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Editorial.

THE MOTHERS OF THE NATION.

An effort is now being made to form a "National League for Physical Education and Improvement," and a meeting in support of the scheme is to be held at the Mansion House on Wednesday in next week.

The objects of the League are:—

1. To stimulate public interest in the Physical Condition of the People throughout the Kingdom.
2. To establish close Association and Centralisation of all Societies and Individuals trying to combat such influences as tend to produce National Physical Deterioration.
3. To aid existing institutions.
4. To start organisations for Physical Health and well-being wherever none exist.

These objects are admirable, and we have much sympathy with them, but if they are to be effected the interest of the whole nation, men and women, must be aroused, and hand in hand they must work for the common welfare. Moreover, in the care of the child—and it is on the early care and upbringing of the child that his future good or ill-health mainly depends—the work of women has a supreme and unique place. Further back even than the birth of the child, in the care and judicious management of her own health for the previous months, her influence for good or ill is unbounded. She it is also who dominates the life of the child in infancy, with her rests the supervision of every detail as to food, clothing, warmth, light, air, provided for the undeveloped little body. If she is able to afford a nursery, then the selection of the nurse who cannot fail to have a permanent influence on the mental and moral nature of the child rests with her, as does, mainly, the inculcation of moral qualities, such as truth, honour, and courage. Physical education is, in fact, essentially a woman's question, and we have no hesitation in saying that any scheme for physical improvement which does not secure and give an influential place

to the co-operation of women can never accomplish its objects.

Yet when we turn to the list of Vice-Presidents of the proposed Society what do we find? We have the names of Medical Men, the Heads of Medical Corporations, the Church, the Law, Lord Mayors, Lord Provosts, Education, Science, the Houses of Lords and Commons, and Athletes all represented, but we look in vain for the names of leading medical women, of women sanitary inspectors, of women whose names are known throughout the country, as efficient teachers; nor is there the name of one Matron of a hospital or Superintendent of District Nursing; albeit Mr. Charles Booth, in his classic work on Social Influences, has pronounced that in every neighbourhood where a skilled nurse is provided "the direct influence on health is considerable." He quotes Miss Nightingale's words:—"We look upon the district nurse, if she is what she should be, and if we give her the training she should have, as the great civiliser of the poor, training as well as nursing them out of ill-health into good health (health missionaries), out of drink into self-control," and he ends his summary on this subject with the following words:—"Of all the forms that charity takes, there is hardly one that is so directly successful as district nursing. It is almost true to say that wherever a nurse enters, the standard of life is raised."

The present marked tendency to discount the work of women, to remove them from positions in which their work has been proved invaluable, to keep them behind the grille, not only in the House of Commons but also in public life, is unworthy of the men of a nation which desires to be regarded as liberal-minded and progressive. Such action must inevitably have its reward. In the present instance the fact that the promoters of the Physical Education League are not acquainted with one woman worthy to be placed on their list of Vice-Presidents will probably result in the lack of interest on the part of women in a scheme to

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