors. Health visitors. Superintendents of

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Maternity and Child Welfare Centres. Tuberculosis visitors. Mental deficiency visitors. School nurses. Nurses attached to Tuberculosis Dispensaries. Nurses attached to V.D. Treatment Centres. Measles nurses. District nurses. Inspectors of midwives. Midwives. Matrons of maternity homes and hospitals. Home helps. Crèche matrons.

All the work done by the officials mentioned above falls under four heads : Prevention of Disease. Treatment of Disease. Midwifery. Housewifery.

The practical application of the principle of the re-organisation of the Public Health Service as regard Women Officials would be to divide them into four branches : Branch A, Administrative and Preventive, to include the first five offices mentioned ; Branch B, to include the next five ; Branch C, to include the following three, and Branch D, Housewifery, the remaining two.

The advantages of this scheme would be :—

In Branch A. The attraction to the Public Health Service of women possessing a high degree of general education and of specialized training, provided that a salary commensurate with the cost of such education and training be paid. *In Branch B.* The immediate utilization of the services of a large number of fully-trained nurses, now demobilized. *In Branches A, C, and D,* the possibility of giving practical training to students wishing to enter the Public Health Service. *In all Branches :* A higher standard of work, consequent on a higher standard of training ; higher salaries, and better conditions ; improved prospects of promotion ; the avoidance of overlapping and of “ omnibus ” visiting ; a higher standard of Public Health.