THE CURSE OF NOISE.

Sr,—I should like to support Dr. Hilliard’s suggestion (August 11th, p. 276) that the Council of the British Medical Association should initiate a bill in Parliament with the object of preventing a good deal of the unnecessary noise of which so many complain. One has only to read the letters which have recently appeared in the Times to realize how necessary it is that some action should be speedily taken. It would appear that no body of men is better qualified to draft a bill or move a resolution to carry it to a successful issue. I feel sure that the attempt would be greatly appreciated by the public and would add to the influence of the Association.—I am, etc.,

W.M. COLLIER.

PAYING CENTRES FOR INFANT HYGIENE.

Sr.—Your report of the Annual Representative Meeting of the British Medical Association at Cardiff states that the Representative Body reversed, by amendment, the Council’s approval of the principle of paying centres for infant hygiene. In the discussion allusion was made to such a centre in Chelsea—presumably the Babies’ Club, 35, Danvers Street. May I, as its honorary secretary, submit a few points which do not seem to have received due consideration at Cardiff?

From references made to the State-aided infant welfare centres, the majority of the speakers seemed to agree that this work has proved a valuable educational force. Some went so far as to admit that the clinics provide general physicians with work which would not otherwise have come their way. There seemed to be little appreciation, however, that the infant welfare movement, through its clinics, doctors, and especially its health visitors, has created a type of work which has never been undertaken before. Its success throughout the country shows how great was the need, and suggests that the lines on which it has developed have been right.

The middle-class mother has now begun to demand a similar regular medical supervision of her infants, as a preventive measure against disease and delicacy. In many instances she cannot get this from her family doctor, not always because he has not the necessary knowledge for this branch of preventive medicine, but because he cannot organize his work to afford time for the regular supervision of many healthy babies, nor can she afford the money for the necessarily frequent consultations. As a result, some mothers have begun to attend State-aided welfare centres; others rely on advice of doctors, such as is found in magazine articles or obtained from correspondence bureaux. Others, again, seek help from the nurse who attended them at their confinement, who in many cases was the chief arbiter of their baby’s welfare during the first few weeks of life, but whose experience does not necessarily extend much beyond that period. Where lectures are used as a means of education (the method endorsed by the Association’s amendment) the mother has to make selections from the knowledge thus gleaned with no one to advise her whether or not it applies to her own child.

In the Babies’ Club an honourable attempt has been made to meet the mother’s needs on the one hand, and to safeguard the general practitioner on the other. Advice is paid at a proper rate; the mother may not join unless her family doctor gives permission; the medical officer of the club does not visit the baby in the home unless at the family doctor’s request. While no completely acceptable definition can be given of “sickness” and “treatment,” a conscientious attempt is made to exclude sick children, and to confine the advice given to points of medical hygiene and prophylaxis. Profiting by the example of existing welfare centres, advice given by the medical officer of the club is followed up by home visits paid by an experienced health visitor. A very close insight is thus gained into the home conditions, which provides a sufficient answer to the formidable objection raised in the Cardiff discussion that the physician at the clinic must be ignorant of many of the most important factors in the child’s life.

Obituary.

Dr. CHRISTOPHER CHILDS, who died at West Looe, Cornwall, on August 6th, in his 82nd year, was widely known by reason of his interest in public health problems. He was born at Liskeard, and at Uppingham School was distinguished as an athlete. He received his medical education at Oxford, St. George’s Hospital, and the University of Bonn; he obtained the diploma L.R.C.P. in 1875, graduated M.B. Oxon. three years later, and proceeded M.D. in 1887. He had been a member of the Royal College of Surgeons since 1879. In 1885 he obtained the Diplomas in Public Health of the English Conjoint Board and of the University of Cambridge. After holding the post of house-physician at St. George’s Hospital he returned to Uppingham as scientific assistant to Dr. J. H. Huish, under Dr. Huish’s successor, Dr. F. C. Graham. In 1889 he left Uppingham and took part in the temporary migration of the school to Borth, in Wales, during the outbreak of catarrh fever at Uppingham. He then practised for some time in London, acting also as a lecturer at University College, and later went to Weymouth, where he was surgeon to the Weymouth and Dorset County Royal Eye Infirmary and physician to the Weymouth Royal Hospital. Throughout his active professional life he found time for the study of preventive medicine and epidemiology, and was one of the pioneers in the treatment of dysentery at the time of the South African war. He was the author of a number of controversial papers on epidemio-

DR. HEYWOOD SMITH, who died at Chichester on July 21st, was well known in London during his active life as a gynaecologist, and in his later years, in retirement at Chichester, he participated in professional affairs on the scientific side. Born in 1837, he received his education at the University of Oxford, graduating in arts in